

AN OPEN GATE.

But my favourite haunt is an open place where lies a long, narrow, grassy amphitheatre, shaped by mossy stone steps, above which slope up the grassy banks crowned by umbrella pines and the stiff black cypress obelisks. I never pass there but I see it as a background to some scene of the gorgeous, wicked Renaissance days, whose very spirit it seems to embody. Here, after creating this paradise Cardinal Borghese may have made great feasts and festivals, to which the Roman world came to take its pleasure in the scornful, reckless fashion of the time. Now, on this fine Sunday afternoon it is bright with family groups—boys playing ball, children and parents busy picking the pale little crocus, the pink anemones, the hidden violets. Everywhere is life and movement and sunshine, and the phantoms of dead and gone cardinals and noble ladies retire to shadowland to await the solitude of some moonlight night to repeople their old haunts.

There has not been much stirring in Rome since the excitements of the carnival and of the ministerial crisis passed away together. There was great emulation and striving for tickets of admission to the Sistine Chapel for the 5th of March, when the double anniversary of the Pope's coronation, and of his eighty-first birthday, were celebrated there by a Pontifical High Mass.

Leo XIII. is no friend to the system of liberal admittance of heretic tourists to church functions that distinguished the days of his predecessor, and it was said that fewer than usual would gain admittance to this ceremony. Nevertheless, there they were in numbers, English and American, even inside the Sistine, while there were many more standing outside in the Regia, through which the procession had to pass. Great influence was needed to get the tickets for the Sistine, and yet—there is always something going on behind the scenes in Rome—I know of a hotel porter who offered one for sale for twenty francs.

The Pope was carried in a gilded chair by the Swiss Guards, shining in their full splendour of silver helmets, along the Loggia of Raffaele to the chapel. He was very pale, and at the sound of the subdued applause from the crowds that lined his passage through the Reggia, a tremor of emotion was visible in his face, and the hand that he raised to bless the people trembled visibly. Frail and worn as he is, there is around him that calm and serenity of goodness of one who, life's combat nearly ended, pauses for a while on the border land of eternity. The heavy white silk robes, blazing with gold and jewels, and the shining tiara which he wore, seemed by their brightness to add to the pallor and frailty of his face.

When his chair had been lowered and he had taken his seat upon his throne, the Cardinals came, one by one, to kiss his ring, one of them being so old and infirm that he had to be helped up the steps by two attendants. After these came the bishops and priests, who kissed his hand as well. The Pontifical Mass was then celebrated by a Cardinal, the Papal choir singing, but with no instrumental music, and afterwards the Pope gave the benediction. In his address to the Cardinals, on receiving their congratulations the day before, he compared himself to St. Gregory, who, surrounded by the foes of the church, stood firm in his faith that it would ultimately conquer.

Rome has for generations been the spot where many a dethroned king or queen, or discarded branch of royalty, have come to end their days.

When in St. Peter's, one pauses before the ornate monument to the last of the Stuarts, and, not very far off from it, that to Queen Christina of Sweden, one cannot but recall, beside the former, Horace Mann's pitiful description of the degraded feeble ending of that fated line; and beside the latter, Pasquin's biting words:—

A Queen without a kingdom;
A Christian without virtues;
A woman without modesty.

Perhaps it would hardly be fair to class poor Prince Jerome Buonaparte as he lies a-dying in such a category, and yet the name of Plon Plon must arouse a thought of the faint-hearted soldier, the cruel husband, the sneering sceptic.

In these bright afternoons, as one passes along the Via Babuino, one loiters a bit to see the carriages of the numerous royalties and dignitaries as they pass to and fro to the Hotel de Russie, where he lies, and where two or three carbonari stand about the door on guard.

His family are all here, reunited at last at the prospect of death. It would take nothing less than such a cause to bring his wife, Princess Clothilde, to Rome, which she has never entered since the Italian troops marched in at the Porta Pia, and Victor Emmanuel, her father, took what she considers wrong possession of the Papal patrimony. Even now she refuses to stay in the palace which she considers his, and so, instead of being at the Quirinal, is at the Hotel de Londres.

Poor woman, what a life time of disappointments she has lived through. A husband who not only outraged her affections as a woman, but her faith as a Christian. Herself a most devout Romanist, she has had to watch her father and brother drawn into their long antagonism with the Pope; her family affection and her religion thus set against each other. Her children are here, too. Young Prince Victor, heir to that slim portion of what remains of the Buonaparte hopes, and Princess Letitia, the young widow, whose uncle husband having died last year, it is now currently reported that her step-son and cousin, the Duc d'Aosta, is anxious to marry.

