

CLEAN.

BY EMILY PFEIFFER.

"He that is washed, needeth not
save to wash his feet, but is clean
every whit."—JOHN XIII, 10.

"He that is washed needs but to wash his feet,
And he is wholly clean. What words are
these!

So hard, so dark, they warn us from the beat
Of outward sense, and bid us rise to seize
Some ray of light flashed downward from the
sun
Of truth, eternal as the truthful One.

"He that is washed needs but to wash his feet;
His comings and his goings must be clean,
His path still pure adown life's crowded
street,
His track upon its mire and slime unseen.
Few are too weak or vile to purge their walk;
Our Master did not mock us in his talk.

"He bade us do the thing we could—no more;
Be heedful of our outward ways and deeds.
Watch well our feet—that so He might out-
pour
His spirit for our spirits' inward needs;
Till we in Sabbath rest and peace shall sit,
And hear his words, "Clean are ye every
whit."

A Pilgrimage to the Sanc- tuaries of St. Francis.

I.

The moon hung her bright lamp high over the
city of *Il Serafico*, as we wended our way thither
from the railway station. A silvery haze en-
veloped the landscape in a mysterious veil. All
nature was hushed; the only signs of life abroad
were the glinting fire-flies that flashed their
brilliancy athwart the feathery fields of maize.

Suddenly we heard the low murmur of many
voices; a bar of light lay across our road. It
proceeded from the open door of a little way-
side chapel, which was crowded to the very
threshold with the poor contadini, who, after a
hard day's field-work, were resting themselves
by saying the rosary of the month of Mary at
the *Spedaloclo*.

When St. Francis was carried in a dying state
from Assisi to his favorite Santa Maria degli
Angeli, it was at this leper-hospital, where he
had often tended the wretched inmates, that he
told his bearers to halt and turn his face towards
his beloved birthplace. There, raising his hands,
he prayed aloud for God to bless Assisi; for that
hence would issue many champions of the holy
faith. On the front of the little chapel is still
to be seen a fresco, representing the saint with
uplifted hands in the act of blessing. Looking
now in the same direction, we see the fortress-
crowned hill and city, probably with much the
same distant aspect as in his day, except that
there were fewer campaniles then, and the glori-
ous *Sacro Convento* was not yet conceived. Now
it is the one object that attracts the eye, and
thrills the soul with pious memories of the mil-
lions of pilgrims whose hearts bowed down with
holy joy at the sight of those serried arches that
buttress round a mausoleum worthy of one of
the greatest reformers the world ever saw. Yet,
after studying the life of the saint, one cannot
help feeling that this sepulchre was not the one
St. Francis would have chosen for himself. By
some historiographers we are told that, out of
humility, the saint desired to be buried near the
spot, because the jutting hill was called the
"Devil's Neck," and was the place where male-
factors were executed; others say the edifice
was erected here because, when Pope Gregory
IX. gave orders for a splendid church to be built
in honor of the holy saint, this was the most
eligible site that could be found near the city.

The vast structure looks most imposing from
the country; the great church seems enshrined
amid the mass of conventual buildings, and the
jolly bell-tower lifts its beacon head proudly
over all. In an artistic sense, no church in the
world can compare with San Francesco; its
walls were covered over with pictured scenes
from his life by the pioneers of painting; many
are dimmed by neglect and damp, but enough
still remain to form a precious museum for the
edification and instruction of modern artists.

There are both interior and exterior stairs
leading from the upper to the under church; the
declivity of the mountain, on which the build-
ings stand, being so abrupt as to admit of all
three churches having entrances from the ter-
race hill. The middle church, though obscurely
lighted, has an unspeakably beautiful aspect
in the perspective of its gloomy aisles; its great
altar is jealously shut-in with high railing of
antique iron tracery. It was beneath this altar
that the remains of St. Francis were found in
the year 1818. Incredible as it may appear,
that though during his short career more than
ten thousand disciples had entered his order;
and that even during his life pilgrims came
from afar to visit his hermitage, and that this
church was built expressly in his honor and for
his sepulchre, his remains having been removed
there, in great pomp about eighteen years
after his death,—yet for more than six hundred

years the exact spot of his burial-place was only
conjectured. Many attempts had been made
from time to time to discover it; some pre-
suming it was under the altar of the upper
church; still, the constant tradition always
pointed to that of the lower.

