

A Swiss Procession



HE Catholic traveller in Europe cannot but feel a sense of pleasurable emotion when he crosses the Swiss frontier for the first time and sets foot on the land of those sturdy mountaineers who for centuries have furnished the body-guard of the Vicar of Christ on earth. This is especially the case if he happens to be traveling northward from Italy, if he happens to be coming from Rome, where the Swiss guards are imprinted in his imagination with everything connected with the Vatican. How loyally they have borne the Papal colors He knows, too, and that they are no mercenary troops, but men who have ever been ready to shed their hearts' blood in defence of the Chair of Peter. We are now about to see that the Switzer's devotion to Christ's Vicar is in nothing exceeded except by his devotion to Christ Himself. We arrive in Lucerne in the days immediately preceding the *Fête-Dieu*, the Feast of *Corpus Christi*. Lucerne is one of the Catholic cantons *par excellence*. Its name is a corruption of that of its patron, St. Leodgar, for whom, as for St. Moritz, they have the greatest devotion.

They who are familiar with Lucerne will readily call to mind its fine *Hofkirche*, its beautiful *Schweizerhofquay* and its picturesque bridges, which link the *grosse* with the *kleine stadt*, as the divisions of the town are called at either side of the River Reuss, which here flows into the Lake. Well, let them imagine all this picturesqueness enhanced by a wealth of floral decoration and greenery in profusion, decking houses alike of rich and poor, the windows of which, in some cases, are transformed into little altars with statues and lights. As the procession is to traverse the entire town, these decorations are to be seen everywhere. At several places along the route, great arches have been erected, all made of Christmas greens and adorned with pictures of adoring angels and