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THE CHARITIES OF ROME.

(From the 'Three Romes' of the Abbé Gaume.)

No traveller has hitherto undertaken the tour of Christian Rome, nor has its itinerary been traced by any guide; and yet, it is full of interest. What has resulted from this omission? As queen of the fine arts, Rome is admired by all; as the mother of the poor, and the model of all nations, Rome is calumniated; her good works, more beautiful than her monuments, have been forgotten; and the divine spirit to which they owe their existence, hardly discerned by some, and an object of sarcasm to others. Because she does not participate in the factitious life, nor in the feverish activity of modern industry, she is called dead. It is a calumny! The Rome of Pius the IX. is a thousand times more noble than the Rome of Augustus, the mother of men, and the nurse of nations; charity is the life of her city, and of her people; yes, divine charity flows largely in the veins of Christian Rome, it is alike its instinct and its essence. And it should be so; those who are accustomed to reflect will not be astonished. The centre of faith, the city of the Pontiffs, ought to be the home of love. Reader, consent but to accompany us in our travels, through the eternal city, and the truth of our assertions will be apparent.

Leaving the Propaganda early, we directed our course towards the Castle of St. Angelo, passing by the place of the people, and the tomb of Augustus, that is to say, we took the road of the scholars. During our walk we recollected the numerous monuments of Roman charity, which forms the prominent character of the subject we are about to study.

Catholic is the distinctive sign of her faith, which flows from her royal hills. Catholic also is the predominant character of Roman charity. Catholic, because Roman charity excludes no one. Its establishments are the fruit of its own savings, and the gifts of nations formed in its school. Sublime conspiracy of charity! In the eyes of faith, the monarchies and republics of Christian Europe, associated themselves with their mother church, to found these asylums in the centre of Catholicity, which are always open to the stranger, whatever might be his wants, his country, or name. We rarely find foreigners in the hospitals of other European nations. In Rome there is not an hospital, nor a house of refuge, which does not contain the citizens of other nations. In looking through the names of the founders and benefactors of these pious establishments, we find that all ranks have contributed to them; and the old archives mention together the names of popes, cardinals, prelates, kings, princes, with the more humble and obscure, and also many of the saints. Catholic, because its charity is more abundant than elsewhere. In its solicitude for charity, Rome amassed a great patrimony, which, although considerably diminished, by convulsions, still doubles the amount of the most charitable city in Europe. The population of Paris is five times that of Rome, (I have not calculated the voluntary alms of the philanthropic society of Paris,) but in adding those we find that the charities of Rome double those of Paris, although the northern cities have more wants to satisfy than those of the south.

Catholic, because in the establishment of its works of charity it has the priority over all other countries. I shall only now cite three examples. The hospital of St. Roch, the hospital of the Convalescents, and the Penitentiary prison of St. Michael. The hospital of St. Roch is a lying-in hospital, open gratuitously to all women, who may there bury in mysterious silence the secret of their faults, whilst they find all the care and attention which their state requires. It was formed in 1770, and was the first ever established. The hospital of Convalescents was founded in 1548, by St. Philip Neri, and is anterior by two centuries, to all others of the same kind, and the penitentiary prison of St. Michael, this is the third example I shall cite.

At the end of the last century, when the United States offered to the eyes of wondering Europe their numerous penitentiaries, it was never doubted but that these institutions were of American origin. Protestantism gloried in them, and no one thought of disputing their triumph; but at length their true origin was brought to light. Our publicists sent to all parts of Europe and to America, agents to study the penitentiary system, who at length arrived at Rome. M. Cerffier, charged in 1839, by the minister of the interior, to inspect the prisons of the peninsula, expresses himself thus in his report:—

"I do not hesitate to declare, that penitentiary reform began in Italy, from the centre even of that country—from Rome—where Pope Clement the XI. constructed, in 1703, a large house of correction for young prisoners. The correctional system is Christian and Catholic; it took its birth in monasteries. America has neither invented nor perfected it; she borrowed it from Ghent, which took it from Milan,

and Milan from Rome. It was Rome who created the first cellular house, and who made use simultaneously, of absolute or mitigated isolation: it was a Pope, who wrote with his own hand the first rules of a house of correction. . . . I attach a great importance to restoring to the Roman Pontiff, Clement XI., the honor of the first idea of penitentiary reform, for I find in it a powerful reason for gaining the numerous disciples of religion to the cause of this reform, which, to be salutary, ought to be consistent in its origin, essentially Christian.