In 1818 the last excavations were made, and
carried on for twenty nights. They quarried
through the foundations of solid masonry, and
at last came to a plain square massive stone
coffin. Piercing a hole through the thick slab,
they could perceive human remains, and con-
cluded they had arrived at the object of their
search. Above the lid, and soldered to it, was a
heavy grating of iron. This was detached, and
several savans, doctors, &c. were called upon to
certify to the character of these remains. They
judged them to be the bone of a man, but no-
thing was found to prove that these were the
remains of the saint; but the circumstance of
the situation coinciding with the tradition, and
the security with which the sarcophagus was
imbedded with the solid earth, led to that con-
clusion.

Some old coins, much defaced, were found
close to the body; also a few beads, which might
be those of the rosary invented by his friend St.
Dominic.

The precious remains were carefully en-
shrined in a double casket, and when the pre-
sent crypt was excavated, partly from the foun-
dations of the upper churches and partly from
the native rock, care was taken to leave the
coffin untouched, and itself and the masonry in
which it is imbedded visible. As soon as the
crypt was finished, with solemn procession the
relics were carried through Assisi, once more
deposited in their resting-place, and therein se-
cured with three locks; the key of one being
kept by the pope, of another by the general of
the order, and of the third by the superior of the
convent.

The great convent, capable of giving roomy
habitation to 1200 monks, and on a pinch to
perhaps as many more, now shelters only
twelve of its former inmates; two for three
more are allowed to dwell there by paying rent
for their rooms—these are situated in an off
wings of the buildings. So the great refector-
ies, with corresponding kitchens close at hand,
where, no doubt, many a savoury mess was con-
cocted on festival-days, no longer resound to the
clinking of platters, or the sonorous voice of the
frate letters.

Diamally echo our solitary footsteps along the
endless corridors of the dormitories. We peep
into some of the cells, and find them large airy
rooms opening on balconies that command an
extensive view of the Umbrian valleys, with
town-speckled mountains in the distance. The
refectories beneath us also open on a wide
cloistered loggia that runs round nearly the
whole building. There are three or four interior
square cloisters besides—one, I fancy, that is
rarely seen by strangers; and the most pictur-
esque of all is, or was, the Campo Santo. But
the quiet beauty of the verdant shade, if pos-
sible, increases the painful impression made by
seeing ricks of skulls and dead-men's bones
piled up against the walls; some skeletons en-
tire, others minus this part or that; others
clothed with a leathery substance that once was
flesh and blood; scraps of shrouds, of hair, of
ribbon, thrown pell-mell on the heap. Such
disregard for the remains of the "faithful de-
parted," of those "we have loved and lost,"
must produce the reverse of a salutary effect on
humanity in general. Many are the saints and
frat-side martyrs who have never been canon-
ized. We might at least so far respect their
remains as to let them lie quietly in their
graves.

II.

An iron-shod alpenstock was the pilgrim's
staff that aided our weary limbs on the rugged
road to the Carceri, or primitive hermitage,
where St. Francis was wont to retire to meditate
in solitude.

The way was long, the mountain steep—a real
stony mountain; not like those blooming Swit-
zer hills, where plateau of flower-decked mea-
dows are terraced one above the other. Here
were no "purling streams," no mossy bowers,
no pines, no meadows: a barren mountain—
fruitless, flowerless.

The day was dark and sultry. The valley be-
neath, clothed with glossy mulberry, trailing
vine, and silvery olive, steamed with a grayish
mist. On turning a shoulder of the mountain,
below us we saw the gorge of a mountain tor-
rent. Its friendly sides gave shelter to a grove
of trees still gladome with the tender hues of
spring. We pass through a doorless gateway,
and after some hundred yards, in answer to our
ring, the door of the hermitage is opened to us.

We enter a small paved court, and Fra Rocco
welcomes us to the Carceri. To give a pen-and-
ink picture of the establishment is impossible.
It is just a few bricks and mortar fastened on
the face of an almost perpendicular rock, to
help out the original refuge of St. Francis in the
natural rock itself. Before us is a very small
dingy chapel hollowed in the rock. Over the
altar is a miraculous image of our Saviour on
the cross. The good frate told us that he him-
self had witnessed prodigies performed in its
presence. A few steps below is another little
chapel, where is preserved an extremely ancient
picture of the Madonna and Child; the same
which was cherished by St. Francis himself.
Down again some steep and narrow steps out in
the rock we come to the oratory of the saint,
and see the stone on which he slept. It is now
protected by an iron rail, placed there by St.

Bernardino of Sienna. Over the altar is the
wooden crucifix St. Francis always carried on
his person. Many wonderful legends are told of
all these images, very touching and beautiful,
but which, luckily for some, are not articles of
faith.

