

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

FRANCE.

All the eyes seem to have only one business—to see the official organs of the French Government have been too eager to undecipher the world as to the object of the Commission called together to inquire into the conditions of the Imperial army. France is not going to disarm. She has no intention whatever to reduce her land or sea forces by one single man. An increase of the Reserve, a mobilization of the National Guard, may be in contemplation but the 400,000 of the standing army are deemed to be rather below than above the mark, and people must prepare rather for an increase than for a reduction in the war budget. The example of France would leave little choice for the policy of other Powers, if these needed any stimulus in their military preparations. But the mania for 'big battalions' has spread to all States, large and small.—Russia is swelling her ranks by 300,000 recruits; Prussia is organizing four new corps; Austria is remodelling and reforming; every where new weapons are tested, new systems discussed. The art of killing threatens to become the exclusive industry of Europe.—Times.

The Emperor is aware of the defects in the existing system of organization in France, and of the superiority for a military nation of that of Prussia. He has profoundly studied the latter, and from the admiration which he expresses of it in his published essay, 'Military Organization of France,' it would not be surprising if his plan were based upon it. In that paper, after explaining the peculiar organization of the Prussian army after the defeat of Jena, he observes that the important question is to light upon an organization which shall furnish at the moment of danger thousands upon thousands of disciplined men; and which during peace shall press lightly on the Budget, and deprive industry of as few hands as possible. This difficult question is, in his opinion, solved 'materially and morally' by the Prussian system; for not only is it advantageous in a military point of view, but it is worthy of admiration on higher grounds, for it removes every barrier between the citizen and the soldier, and it exalts the sentiment of each individual by making him understand that his first duty is the defence of his country. In this consisted the difference between the landwehr of Prussia and the National Guard of France. In the former it was the whole people who were armed for the defence of the country; in the latter it was merely the bourgeoisie, for the defence of their personal interests. The bourgeoisie do not seem to stand very high in the estimation of their Sovereign.

Napoleon I., in whose head all great thoughts had their germ (his nephew recounts in the same essay), had not less than 20 draughts of a plan for forming three bands of the National Guard read in the Council of State. Events prevented him from executing his design; and, obliged to attend to other objects, he saw this plan escape him which he knew to be calculated to save France from all reverses. He used to say to the Council of State 'Carry out the basis of the National Guard; let each citizen know his post in case of need. Let M. Cambaceres, who is sitting there, be ready to take up his musket when the danger is imminent, and then you will have a nation built up of solid masonry, and capable of defying time and men. I am intractable on the question of exemptions—exemption is a crime; how can you have the conscience to force one man to be killed to the detriment of the other? I am not quite sure but I should exempt my own son.'

Prince Napoleon is probably much nearer than we are to the commentary of facts upon the policy he favored when he declared, at the dinner-table of his friend—M. Emile Girardin—that Austria ought to be stamped out of existence as a Power friendly to the Holy See, that the Catholic Church must be swept away, and that France ought to side with Prussia as the fatherland of 'the great Luther.'—When the two great military Powers of Northern Europe shall unfurl their banner, and let slip the dogs of war, is, of course, a secret they will keep to themselves until the hour for action arrives. That they mean mischief is demonstrated by the new levy of four hundred thousand recruits in Russia. The influence of England, except for the purpose of inciting rebellion and encouraging revolution on the continent, having become a matter of history, we suppose the Prusso-Russian conspiracy will let us alone, except so far as interference may be necessary, to push aside our pretensions to 'rule the waves' in the Mediterranean. But the French Empire had better look to its defences. At Sadowa two great blows were struck, and the victor annihilated at the same moment Austrian supremacy in Germany, and French ascendancy on the Continent. We said so on the instant, and we do not in the least apprehend that time will show we were wrong.—Weekly Register.

Toulon, Nov. 10.—The French iron-clad squadron has received orders to be in readiness for sailing on the 28th inst. It is stated that the squadron will bring back the French troops from Rome.