ALICE JONES.

AN unlatched gate has swung outwards and no one has cared to shut it,—why should it be a melancholy sight? It is not like a ruin, bespeaking vain endeavour and the weakness of man's best work; nor is it like the empty house, no matter how mean, which once had a human tenant, for that suggests the tragedy of life. They are both grandiose, elaborate; but this is a small, simple, commonplace object. There is nothing in its make or shape to provoke sad thoughts: it is merely five upright slats on two crosspieces, swung from hinges. It stands ajar, and the level sunbeams make the double of it on the smooth, well-kept walk, in bars of shadow for bars of wood. That is all and yet I can never look at it without a touch of strange, nameless, haunting despair, like that called up in the poet's heart by the sight of rich harvest fields and the thought of days gone by.

The feeling remains unaccountable. No theory of metaphysics can explain it, for the gate does not represent a gap in my life. If I had seen any one I loved pass through some gate on a long journey, from which he never returned, from which there was no return, all would be clear. But I have never known such sorrow. Perhaps it is because the unclosed gate suggests the human actor; for it did not move of itself. The swinging barrier has been pushed open in haste by hands that could not wait; feet that might not stay have hurried through. What was the errand, I wonder, of the latest passer by? Was it sad or sweet? Was it my lady fluttering forth to keep her tryst? Was it a son parting from a loving father in anger, and flinging out to take the world for his pillow? Did two friends stroll through, lost in such close sweet converse that the gate was forgotten, with all other earthly things? Or has some one gone out but a moment ago, thinking to return at once?—The gate stands open and I ask myself these questions in vain.

But apart altogether from any thought of man's doing or undoing, the unclosed gate has a meaning of its own. There is something pathetic in the lack of completeness that it betokens. The little home garth had been so carefully hedged in round about. Once, ages ago, the merely ornamental fence was a stockade and the homestead a fortification. It still carries with it the idea of protection; it is still a symbolic safe-guard. Within the pale are the well tilled gardens, full of flowers and herbs good for food: within, the grass-plots, the shrubberies, the orchards. Without is the vast wilderness of the world, all briars and thorns. The gate seen against the sky seems to open directly into this outer world; the way may lead any whither or no whither, and this enforces the contrast between the greatness of the one and littleness of the other. Now a breach has been made, the enclosure impaired; the gate has been opened and through this neglected sallyport the joys of the sheltered home can flock out and all evils stream in. The little croft had been so heedfully guarded, so straitly shut in on every side. From every quarter it presented an unbroken front; now there is a gap in the barricade. Something has gone amiss; some harm will befall, you cannot tell what. It is as when you awake in the morning wondering dumbly what is it that has gone wrong, before with a sob and a cry,—Ah!—now I remember!—the familiar pain returns to its old place in the heart.

This is the reason, if reason it can be called, why such a commonplace thing has always in it the power to make me grave.

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THE RAMBLER.

QUITE a controversy has been going on over John Wesley. The main point—as to whether he died in the Anglican Communion—need not be discussed here. But a few varying remarks may be culled with profit.

Archdeacon Farrar made the chief address at the unveiling of Wesley's statue, March 2, the 100th anniversary of his death. One sentence is hardly intelligible where he says: "Deeply, too, is it to be deplored that the bishops of Wesley's time had not the sense and magnanimity to accept his mighty self-sacrifice and make him a bishop in *partibus infidelium*. How infinitely stronger this day both the Wesleyan connection and the Church of England would be had they done so!"

The Church Review remarks:—

"We yield to none in our admiration of John Wesley, and are perfectly willing to give credit to the Salvationists for what good they have done, but we object *in toto* to this going out of the way to drag them in as a contrast to the apathy of the Church. After all, that really despised institution has no need to be ashamed of the work of the last half century, though it must be admitted that it has not been done by members of Archdeacon Farrar's school."—Church Eclectic.

The Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette says:—

"It is a strange thing that such a man as this John Wesley should ever have been credited with having founded the largest schism on record in the Church of England. According to his own statement he remained a faithful son of the Church to the last, and warned the Methodists that if ever they forsook the Church of England God would forsake them. It is not difficult, however, to see how Wesley himself by his strange action in ordin-

ing Dr. Coke a pseudo Bishop, and afterwards laying his hands on some of his preachers, prepared the way for the inevitable schism that followed in his death. He did this contrary to the advice of his brother, Charles Wesley, and he lived to repent of it with tears. There is no evidence that he laid hands on any after the year 1788. It was the restless ambition of Coke that prevailed on Wesley to set him apart as a 'superintendent' in his bedroom in Bristol in 1874, so little did Coke believe in the reality of the Episcopal office thus pretended to be conferred on him, that he subsequently sought consecration without avail from Bishop Seabury, of Connecticut, and Bishop White, of Pennsylvania. Charles Wesley saw the ridiculous side of his brother's action when he penned the well-known epigram:—

How easily are bishops made
By man or woman's whim;
Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,
But who laid hands on him?

"The act was far from agreeable to the minds of many of Wesley's most trusted friends. Whitehead pointed out that Coke had as much right to lay his hands on Wesley as Wesley on Coke. Another wrote, 'I wish they had been asleep when they began this business of ordination; it is neither Episcopal nor Presbyterian, but a mere hodge-podge of inconsistencies.'—[Tyerman's Life, vol. iii., p. 439.]"

The musical lectures last week at Trinity College do not appear to have been particularly enlivening. Dr. Lott had to speak, it is true, before a critical audience, accustomed to Profs. Clark and Symonds and other distinguished residents of Toronto. Our standard here is perhaps higher than people in England care to recognize, and, although we are loyal to principles, we are discriminating in our enthusiasms over individuals. Our tastes are sharpened by conflicting colonial exigencies which make for high standards in certain accomplishments.

Dr. Lott is quite the typical Englishman as regards his ignorance of the colonies, or rather Canada, for India and Australia have always been, and for very patent reasons, more intelligible to the people at "home." He asked an acquaintance here if we had a theatre in Toronto and appeared bewildered—not at the size and number of our theatres—but at the importance and wealth of the Queen City taken as a whole.

Anything and everything good we will cheerfully take in, no matter what its source. Anything and everything merely English we have no desire to vacantly seize and assimilate. As many things which are good are likewise English, we are not often compelled to discriminate, but choice has occasionally to be ours and we affirm our right to make a choice and declare in favour of our preferences, quite aside from national proclivities and prejudices.

The American exchanges are full of reminiscences and tales about the late Lawrence Barrett. His name is supposed to have been Brannigan; by the way—an uncharitable bit of resurrectionary lore. What if it were—he lived to make it a splendid name! Most critics agree in saying that his Cassius was his finest impersonation, and I imagine it may have been. He was thin and nervous-looking some years back and required little making up for the part which is "lean and hungry," you know. His voice had the hollow Irish ring to it, which made his declamation rich and forcible to a degree, particularly when listened to in the neighbourhood of many American actors.

One reflection forced upon us in this stage of the world's progress is the dearth of new musical and theatrical geniuses. Soon the names of Reeves, Santley, Irving and Booth will belong to the gracious Past. Who will succeed them? Is there a single great Shakespearean actor now anywhere, emerging from obscurity into the light of fame? Shakespeare, it may be remarked, is an unknown quantity. He might "hold the stage," perhaps, if the experiment were tried, but nobody arises, worth the mention, who cares to try the experiment. And yet there was never such a theatre-going age as the present. A look at a London paper reveals the fact that there were quite recently twenty-five first-class theatres doing enormous business. These are: the Royal English Opera, the Haymarket, Adelphi, Globe, Strand, Lyceum, Royal Princess, Drury Lane, New Olympic, St. James', Vaudeville Savoy, Toole's, Opera Comique, Court, Comedy, Criterion, Avenue, Prince of Wales', Terry's, Garrick, Shaftesbury and the Crystal Palace, Lyric and Lyric Opera House. Of these, two or three are light opera and two or three were—a few weeks ago—pantomime. The rest are mostly comedy performances. Wilton Barrett is still at "The Silver King"; nothing more original than "Our Regiment" is at "Toole's," and "Monte Christo" holds its own at the "Avenue."

There appears to be a steadily increasing demand on the part of an over-strained and "high pressure" public for light, wholesome, natural, and mostly amusing plays. The grand, tragic, and serious elements are no longer as popular as they once were, and melodrama is, more than ever, confined to the Surrey side. The people who go to see "Hedda Gabler" are mostly "followers," and it is only hoped that they do not feel nearly as miserable as they look.

I have received a Theosophical Society's circular. It is concisely and intelligently put, and is certainly not ridicu-