

things abroad and at home, to the great advantage of the former. Churches open and frequented at five or six in the morning (when I happened to be up and about, because I was travelling) and a decided air of reverence in the people, especially the females; favoured perhaps in a degree by their dress—for every third female one met was habited like a nun. Also (in another way) the state of the towns late in the evening was strikingly different from those of any of our own, greater or smaller. No ill-conditioned people about (as a general rule) and yet one could not but feel (especially as after the appearance of the Churches in the morning) that all this was the fruit of something better than mere police regulations.

To come now to my last visits. I will speak of Normandy first, because I was there first. Now, you remember my eyes are open, and my sympathies Catholic, you must allow accordingly. Yet I do not think any one could be in Normandy a week without having it forced upon him, that religion has a place in the hearts and affections, more or less, of the people, especially the poor. In England, a foreigner might certainly travel on six days in every week and consider himself in a heathen country; but you need not be abroad more than one day, and that any day, in order to find that you are among Christians! And this, after all the miserable effects of the first French Revolution, in banishing the external signs of religion—such as processions—from that country. But still there are the crucifixes, to which many pay reverence (though fewer, alas! than formerly) still all churches are open from (at least) six till twelve, and again in the evening, with a succession of edifying services, and an attendance of devout people.

I spent a Sunday at Bayeux, where I was fortunate enough to come in for the Festival of the first Bishop and Patron of the place, St. Exuperius. It is difficult to conceive a more interesting circumstance than that of a whole town engaged in the religious celebration of a holiday. It did one's heart good to hear the glee with which the people joined in the hymns descriptive of their Saint's christian achievements. The noble Cathedral was filled both at the First and Second Vespers on the Saturday and Sunday, and on the Mass on the Sunday morning. The Service was most magnificent and most edifying even to those who could not well follow it, which was our case; the chanting of the psalms was alternate (as is common in France) between the choir and the congregation; there must have been many hundreds in the nave, who took the alternate verses, and it quite reminded one of the "war" of voices, which one of the Fathers, I think, speaks of in describing the psalmody of ancient times. I do not mean that there were

not points in the service which some might lament; i. e. a lighter strain of music than was always suitable, and what seemed to us like an occasional cutting off of the verses, and substituting for them a showy organ accompaniment. I speak but of the general effect upon a stranger, which was doubtless most highly impressive; indeed the delight of being permitted, though but for one hour, to join in this psalmody, with the feeling that one was so far in active communion with the holy church throughout all the world, was in the act, and is in the retrospect, of the most inspiring kind—a momentary but absolutely transporting foretaste of that union of hearts and voices for which we all pray, and the signs of which seem to grow brighter and brighter.

My recollections of Normandy are simply favourable. The French church suffers a grievous loss in lacking the full Roman offices; and their Service labours under the farther disadvantage of diocesan varieties. Still the general features of Catholic worship are preserved; and to a stranger the celebrations are not visibly affected by these peculiarities.

I must not forget a scene at Caen. We witnessed the funeral of a person who was one of the poorest in the town, perhaps a tradesman on the smallest scale, or less. It was most pleasing to see the exceeding care with which the ceremony was conducted; both procession and service. The latter occupied nearly two hours, and seemed to consist in the full office for the dead, chanted with the utmost solemnity. The procession was every where received with great marks of reverence; all persons on foot baring their head as it passed; all vehicles stopping or slackening their pace. It might, no doubt, have been some person who was peculiarly respected; but it struck us as presenting a remarkable contrast to the funerals of the poor in this country, especially in towns. I should add, that it was at a time when some public gaieties were going on in the town.

As to the clergy, we understood that they were very strict in conduct, and generally respected. They never appear at public places of amusement, and rarely if ever dine out, except with their Bishop. This we heard at Rouen. Of course, in judging of the service abroad, an Englishman is frequently called upon to make large allowance for the peculiarity of foreign tastes and habits. I am not speaking of the dressed figures, of which however I will say, that in the present state of the popular taste, I think the authorities would be very wrong in discontinuing them; but of practices, which come quite naturally to Frenchmen, but which are exceedingly, and very properly, disgusting to us. Yet it ought to be considered, that since Frenchmen of the rank out of which the