The *Monde*, of Paris, the principal organ of the French Catholic party, states that the Pope will not leave Rome unless forced to do so by a popular demonstration, and then proceeds to say: 'Every country would receive Pius IX. But Pius IX. is not simply a king who seeks an asylum; wherever he resides there will be governed the Church. The Sovereign Pontiff will proceed to the country where he expects to enjoy the greatest liberty. And if many Catholics now have their eyes on England, it is because England has often served as an asylum to the victims of fate or circumstances. She alone has preserved the right of asylum, that ancient privilege of the Catholic ages. In 1791 and 1792 she received the members of the French clergy who were driven by the storms of the Revolution upon her coasts, and treated them generously. Recollections of this kind are not effaced. Owing to the absence of the systems of centralization which obtain in other European States, Malta, although a British possession, is yet an Italian and a Catholic country. Pius IX. would, by residing there, be as close as possible to the States of the Church. It possesses a friendly population. Spain and France, owing to their revolutions, are no longer in a position to receive the Sovereign Pontiff. Every inch of their territories are under the authority of Government. In former days, the towns, the communities, being possessed of sovereign rights, hastened to welcome the exiled Popes. In the fourth century the Papacy sought refuge in Avignon. But that territory no longer belongs to it. All despoiled as he is, the Pope is still a powerful guest, and one who would cause a good deal of anxiety to many governments. In order to enter into Spain or France, he would require a permit. He enters, it may be said, into Malta of his own right, and a special law would be required to expel him.

PARIS, Nov. 12.—M. Charles Duvergier, whose name was so prominently before the public some thirty-four years ago as one of the chiefs of the St. Simonians, died on Saturday. The pontiff of the sect, Pere Enfantin, died just two years and a half ago. St. Simonism, which filled a large space in the events which troubled the early years of the Orleans Government, is now completely forgotten; and the survivors of the enthusiastic Brotherhood of Menimontant, whose ambition was to found a new religion, and to change the moral character of the world, have cooled down into ordinary mortals, cured of their ancient fervor, shrewd, and calculating and worldly; living like people who never dream of changing the face of society, and never allowing self-denial to interfere with the chances of material prosperity. M. Duvergier was one of those who, with the pontiff or 'pere,' as Enfantin loved to designate himself, and as his disciples designated him,

were tried by the Paris Assize Court in 1832 on two charges, which brought them within the 291st article of the Penal Code—first for holding unauthorized meetings consisting of more than twenty persons; secondly, for outrages on public morals. The trial, which excited much interest in Paris, and even in the Departments lasted two days. The accused were found guilty by the jury, and Enfantin and Duvergier sentenced to one year's imprisonment and 1000 fine, and two others to 500, but without imprisonment.

The London *Pall Mall Gazette* contains the following:—

"It is a curious illustration of the strange notions prevalent in France in reference to the Emperor Napoleon, that among the workmen of Paris there is a story that he has been dead a fortnight, and was personated at the review on Monday by a well-known tent maker. There are three men in Paris, it seems, who very closely resemble his Majesty—one being the tent maker in question, another a wood-ranger in the Bois de Boulogne, and the third the keeper of a dancing-room at Mount Parnasse."

ITALY.

Piedmont.—Florence, Nov. 9.—At a time when the financial future of Italy certainly looks gloomy enough, and when some bright and hopeful signs are greatly wanted to dispel ill-omened rumors and depressing anticipations, few things could afford greater satisfaction to her friends and more reasonable confidence to capitalists than a complete reform in the administration and in the system of accounts here in force. The excess of Government servants is a crying evil.

The number of clerks in the Italian public offices is incredible to any who have not actually ascertained it. There are European countries with a population half as large again as Italy which have a much less numerous administrative staff. One has but to look at the great official hives out of which at certain hours the mingled bees and drones do swarm—the latter, it is to be feared, not unfrequently in the majority.