How appropriate is the name Carcere, or
prison! Few prisons, let us hope, are as damp,
as dismal, as gloomy. Yet so natural and primi-
tive are they, that, oblivious of the lapse of six
hundred years, the mind easily pictures to itself
"Il Serafico" rapt in ecstasy in this dim dun-
geon.

Passing through a cleft of the rock, we stand
on a ledge, and see before us the identical flex-
tree to whose warbling inmates St. Francis is
said to have preached his famous sermon. A
circuitous path leads to the other grottoes, where
the disciples of "Il Serafico," after discovering
his retreat, insisted on sharing his solitude.
These cells are fissures or ledges of rock; such
as that of St. Kevin and others nearer home.
Our simple-minded guide makes us quite fam-
iliar with the stories of brothers Elia, Egido, &c.

In contrast to the burning mountain-side, the
air here in this ravine is cool, almost chilly.
Beautiful wild-flowers grow on the mossy banks.
As I gather some, Fra Rocco told me that when
Monsignor Wiseman (pronounced Vissman)
visited the Carceri many years ago, the frate
was surprised to see him take out his knife and
dip up the flower-roots, and asked him why he
did it. Monsignor Wiseman answered that he
would plant the roots in pots, and carry them
with him to England; for that the ground in
which they had grown was *terra sancta*.

In truth a holy repose and sanctity dwells in
this spot, imbued with hallowed memories.

Many yards beneath us, in the very bed of the
mountain torrent, was planted a garden of
lettuce. We wondered at the imprudence of
planting them where the first heavy shower of
rain must necessarily carry them all away.

"O," said Fra Rocco, "that is the most won-
derful thing of all! Above us you may perceive
how the mountains converge together into a
funnel-shape, so that, naturally, this torrent is
the only outlet for all the water that falls from
them. Well, the loud raging of this torrent used
to disturb the meditations of St. Francesco and
his followers so much, that he prayed to God to
stop its flowing. From that hour to this no
water ever runs in this channel except on the
eve of some great demonstration of God's anger.
So sure is it, that we have orders to send word
immediately to the holy father in Rome, who
gets prayers offered up in all the churches. The
last time it rushed down, carrying all before it,
was in 1853; and before that, in 1832. On one
occasion it was the forerunner of the cholera
which broke out in these provinces, to which
numbers of the inhabitants fell victims. Close
following the other occasion came a terrible
earthquake that destroyed many churches and
buildings, though few lives were lost."

"But, mio padre, where does all the rain that
falls on these mountains escape to?"

With a shrug of the shoulders: "Eh! oh! lo
sa? It goes into the ground, and there's an end
to it."

After a refreshing drink from the holy well,
much pleased with our visit to the prisons, we
took leave of our amiable guide, who seemed
the happiest of the happy in his solitary den.

III.

How long after the death of St. Francis his
followers adhered literally to his precept and
practice of holy poverty, it is hard to say; but,
to have an idea of what that poverty was,
carried out *au pied de la lettre*, one must visit
the little convent of St. Damiano, lying away
beyond the town of Assisi, in a nook of the hill-
side. This was the convent founded by St.
Clare and her sister St. Agnes, two rich young
virgins, who, inspired by the preaching of St.
Francis, adopted the rules of his order, received
the veil at St. Mary of the Angels, and estab-
lished themselves here, where they soon had
many followers.

We are shown the choir, with its original
seats and kneeling-boards, than which nothing
can be harder, or plainer, or poorer; the dormi-
tory, where the nuns slept on pallets laid on the
floor; the refectory, with its groined ceiling,
dark with the smoke of centuries—precious in
artistic eyes for its Rembrandtish tints of golden
brown. Padre Felice points out to us that the
seats, with wooden backs high against the wall,
are those of St. Clare's time; but that the tables
had been removed or mended, but always in the
same form. He says the refectory has been in
daily use ever since; and we see on the bare
boards three mugs, platters, &c. for the few
inmates that are left.

In the poor little church is preserved with
great veneration the crucifix from which issued
the command: "Go, Francesco, and rebuild my
church!" which order Francesco receiving
literally, went back to his father's house, to
a quantity of plate, linen, &c., sold them, and
brought the proceeds to the Augustinian monks
who then inhabited the convent. The monks
refusing the money procured in this manner,
he threw the purse in through the window and
ran away.

In after-times this injunction to St. Francis
was understood in a spiritual sense; for abuses
he was destined to reform had crept in and cast
obliquity on the holy church. We may still see
the famous fresco, in the upper church of the
Sacro Convento, that represents the saint
exerting all his strength to support the Vatican,
which is falling to pieces.

