

From the London Tablet.

REVIEW.

Notes on the Ministry of Cardinal B. Pacca, Secretary of State to his Holiness Pope Pius VII. Translated from the Italian of Cardinal Pacca, Dublin. Cumming. London: Dolman. 1843.

This book will do something to fill up the want that has often been remarked in English literature of works treating on the all-important ecclesiastical affairs of Rome and Europe in the early part of the present century; when Infidelity towered aloft in admitted supremacy: when the "Italian old man" was scoffed at and derided; when the temporal dominion of the Popes was ravished away; when the Papedom itself seemed for a time extinct—the See either being vacant, or the holder of it shut out from all communication with both his spiritual and his temporal subjects. Such an epoch is, indeed, one of high and deep interest to every one, whether of the Church or not of it. A modern writer complains bitterly of Napoleon, that being "a reality" a great man, he "wrapped his own reality in tinsel and mummery; "apostatized from his old faith, and strove to connect himself with Austrian dynasties, Popedoms, and the old false Feudalities which he once saw clearly to be false." What an unfortunate man this poor Napoleon—this creature of a day—must have been to degrade himself by connecting himself with such poor weak "Chimæras! He, the mighty Emperor, lord of invincible legions, the creator of kingdoms, the deposer of monarchs, the remodeller of vanquished Europe—he, this man to connect himself with a weak, old, Italian exile! What an insanity, judging according to the world and its notions! But, indeed, it is in this very thing that we are forced to acknowledge the shallow judgment of the modern writer, and the half true and penetrating judgment of Napoleon. If we were asked to point out the circumstance which displays most clearly Napoleon's intuitive genius, we should refer to this very circumstance which the anti-Catholic derides. Putting down half worn out insurrections by artillery, gaining battles, conquering empires, are comparatively, vulgar exploits, achieved in a vulgar direction. This was the course marked out for him in the opinion of the world; this was the direction in which every man's understanding, even the shallowest, heralded him on to common and ordinary greatness. But when, with eagle eye, he looked back into the past, seeking to find in it some element of performance and stability, and discerned it not in anything that was saluted by the applauses of the world, the sound of trumpets and drums, the roar of artillery, and the waving of banners, but in a poor, weak, despised, old man, whom all the world had been despising, and ridiculing, and execrating, and longing to get destroyed and abolished—then; indeed, all the clever, little vulgar men exclaimed that he was losing his head and mistaking his position; and of his consecration and coronation at Notre Dame; a Marshal of the Empire could exclaim "that nothing

was wanting to complete the pomp of it but the half-million of men who had died to put an end to all that! So said Augereau at the time; and we rather wonder to find this exceedingly small saying repeated with acceptance forty years afterwards. Of a truth, the "half a million of men who have died to put an end to all that," have died in a rotten cause. They have gone to their account: to answer why it was they threw away their lives "to put an end to all that;" but "all that" lives still with an immortal life, and though seeming dead when it amazed men to find a Napoleon patronizing it, it has out lived his life, and his dynasty, and another dynasty; and is now, amidst many elements of disorganization in France, the most powerful thing now alive there; is, indeed, the only vital organic thing there extant.

How this thing so strangely vital, was able, in its utmost feebleness, to struggle with the imperial mightiness of Napoleon, and to tire it out, watching patiently till his downfall, this volume shows us in a very interesting and instructive manner. The book itself is too well known (though as yet untranslated) to need much detailed analysis, but we shall make a few extracts, to show those of our readers to whom the book may be unknown the value which attaches to it. The following description will be read with interest of

ROME DURING THE FRENCH OCCUPATION.

I at all times inculcated to them in my despatches to watch over the preservation of the peace and tranquility of the people; and I therefore forbade, in the year of my ministry, bull-fights, fireworks, and different fairs outside the city of Rome. I forbade several solemn processions, and chiefly those at night, and I took all the precautions possible to repress, at Assisium, all tumult at the feast of the Porzincula, and to prevent a great concourse of people, whence generally strifes and fights arise, which might be the beginning of greater disorders. I did the same in Rome, and the good people of that capital, during the whole time of the imprisonment of the pope (notwithstanding the daily vexations given by command of the French military to the pontiff and the Sacred College), maintained an attitude and a conduct really admirable, keeping themselves as much as possible at a distance from the French, to evince their affection to the government, without however, showing any want of civility or offering any insult, and blindly obeying not only the orders, but even the wishes of the pope; a conduct ascribed by many to the special protection of the blessed Virgin, to whom the Romans pay a particular devotion, and which tended much to preserve the honour of the pontifical government unstained; a conduct, in fine, which filled strangers then residing in Rome with astonishment, as well as those who in distant countries heard the true and faithful account from people of their own nation. A Russian nobleman, who was in Rome at that time, said one day with bitterness, that he delighted being in the capital to witness so rare a phenomenon; that there were in