Then the Piedmontese system of accounts has been spread throughout Italy, in most cases replacing better ones. Here in Tuscany, under the old Government, accounts were kept by double entry, and excellently well kept. In the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, whatever the corruptions and vices of the Bourbon Government the public accounts were at least so kept that the Finance Minister could at any moment ascertain his position, which is very far indeed from being the case with the Finance Ministers of Victor Emmanuel. The high prices maintained by the Neapolitan funds spoke in favour of the financial system of that kingdom. Your Naples correspondent can set me right if I am speaking from erroneous information in giving this much credit to a Government in many respects so unpraiseworthy. In Italy, as at present organized, no Finance Minister ever knows his exact position.—The spectacle presented by each gentleman who in turn assumes the reins of the department is that of a hapless fly hopelessly struggling in the tangled web of a vast circumlocution office. Finance Ministers frequently change in Italy, and the reason is obvious. No man could long hold such an office and live.

It may seem incredible when told of a country of whose financial straits we hear and know so much; but it is nevertheless a fact that important branches of the revenue are habitually greater in arrears simply by reason of the defective system of administration and collection. At the present moment this is the case with the income-tax, which has not been got in since the first half of 1865. The expense of collecting many of the taxes is vastly greater than it should be.

ITALIAN PROSPERITY.—A letter in the *Daily News* gives us the following picture of the happy condition realised in Italy. 'The cost of living in Italy has, elsewhere, immensely increased—free (?) Government is everywhere expensive Government—the acquisition of unity has largely added to the ordinary expenses of free Government in Italy. To heavy taxation has now come a forced loan, and the issue of ten millions sterling of paper money. The manager of a large concern at Milan told me that under the Austrians his taxes were 600 francs a year; last year they had risen to 6,000 francs; this year he has 16,000 francs to pay.'

The *Nazione* of Nov. 4 announces that an official from the Ministry of Finance at Rome has gone to Paris to treat upon the question of the Pontifical debt.

Florence, Nov. 12.—Intelligence received here from Rome states that it has been decided at a secret Consistory that if the Pope be obliged to quit Rome he will seek an asylum in Malta. The ecclesiastical authorities of that island have received semi-official notification of this decision.

Rome Nov. 11.—Mr. Gladstone has written a letter to the official journal denying the account of his interview with the Pope published by the *Corriere Italiano* and other journals.

The news published by some Continental journals of a hostile manifestation made by the Roman Legion on the occasion of its receiving the Pontifical flag is entirely devoid of foundation.

THE PONTIFICAL DEBT.—The *Opinione* of Florence states that the negotiations which are pending between the French and Italian Governments had not advanced a step in consequence of a want of accord on the subject of arrears of interests. France persists in demanding that the Government of Florence should take to its charge, in addition to its share of the Pontifical debt, based on the proportion of the population, the interest from the date of the annexation until the present day. The Italian Government which has never refused to come to an accord relative to the Roman debt, simply observed that it did not think itself obliged to take the arrears to its charge.

I open my letter to add that we have another gleam of hope. It lies in the matter of the pontifical debt. Italy agrees to pay seventeen millions a year at the debt of the Provinces, but she will not pay the arrears of the same. Italian patriotism is very strong, and it would take much blood to get together eighty-five millions of francs—to be handed over to the Papal Government in order to strengthen its means of defence against Italy. But France says she will not go from Rome if the debt is not paid. So that here is another chance that Mr. Gladstone, Lord Russell, and the rest of the non-Catholic visitors will be balked of the sport which the *Times* has promised them. It is said that Mr. Gladstone has called on the King of Naples. Believing Mr. Gladstone to be a gentleman, I disbelieve the report.—*Cor. of Weekly Register*.

KINDOM OF NAPLES.—It would appear impossible, says the *Monde*, that in the middle of the nineteenth century, in the midst of civilised Europe, such excesses could be committed as those of which the Piedmontese Government is guilty at Palermo.—Every day new facts come to light. We were aware that some poor fellows had been beaten in the quarter of the Questina, in order that disclosures might be wrung from them. It is known now that there were priests and monks among them, who had been arrested either on suspicion, or on the information of the first comer. They were subjected to most barbarous treatment, before they were taken to the Vicaria. The sacristan of the monastery of the Sette Angeli was shot on the 23rd, on the entry of the troops, being suspected of having taken part in the revolt. The unfortunate man had lain hidden during the six days fighting. The steward of the same convent had his head broken with a blow from a crozier; the nuns were mercilessly and brutally driven out.