Catholic, because it is humble. Rome observes to the letter, the command of the Saviour: 'When thou doest alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand does. Rome has no newspapers who publish her good works; and yet travellers so ready to blame the mother and mistress of the churches, have never said a word which might lead us to learn the treasure of charity which is hidden in her bosom. We believe ourselves, Rome is at the head of all true progress. Our ideas, our plans, our least attempts for the amelioration of the suffering classes, are published as discoveries. Still Rome is silent, and contents herself with showing at home the realisation of thought, which with us are still projects, or are only about to be carried into action.

Catholic, because it embraces all human miseries. Misery is the indestructible net-work which envelopes the children of Adam, from the cradle to the grave, and beyond; hence, to be Catholic, charity ought to be as long as life, and as varied as suffering; its remedies must be prepared with wisdom, and administered with love, and disposed of in such a manner as to form a complete system, without defect or deficiency. To Rome, and to Rome alone, belongs the glory of having realised this wonderful achievement. Children of this immortal mother, let us rejoice; if the tree is known by its fruit, what stronger proof can be given of the truth of a doctrine, which develops itself by such spirit and works?

These reflections had conducted us to the bridge of St. Angelo. It was time to convince ourselves that this beautiful system of charity was not a chimera, but a reality; to follow it in all its ramifications, a conducting thread was necessary; it was supplied by the following reasoning: three species of misery, relative to the three-fold life of man, compose the inseparable cortege of man through this valley of tears; the physical miseries are poverty, sickness, and death; intellectual miseries are ignorance and error; the moral miseries are the passions and their effects. Furnished with this guide of sorrow, we began to follow man in the lamentable path which he traverses from infancy to the tomb.

He is born, and sometimes death waits for him on the very threshold of life. Roman charity presents herself and interposes between the homicidal mother and the young victim; she has discovered the secret of saving the honor of one and the life of the other. We are near the triumphant gate: on this fatal spot, where pagan Rome caused the car of the conqueror to pass, followed by humanity in chains, rises the hospital of Santo Spirito: it is the most ancient, and with those of Naples and Milan, the most beautiful of all the palaces built for the unfortunate. In the year of our Lord 1193, Innocent the III., occupied the chair of St. Peter. As he was walking one day on the banks of the Tiber, he was told that a fisherman in drawing his nets, had brought up, instead of fish, three little children. The excellent Pope was so much affected, that he caused immediately to be established, near the hospital of Santo Spirito, a turning box, lined with a mattress, where at any hour of the day or night, abandoned children might be deposited. It was forbidden, under severe penalties, to inquire the names of those who placed them there, or even to look after them. Yes, they were received by charity, which has hands to accept, and ought not to have eyes. These children were brought up, educated, and provided for, in this hospital; thus was the first permanent and regular asylum opened in Europe, to the young and innocent victims destined by Satan to an early death. At Paris, the first home of foundlings was that of St. Vincent of Paul, in 1678; London did not possess one until a century later.

The charitable work of Innocent the Third has been perpetuated through centuries, and thanks to Roman charity, it continues to be in a prosperous state. When old enough to work, the boys are sent to Viterbo, to an asylum belonging to Santo Spirito, and are there taught a trade. At seventeen, if no one adopts them, a sum of money equal to a year's expenses at the hospital is given to them; this money procures them tools and things necessary for the exercise of their profession; being then enabled to provide for themselves, they are sent away. The girls are equally objects of a solicitude, for nothing escapes. They form an establishment of about 600 souls. Under the direction of pious mistresses, they are formed to virtue, and instructed in all that is ne-

