

## IV.—THE MONTHLY CONCERT OF MISSIONS.

## PAPAL EUROPE.

It is one of the wonders of the ages that changes so radical and revolutionary should have taken place in Europe. In the age succeeding the Council of Trent, Papal Europe embraced the oldest and grandest of monarchies: the German Empire as the political and military center; France as the intellectual and social center; Spain and Portugal as the "center of expansive force"; Italy as the historical and ecclesiastical center of all. Papal Europe then represented all the old, polished languages and every great historical city, ancient university, and every influential nucleus of letters, art and civilization, except those developed after the Reformation.

In Luther's era Rome held Europe in her firm grasp. Great moral and political revolutions have cut off England, Scotland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, and part of Germany and Switzerland; and even the countries that have not thrown off allegiance to the Pope have undergone great change. Papacy has lost beyond calculation or restoration, and in nowhere more surely than in Italy itself. "Papal Europe" has now a different meaning; Protestantism has been, and is, steadily gaining in numbers, wealth, prestige and in power—intellectually, morally, politically and spiritually.

*The balance of power has been actually reversed since 1789.* At the period of the Reformation, Spain and Portugal and Austria were the dominant powers in Europe. Spain, that made England quake at the terrors of her "Invincible Armada," had three times, perhaps six times, the population of England; now England, after all the millions she has sent to colonize India, America and Australia, has still twice the population of Spain. During fifty years, from 1825

to 1875, England gained 119 per cent.; Prussia, 72; Austria, 27; France, 12; or, taking excess of births over deaths: if France be represented by 1, Austria will be represented by 3, Russia by 5; but Prussia by 6, and Britain by 8! In 1825 Protestant population was to Papal as 3 to 13; and, in 1875, as 1 to 3.

The transformations in Italy are incredible to one who has not witnessed them. Where two-thirds of the people could not read or write, education is now compulsory. Where the very conscience of the people seemed paralyzed, and the sense of personal responsibility and accountability dead, we have seen the church party in Rome opening numerous schools, issuing cheap literature in large quantities, establishing soup-kitchens, relieving poverty, and informing ignorance. Where the Pope swayed with an absolute scepter, Pius IX. was a prisoner in the Vatican, bewailing the loss of temporal power; and it is obvious to the world, if not to the College of Cardinals, that even the spiritual scepter is very loosely held, if not already broken. The Pope will never again make emperors bow as penitents before him, or torture heretics in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

The ignorance which is the mother of superstition is giving way before the intelligence that is the handmaid of faith and devotion. In fact, as to the *Papacy*, we mark a grand crash in the whole wall which has shut out the Bible and the pure gospel from the people. It is like the falling of the ramparts of Jericho before the trumpet blast of Joshua's hosts; and wherever the army of God faces Romanism, every man may march into the breach straight before him and take the city.

We can hardly credit it that Protestant churches and Protestant