That the rebellion was partly the consequence of the suppression of the religious houses, is possible; but it is a calumny to say that it was or gained in the convents. There are more convents in Sicily

than in any other country. In consequence of the French invasion, and at the time of the Cisalpine and Parthenopean republics, religious corporations were abolished over almost the whole of the rest of Italy. The revolution did not extend to Sicily; it was in that country alone that they remained intact; they form the principal wealth of that country at the present day; they are connected with a great number of various interests, and thousands of every rank in life draw their means of support from convents alone. When these poor people perceived that they were ruined in consequence of the suppression of the convents, they took up arms at once along with the other insurgents, preferring to meet death in the shape of a bullet, than endure the cruel sufferings of destitution, and see their families starve to death. This is one cause of the rising, and as long as the Government keep on the plundering game, Sicily will always be a hotbed of insurrection, and the most festering sore of unfortunely united Italy. It is well-known that the Capuchins and Franciscans distribute soup and bread daily among all the poor who present themselves. Who will feed all these people now? Who knows how many of them will not die of hunger? Nor is this all; the monks are actually forbidden to wear their ordinary dress, and all those who belong to the districts of the Interior have been ordered to leave Palermo, and repair to their homes. Such is the meaning of liberty under the Piedmontese Government. A monk is not even free to choose his own domicile.

Another writer describing the atrocities of the Piedmontese mercenaries, says:—

"Unhappily, such are our 'daily instances' in Palermo. My own aunts, aged and venerable ladies and vowed nuns, were dragged forcibly from their monastery, and, without any regard to their high rank and advanced age, driven into the public streets. They took refuge with my mother, and I found them there with my sisters, praying in the family chapel for the mercy of God on their enemies and their unhappy country. I called on a friend later in the day, and while we were talking, there passed a convoy of forty noble nuns, escorted by soldiers, who were conducting them as if they had been malefactors, and with as little respect, to the monastery of Sta. Rosalia. The people, at this sight, trembled with anger, and I expected every moment that a revolt would break out."

As for the arrests, perquisitions, and fusillades, I do not attempt to relate them. The prisons are full to overflowing, and it will be impossible for me to remain above a few days, as, being a noble, it is certain that I should be denounced as 'a clerical' or a Bourbonist."

We profess a total want of any sympathy with the Sicilians. They were always rebelling against the Bourbons, and they threw up their hats for Garibaldi when his buccannering expedition landed at Palermo by the infamous aid of the British Admiral. They helped greatly to the revolutionising of Italy and the aggrandisement of the House of Savoy. We warned them at the time that they would find the little finger of the Usurper heavier than the loins of their lawful King. Among every order and class in the island there was disloyalty, and they are now paying dearly for it. They have been taught the difference between 'Bomba' and Tromba, and they evidently repent of their former turbulence, treachery and treason. They find by bitter experience that 'United Italy' does not imply Sicilian happiness;—and that, in overturning the Bourbon dynasty, they have exchanged a mild regime for a ferocious tyranny. Victor Emmanuel will extinguish their volcanic fire with his own blood, and to prepare Europe for this, he employs his Commissioner to libel them.—*Weekly Register*.

SWITZERLAND.

Another anti-Catholic quarrel seems springing up in Switzerland. The following intelligence reaches us by a telegram dated Berne, Thursday. 'Complaints having been made against the Government of Valais on account of Jesuits having been employed in that canton, the Federal Government has notified its intention of sending Federal commissioners into Valais unless an explanation be forthcoming within ten days.'

AUSTRIA.