Rome two governments, one opposed to the other; one, having at command the troops, the police, the citadel and prisons, in fine, all the means to make themselves obeyed, to make regulations and give orders to which nobody listened, and in the execution of which it was necessary always to employ force; the other government, on the contrary, deprived of all these means, and of the armed force, shut up in a palace, in reality a prison, surrounded by troops of the enemy, still by means of short manuscript notifications acquainted the public with its wishes, and remark, that whatever she commanded was on the instant voluntarily executed. Beautiful and consoling proof, that even without numerous and expensive troops, and often an insecure police, there are means for a government to make itself respected and obeyed. This admirable conduct of the good Roman people in these calamitous times, deserves to be handed down to the latest posterity.

One lesson, very forcibly inculcated by many parts of this volume, is the immense value to the Holy See of a bold unyielding policy in all times, whether times of crisis, or not. This lesson, applicable to our times as strongly as to those of the preceding generation, is recognized in the fullest manner by this admirable cardinal, who leaves it as a legacy to us from his own troubles and imprisonments.

On the announcement of the violent expulsion from Rome of the popes, Pius VI. and VII., nations became enraged, and the good complained, but no remonstrance, no voice issued from the thrones of the Catholic princes in favour of these sacred and august personages. Providence permitted this, to confirm more and more the Divine lecture given to the popes and ministers of the Church, often repeated in the sacred Scripture, not to repose their trust in the princes of the earth; and to render it palpable, and give evident proof, even to the unbeliever, that all happy events befalling the Holy See and the Church, proceed directly from the supreme dispositions of Providence. Too much, alas! had the Divine counsel been sinned against at Rome for many years; and what was afterwards the reward thereof? Throwing a veil over the events of a more ancient date, which prudence suggests should be passed over in silence, what happened with the French Government in the pontificate of Pius VII., suffices as proof of this. Every decree, I will not say even every request of Buonaparte, first consul, afterwards emperor, became at once law for Rome. The same pontiff allowed himself to be persuaded, that he had found a protector and a friend in that man; but when locked up in a carriage, surrounded by gendarmes, we were carried off to France like two malefactors, he then held a very different language.

Our readers will be amused with the following unsophisticated.

SPECULATIONS ON POPES.

I continued my journey, and arrived at Lansborough, where we passed the night.

The arrival of the pope was already known in the Savoy, and his passage by

the post road, whence the whole population was in movement, and a crowd was collected in the country through which he was to pass. Seeing three carriages, and one of them with the arms of the pope, they all ran, thinking they saw him, one knelt, another cried, and all implored his blessing. We told them that the pope was to pass the next day, and they did not believe what we told them. In one part of Savoy, and if I remember rightly it was at Modona, whilst we were changing horses at the post house, a crowd of people collected round my carriage, and began to question whether or no I was the pope. One said, "He is the pope, and I saw him plainly the time he passed before, and I recognise his countenance." Another answered, "No, it is not he; I saw him also the last time, and he was older than the person who is now in the carriage," pointing me out. A third added, "Must certainly it is not the pope; see, he is dressed like a cardinal." The first answered, "They have dressed him like a cardinal, in order that he may not be recognised." During this debate, a venerable old man came out of an adjoining house, made his way through the crowd, and come up to the carriage. All then looked on, and listening attentively, stood in silence. The old man looked at me, and then turning to the bystanders, "This," says he, "is not the pope, because the popes wear beards." This good man had seen in some house the portrait of some one of the pontiffs of the gone-by ages, and was not aware that the popes had not changed the customs of their illustrious predecessors in other things less frivolous than this.

A great deal of needless cant has been and still is often uttered about the harsh treatment received by Napoleon at the hands of England. If any one is infected with this cant, the best remedy for the disease is to read in this volume the treatment to which Napoleon, in the height of his prosperity subjected two old men both priests, one the deposed possessor of the oldest throne in Christendom—the Pope—the other a Cardinal and Secretary of State.

NAPOLEON'S INHUMANITY TO THE POPE.

All the following winter, and in the spring of 1812, the holy father was left tranquil in his prison at Savona, Napoleon having then turned all his thoughts to the so celebrated, and to him fatal expedition to Russia. But the evening of the 9th of June, towards seven o'clock, the pope suddenly received orders to prepare to return to France, and having made him change those clothes which might cause him to be recognized on the road, he was forced to leave towards ten o'clock in the morning. After a long and painful journey, in the hottest part of the day, he arrived at a very late hour of the night at the hospice of the Christian monks, at Mons' Cenis.

They took Monsignore Bartazzoli up into the pope's carriage, at Stupinigi, in the neighborhood of Turin, and he from that day never left his side. The holy father fell alarmingly ill at the hospice, &