From San Miano, as the Assisians call it, to
Gli Angeli, it is a good long walk on a hot sum-
mer's day; a short cut across the fields was
most desirable. Kind Padre Felice came down
the road to put us in the right track. Just as we
were saying a "few last words," a beggar-
woman, who had followed us in the hopes of a
mezzo batocco, cried out, "*Il serpe!*" and cross-
ing the road to close where we stood, came the
huge creature, or what appeared as such to our
unaccustomed eyes. It was fully a yard and a
half long and thick in proportion, and surely
was not an ugly object, with its glossy skin and
brilliant speckles. Still, its evil repute and the
silent swiftness with which it writhed across the
dusty road, transfixed us with horror. Not a
pleasant introduction that to a ramble through
corn-furrows. Some way on we asked a farmer,
were there many serpents in the fields. He
answered: Not many, but that we had better
keep to the road as soon as we came to it; a
piece of advice we followed with implicit con-
fidence.

The church of Santa Maria degli Angeli seems
capacious enough to embosom the multitudes of
pilgrims that used to throng its aisles each year
on the 2d of August. Under the dome stands
the little church that is quite large enough to
accommodate the ordinary congregation. The
walls of this sanctuary are left in their integral
simplicity, except where the gables are painted,
one by Perugino, the other by Overbeck, his
modern German imitator.

If one may say so, the whole life of St. Fran-
cis is contained in this oratory. It was his
favorite house of prayer, and the spot where
he was favored with many visions. As we
entered, a young monk was saying mass at the
altar, who might be taken for "Il Serafico"
himself—so mortified was his countenance, so
pious his demeanor. As St. Francis was one
night praying in this chapel feeling much com-
forted in spirit, he was suddenly seized with
compassion for the rest of mankind less favored
than he, and he prayed to God to have mercy
on his people; and in memory of the great peace
that had fallen on himself, that God would grant
the same to others, and that for this purpose he
would accord a general pardon to all who at a
certain season should visit this little church,
having previously worthily received the sacra-
ments of penance and the eucharist. The pope
being at Perugia at the time, St. Francis went
to him and obtained from him the bull of the
plenary indulgence given to the faithful who fulfil
the above conditions on the 2d of August. This was
the origin of the renewed *perdono* of Assisi,
to which tens of thousands of pilgrims flocked each
year from the uttermost bounds of Christendom.
The Italian government have discountenanced
such assemblages for the last few years.

Of the original habitations of St. Francis and
his disciples, nothing now remains; indeed,
they were often only huts made with boughs of
trees. A little chapel is built over the spot where
the great reformer breathed his last; and at
some distance is another, built over a sort of
cellar, where he slept.

It is recorded that on one occasion, being trou-
bled with temptations of the flesh, he threw
himself on a bed of brambles, but the brambles
suddenly changed into blooming roses; and
close by we gathered a bouquet from the descen-
dants of those same roses, which never bear a
thorn!

STOP THAT.

One-half the world doesn't know how the
other half lives, and a recent commentator adds
doesn't care. It seems incredible that the prac-
tices our correspondent urges shall be discon-
tinued can exist, but we give the "farmer's
wife" a hearing.

Stop putting lard into your butter; if we
must eat hog's fat, pray give it to us pure and
not mixed with rancid butter.

Girl, stop dipping your fingers in the bucket
of milk and wetting the cow's teats; of all dirty
habits this is the worst.

Wives, stop setting your cream jar in the
family living room to make the cream sour.

Husbands, stop hanging your socks on that
same cream jar to dry over night.

Women, stop putting your butter in the back
bed-room to stay till you are ready to go to
market.

Ladies, stop holding your noses when you go
into your cellars to attend to your milk. You
might as well smell the rat and the mold as to
eat it daily in your butter and cream.

Women, stop telling fibs when you take your
butter to the store. Did anybody ever know a
woman to sell butter over a week old? Stop
coloring your butter with annatto, and then ask-
ing folks if they can't taste the blue grass in it.
If you will stop all these things the next time I
write I shall tell you something pretty.

THE WRONG PLACE.—Anna Brewster, writ-
ing from Rome, says: "A Protestant gentleman
inquired for the Protestant Church last Sunday,
and was directed outside the Porta del Popolo.
There he went, and looked round for the church.
Seeing '*Spaccio di Vino*' over a door, he said to
himself, 'Ah! that must be the place. I sup-
pose *Spaccio di Vino* means Divine Space, a
very pretty title. Who but Italians would have
thought of it?' He entered; and to his surprise
found himself in a wine garden. Hereafter he
will understand enough Italian to know that
Spaccio di Vino means 'wine shop.'"