

and behind, into Rome and through the streets of it. I knew nothing more than this—that since neither I nor my novice-master were in the least satisfied as to my vocation, and since I had considerable estates of my own in France (though I was an Englishman altogether on my father's side), and could speak both French and English with equal ease, and Italian and Spanish tolerably—that since, in short, I was a very well-educated young gentleman, and looked more than my years, and bore myself—(so I was told)—with ease and discretion in any company, and could act a part if it were required of me—I might perhaps be of better service to the Church in some secular employment than in sacred. This was all that I knew. The rest my Lord Abbot left to my own wits to understand, and to our Holy Father, if he would, to discover to me : and that, indeed, was presently what he did.

I had been within the Vatican before three or four times, both when I had first come to Rome four years ago, and once as attendant upon my Lord Abbot ; but never before had I felt of such importance within those walls ; for this time it was myself to whom the Holy Father was to give audience, and not merely to one in whose company I was. I was in secular clothes too—the peruke, buckles, sword, and all the rest, which I had laid aside two years ago, though these were a little old and tarnished—and I bore myself as young men will (for I was only twenty-one years old at that time), with an air and a swing ; though my heart beat a little faster as we passed through the great rooms, after leaving our cloaks in an antechamber and arranging our dress after the ride ; and at last were bidden to sit down while the young Monsignore who had received us in the last saloon went in to know if the Holy Father were ready to see us.

It was a smaller room—this in which we sat—than the others through which we had passed, and in which the crimson liveried servants were ; and its walls were all covered with hangings from cornice to floor. That which was opposite to me presented, I remember, Jacob receiving the blessing which his brother Esau should have had ; and I wondered, as I sat there, whether I myself were come, as