It is now beyond all doubt that an attempt was lately made upon the life of the Emperor of Austria at Prague. The assassin is a tailor, and the motive is understood to be political. Though Count Bismarck has trampled upon Prussian liberties and German rights, and upon all occasions hinted defiance and contempt at the German Liberals and republicans, yet they excuse his misdeeds because they say that he is doing their work better and more effectually than they could do it themselves, by destroying Conservatism and uprooting the principles of loyalty, order and legality in Germany. But they hate the Emperor of Austria, because his policy is repugnant to their views. It is the man who makes war upon false pretences, upon Thrones, expels dynasties, plunders, and forcibly levies upon independent states, that does the work of the Revolutionists while he flatters himself that he is creating a great empire, and the Revolutionists bear with him and applaud him, knowing that he is mortal, and that, when his sun has set, their day will begin to dawn. But they cannot abide the respecter of others' rights, the conservator of order and the opponent of anarchy; and, while they cheer the Prussian Premier, they plot against the life of the Emperor of Austria. Fortunately on this the second occasion, when so foul an attempt was made, a British subject chanced to be present and to avert the blow. On the first occasion, many years ago, and early in the troubled career of Francis Joseph, it was an Irishman—now Count O'Donell—who saved his life; and on the late occasion a similar good fortune befell an Englishman, Mr. Palmer, who seized the assassin while presenting his loaded pistol at the unsuspecting Emperor. It has been reported that the assassin is insane, but his manner was not that of a lunatic; on the contrary, he seems to have taken his measures with great deliberation and to have fixed upon a time and place (when the Emperor was leaving the theatre) most suitable to his purpose and most likely to favor his own escape.—*Weekly Register*.

VIENNA, Nov. 11.—The semi-official *Vienna Journal* of to-day publishes a leading article on the situation of affairs in the East, in which it says:—'Austria cannot but look upon any attempt at a forcible revolution with sorrow and anxiety. It is to be hoped that the united action of the peaceably disposed Powers of Europe will suffice to maintain peace in the interior of Turkey. At the same time it is clear that every Christian country would hesitate to proceed by compulsory or warlike measures against the Christian populations of the Turkish empire. Austria especially is able only to employ earnest representations and peaceful mediation when peace is endangered in the East. This course is necessitated, not only by motives of justice and policy but also by the affinity of race which exists between some of the Austrian populations and their kinsmen of Turkish territory.'

The article then advises the Porte to yield to the demands of Servia, and adds:—

'The best solution of the Eastern question would probably be the maintenance of the tie uniting the Christian population with the Turkish Government, which would not interfere with their independence at home, and yet would secure that independence against aggression from abroad. If the Christian races could be moderate in their demands, and if the Porte would adopt to political course of letting those whom it can no longer retain under its dominion depart without a struggle, dangers threatening to shake the peace of Europe might be averted or, at least, confined to the disaffected country.'

RUSSIA.

The publication of an edict ordering a general levy in Russia, by which 400,000 men will be added

to the Russian army and the marine be likewise increased, has produced no small sensation on the Continent; and especially in France. Coupled with the rumour of an Alliance between the courts of Berlin and St. Petersburg, this levy is thought to be most menacing to the peace of Europe.

The correspondent of the *Globe* writes:—

'The levy for her army is not the only measure of a warlike character Russia has taken. She has stationed large masses of her troops that they could be collected near her extreme western frontier in a very short time; she has besides, as I understand, already 100,000 men armed with, and practised in the use of, breech loaders; and she is getting more such guns, and is drilling more men to the handling of them every week.'

SICILIAN SANCTUARIES.

THE CHURCHES OF PALERMO.

