

But, notwithstanding the romantic style of these pulpit orators, the attention of their hearers was liable to be soon fatigued. It was necessary, therefore, to keep alive the interest of the crowd by other expedients, and these the Jesuits had at hand. Like an ingenious stage-manager, they took care to charm the eyes, ears, and imagination of those who attended their churches—I had almost said their theatres; for it was truly a sort of scenic representation which they exhibited before their congregations.

It has been the reproach of Romanism in all ages, that it has addressed itself more to the senses than to the soul. Its brilliant ceremonies, pompous processions, pictures, statues, official vestments, smoking incense, and tastefully melodious music—all that characterises Roman worship, appears to have been borrowed from the profane festivals of paganism. But never, I believe, has that worship been of a more worldly character than during the last few years. The disciples of Ignatius, admirably seconded by the bishops, have multiplied their seductions with a degree of perseverance which is rarely equalled. Some of the churches in Paris, as for example *La Madeleine*, are really drawing-rooms or boudoirs—well warmed in winter, well decorated in all seasons, glittering with gilded and carved embellishments, and covered with soft carpets,—where ladies take pleasure in displaying the charms of their toilette, as at a rout or a theatre. Opera singers were frequently engaged to mingle their voices with those of the priests. The names of these performers were previously announced in the journals, and the public rushed to church in order to hear—a *prima donna*. The altars were decked with fresh baskets of flowers. All breathed an air of luxury, pomp, and intoxicating aristocratic refinement. It was sensualism lending its aid to Popery.

This scandalous policy was carried so far, that some of the Romish ecclesiastics remonstrated on the subject. But the leaders of the priest-party steadily pursued the execution of their designs. Would not all this rich display increase the number of churchgoers, and had not the Jesuits the advantage of being able to proclaim upon the housetops that they had made numerous proselytes?—Alas! what proselytes!

The methods which I have just indicated were principally designed to operate upon the superior classes of the nation. How were they to win over the lower classes? It is clear that mechanics and peasants could take no interest in the fine harangues of romantic preachers, and had not much taste for the splendour of fashionable churches. Other appliances had therefore to be brought into play. The priest-party considered the subject. It remembered that there is always in the human heart a certain tendency to superstition, and upon this they founded their calculations for gaining the mass of the people.

The most absurd practices of the barbarous ages were revived. Pilgrimages again grew into favour. The old patron-saints of towns and villages came forth from their dusty niches, their meagre figures being clothed in splendid vestments, and paraded in open day. Processions regained all their former brilliancy. Little girls and boys scattered green boughs about the streets, and sung so-called spiritual songs, which edified every listener! When a drought prevailed, the priests raised altars in the middle of public squares or market-places, and implored rain from heaven with ceremonies which seemed rather to become the ministers of Baal than of Jesus Christ. I have read somewhere, that even that disgraceful invention of the middle ages, the *Feast of Asses*, has been re-established in one of our provinces; and