The Norman churches in Sicily form an epoch in the history of ecclesiastical architecture, whose connection with preceding and subsequent phases may be interestingly traced. Itself a link between the Byzantine and Roman, with decided features of the Saracenic, this severely beautiful and noble style fills imposingly the interval between those Basilica types and the highest development of Christian expression in architecture—the Medieval Germanic or Gothic. In western Europe, with the sole exception of Venice, the Constantinian Basilica had been exclusively followed from its Roman model; for eight centuries before Sicily, under her Roman rulers, first displayed the and harmonious union of the acute arch and ornamentation borrowed from the Mosque, with the leading features of both the Byzantine and Roman temple, the nave and aisles conforming to the latter, the inner and more sacred part, comprising transepts, tribunes, hemicycles, or apses, to the former type, as, not unnaturally, the Greek still predominated in this island over the Roman influence. Here may that disputed question, the origin of the pointed arch, be considered with ample illustration, as, from A.D. 331 to the beginning of the eleventh century, the Arabs left a succession of monuments presenting that form afterwards adopted by the Normans and dominant till the middle of the fourteenth century, when, singularly enough, this characteristic feature was abandoned in Sicily two centuries and a half earlier than in the rest of Europe. We may be surprised by finding such an authority as Agincourt in doubt whether the Pointed arch really was introduced into Sicily by the Arabs or by the Normans imitating the structures of the former; and this learned critic goes so far as even to suggest that, in the Saracenic palace, La Zisa, it may possibly have been added by later occupants after the Conquest, though a feature so conspicuous, both in the interior and exterior of the beautiful building so called, happily preserved with all its Oriental richness of mouldings and fretwork, near Palermo. Turning to the Christian temples of the Normans, we find, in their primitive state, a simplicity now to a degree impaired by additions, though, generally speaking, ecclesiastical antiquities in Sicily have suffered far less from the modernization of recent times than those in Italy. Only one altar originally stood in the centre of the three apses invariably opening from the transepts; and thus was preserved a singleness and concentration in the sacred action, as in its locality, very different from the confused, overloaded arrangements, the countless altars, redundant and often tasteless decoration in modern Italian churches. The celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice being thus confined to one spot, the idea of localized sanctity was perhaps more impressively conveyed. The single sacred table being in the centre apse, that on the right served for the *diaconicum*, or table of sacramental vessels; that on the left for the *prothesis*, where the offerings of bread and wine were deposited when still made by the faithful, true to the observances of primitive Christianity. Not only the acute arch (yet unknown in other European countries, save where introduced by Moslem conquerors), but the rich Arabesque work among accessories of mosaic or moulding, was a Saracenic feature that continued conspicuous in the Norman structures for the most part raised in Sicily by active artists, whom Serradifallo supposes exclusively employed by the new masters of this island. Politically assimilated to the rest of the Greek empire from the time of Belisarius's triumph over the Ostrogoths, Sicily became in like manner united ecclesiastically with Constantinople; so that, after the final separation of the Byzantine and Roman church systems, she, too, remained schismatically severed from Rome, the Greek rite alone performed at her altars, and all connection with Latin Christianity, by worship or discipline, suspended.

At the transition point that brought back Sicily, through means of the Norman, out of the Oriental into the western family of Christian Europe, two styles by natural historic result, became blended in her sacred architecture, alike evincing her Greek and Roman relations. Of this the earliest example is in the church beyond the walls of Palermo, St. Giovanni de' Leprosi, the first raised by the Normans here, 1081, where we see the principal body, or nave, at a lower level, the inner, or transept, raised by steps, with three apses and cupolas precisely as the same features are found in all conspicuous Sicilian churches that rose at brief intervals in the years succeeding that of St. Michele, built by Robert Guiscard, 1077, between Palermo and Germin (now a ruin), the cathedrals of Cefalu, Messina, Palermo (the last raised 1185), the abbey of Monreale, 1174, and (earliest under the kings) the Palatine chapel at Palermo, begun about 1129, complete in 1139, when it was declared a papal chapel. In the last are singularly apparent and striking in effect, the blending and opposition of two principles, nave and aisles here conforming to the Roman type, with only Latin epigraphs to the mosaic figures and groups clothing their walls, while the elevated and more sacred part retains Greek characteristics, with Greek inscriptions to all its mosaics.

Never shall I forget the religious awfulness which impresses like the announcement of a Presence and Mystery, on first passing the threshold of that palatine chapel raised by the piety of Rugiero, the first Norman king. Without vastness in scale, is here attained all the effect of grandeur and solemnity, in striking proof how vain the theory that seeks sublimity in the proportions instead of the expression architectural forms are capable of conveying. That twilight dimness and antique magnificence, that gorgeous gloom and wealth of symbolism, raise to a sense of the supernatural and spiritual; while the light from those narrow painted windows reflected on the field of gold, and quaint, but majestic, mosaic figures, only allows to distinguish gradually the rich and graceful details, and the lofty, peculiarly stilted arches carry the eye a long way lines to the fretted ceiling, whose pendant stalactites of fairy-like chiselling, complete, in the whole sacred scene, a character of Oriental dreamlike grandeur. Along the marvellous surface of the roof, is carried, over twenty coffers, the Arabic inscription, in letters like those of the celebrated dalmatic of King Rugiero, now at Nuremberg; and round the drum of the cupola is a Greek epigraph, recording the erection, with the year of the world, 6651, answering (by Byzantine computation) to A.D. 1143. Similarly to the intention carried out more fully at Monreale, we see here the illustration of the entire argument of revealed religion in a vast mosaic series, representing the history of the Old Testament, in the nave; the Apostolic Acts, in the aisles; archangels, patriarchs, prophets, and martyrs, in the cupola; and the holiest personages of evangelic story in the tribune and apses, the central of which contains the colossal figure of the Saviour giving benediction; while the triumphal arch presents, above the altar, the Annunciation. Below the principal in that apse are the Virgin, St. Peter, and Mary Magdalene;

but thus introduced by departure from the earliest traditions of Norman church art, which required that St. Peter should occupy the right, St. Paul the left apse lateral to that filled by the Saviour's image. St. Paul remains in the usual location here; and Serradifallo shows that this group, under the principal figure, must have been added in the fifteenth century, when a window, formerly opening from this recess, was built up; and the figure of St. John the Baptist was then placed in the right apse instead of St. Peter, now brought, as we see, into unusual proximity with the Virgin and Magdalene in the group. Of about the same period also must be the figures of St. Gregory and St. Sylvester, which alone, in this inner section of the building, have Latin, not Greek, names inscribed. Romauld of Salerno, mentioning certain mosaics erected in this chapel under William I., may allude to those in the nave; but the figures in the sacristy, at least, must be ascribed to Rugiero I.—an origin confirmed by their resemblance to those in the Cefalu cathedral, as well as by the Greek inscription under the cupola. Moreover, by a passage describing this interior, in a sermon preached within these walls before Rugiero, by Theophanes Ceramieus, a Greek monk, who calls attention to the mosaics and to the profuse hangings of silk, interwoven with gold, that adorn their surface. This royal chapel, the only sanctuary of its date in Sicily preserved to this day in the original state, quite intact, was consecrated by the Palermitan archbishop in 1140, and is spoken of by Rugiero in a diploma of the same year, with profession of his pious motives in founding it:—"ecclesiam summa devotione fabricavit fecimus." Under the pious King William II., the Archbishop of Gualtieri erected the Cathedral of Palermo, in its original form probably more magnificent than the present, since additions and tasteless alterations have impaired the pure Norman of that pristine construction.

Whoever has sixpence is sovereign over all men—to the extent of the sixpence; he commands cook to feed him, philosophers to teach him, kings to mount guard over him, to the extent of sixpence.—*Carlyle*.

When is a fish like a bird?—When it 'takes a fly.'

To be employed is to be happy.—*Gray*.

UNITED STATES.

Will you be so good as to take a glance at our daily papers in any great commercial centre? Take our own *Republican Democrat* and *Times*. These papers go well into every family; it is understood that they are read and are meant to be read by every one that reads. Their publishers, their editors, are men of great social respectability, fathers of families themselves. You can pass over the advertisements if you please, and come to the reading matter for which these editors and publishers are directly responsible. You see what prominence is given to what is given to what is called the 'Local Department' of these sheets. What are these paragraphs? Nothing but a careful collection of all the scandals of the town. It is evident that their writers know that they are addressing a community to whom the low amours of thieves and prostitutes, the drunken quarrels and dissolute adventures of street walkers, the proceedings of the police courts, and details of every divorce suit, are of primary interest. For it is to those things that the local columns are almost wholly given up. The news is principally contained, you observe, in a telegraphic summary; interests which are moulding civilization, are dismissed with a paragraph; but the man who yields the scissors will give up whole columns to the details of a prize fight, a murder, a scandalous trial, or a detected intrigue. The most obscene recitals, you observe, seem to be carefully laid aside for the Sunday edition, that being particularly the family paper—the issue which the father will have most time to read, and which the wife and children are sure to see. Look over these daily American newspapers, and ask yourself, does the people, which by its demand, creates this supply of daily reading,—does it honor its women and children? What care for purity, what love of all those virtues whose sweet fragrance at the family hearth alone make this life tolerable, have those fathers, think you, that bring to the fore-side, and calmly see in the hands of their virgin daughters such filthy sheets as these. What should chivalry do amongst a people such as this? If our boys and girls and our women, are to know the town and its vices through the means of the press as well as any billiard marker or bar keeper in the place, in what do they need the protection of the strong arm, the reverence of the honest heart? Think you that this rising generation cannot hold its own? Do you suppose that play actors and persons who make their living as buffoons are to have a delicacy of sentiment in regard to our young women, which is scouted by the conductors of the daily press? If our young women are to be initiated into an intimate knowledge of all these things the ignorance of which was hitherto regarded as the grace of girlhood and youth,—if their delicacy of sentiment is to be disregarded daily, and ignorance of vice and crime to be made impossible, and a knowledge of the world to be the precocious accomplishment of every school boy and of Miss in her teens, why make any outcry because the negro minstrels satirize a few girls, who have been before the public in these very papers, and whose every day associates crowd the place to see them taken off, and regard the whole burlesque as the best thing of the season?—*St. Louis Guardian*.

New York, Nov. 23.—The *Herald's* Washington telegram says: The investigation going on by the Retrenchment Committee has developed facts which implicate parties occupying high and influential positions under Government in cotton frauds. A great deal of fraud, more than was at first supposed, has been practised upon the Government and on the citizens of the South by cotton agents who were in the habit of confiscating large quantities of cotton in the name of the Government, and after it had remained on their hands for a short time, they would turn it over to an outside party who sold it and divided the proceeds with the agents.

The Commissioners announce that the American canals are to be closed on the 13th Dec.

It is reported that an arrangement has been made between the government of France and the United States, that a tract of territory in Mexico shall be devoted to French colonization. It is also stated that an arrangement has been agreed upon that French bondholders shall not be disturbed in their rights.

New York, 22nd Dec.—The disease which broke out on board the ship *Mercury*, on her passage to this port, now proves to be cholera. It appears that the epidemic broke out among the passengers shortly after the vessel left Havre, and continued its ravages up to the moment when she arrived at quarantine. The disease is said to be a severe type; all symptoms show that it is Asiatic cholera.

CATHOLICISM IN THE U. STATES.—The Catholic Register of 1866 gives fifteen archbishops, thirty-four bishops, and 2,503 priests, making a total of the priesthood 2,551. There are also seven provinces and forty-three dioceses, extending to the length and breadth of the country. The diocese of Baltimore is the oldest, having been established as early 1789. No denomination is doing more in the way of education. The Catholics have 30 colleges, 28 theological seminaries, 177 male and female academies, and 624 parochial schools, making a total of 857 educational institutions. Besides these they have 171 convents, which are usually institutions of the higher elements of learning, both literary and ecclesiastical. It is doing much also in a charitable direction. It has no less than 139 hospitals for the sick, asylums for the aged, the indigent and the destitute youth. The Christian Brothers and Sisters of Charity labor in these with no other compensation than food and clothing and the satisfaction of doing good.