cessary to their sex. All the linen of the immense hospital is confided to their care. Some are occupied with the childrens' clothes, others plait the toilets and surplises, or embroider in silk and gold. A three-fold future is open to their choice: perpetual residence in the hospital, marriage, or the religious life. In the first case, their living is secure. In the second, the hospital gives them a marriage portion of nearly £22 sterling. But observe the maternal foresight of Roman charity! This portion must be placed in mortgage on an unencumbered property, in order that the daughter of Providence may never be deprived of it. Lastly, if they embrace the religious life, the hospital provides for them. But this is not all; Leo the Twelfth, of glorious memory, wished that these young orphans should have a right to a portion, payable at the hospital, if they either married or entered a convent. Whilst we blessed this intelligent solicitude, the contented air and rosy complexions of this multitude of children, the superb building which they inhabited, revealed to us the maternal care, and the royal magnificence of the charity. However, we had seen but a small part of the hospital; immense halls opened before us, airy, lofty, and well paved, and mostly ornamented with consoling pictures, which represent the miraculous cures worked by our Saviour. They are occupied by numerous ranges of beds: altogether, there are sixteen hundred. Each hall bears the name of the Saint who protects, or the Pontiff who founded or embellished it; the memory of Pius the VII. fills the place. His sufferings in the prison of Fontainebleau, did not cause him to forget those of the sick poor. By his orders, the buildings were greatly improved, so that in the opinion of strangers, unwilling to praise, no establishment in Europe can be compared with it.

These halls are warmed by pipes from large stoves placed in the centre, on which stand the drinks required for the sick. The hospital is cleaned four times a day. As soon as anything is soiled or spoiled, it is immediately replaced. Every thing is done to preserve the purity of the air, by ventilating and disinfecting the rooms with acids. Sewers containing a considerable quantity of water, are constructed under each floor, which convey rapidly to the Tiber all impurities. So much care is bestowed on the cleanliness of the hospital, that the most fastidious must be satisfied. The bedsteads are of iron, and comfortably furnished; between every two beds a marble table is fixed in the walls. Above them, little tablets, indicating the state and treatment of the patient, whether he ought to receive the Viaticum, Extreme Unction, &c., &c.

Their food is regularly served, by one of those delicate attentions, of which christian charity alone is capable. Three times a week the organ is played during the repast of the sick. Sunday presents a very touching scene; numerous brotherhoods arrive from all parts of the city, to tender to the sick their charitable services: some bring little delicacies, others arrange the beds, and render various services to the poor invalids. And what is the result of these pious attentions? The annual mortality is from nine to ten per cent.; a very low mortality for so vast an hospital, and is the greatest praise that can be given to this establishment.

This is the care bestowed on the body; but the soul!—too often neglected in hospitals of other nations—Rome knows its price, and surrounds it with admirable care. Twelve chaplains inhabit the hospital; night and day at the service of the sick, they celebrate mass every morning in the different wards, administer the Sacrament, and assist the dying. In order to procure to the sick every facility to fulfil their duty, each religious order resident at Rome, must, according to the prescriptions of Clement the XI., send once a month, two of its members to hear confession; their stay must be, at least, five hours. Several times a day a priest walks through the wards, and stops in each to suggest some good thought, some holy maxim, capable of consoling the sick, or inspiring them with regret for their faults. As all sorts of persons, without distinction of religion, are received, many priests, both secular and regular, come voluntarily, either to bring to the Catholic faith those who unfortunately do not profess it, or to confess, instruct, and console, the sick. The laity come also mostly on Sundays, to exercise the different works of spiritual mercy. In wandering through these vast halls, we fancy we see St. Camille de Lellis, the illustrious frequenter of this hospital, who, during several years, past nights and days by the bedside of the dying. I shall not speak of him now, but shall return to him later.

If the sick sink under their sufferings, they are left for two hours in their beds, and are then transported to the chamber of the dead, where they remain twenty four hours. A string attached to the hand communicates with a bell placed in the surveillants' room. If the sick person should only be in a trance, the least

movement of returning consciousness would be known to the watcher. Every evening after the Ave Maria, a pious association of the laity repair to the place, where the dead are laid, with a covered car, and bearing torches in their hands, conduct them to the cemetery Janicule. Nothing is more touching than the cortege of these charitable brothers, who come from the most distant parts of the city, in spite of the cold and rain of winter. When there are no dead to bury, which often happens, they still go to the cemetery to recite the prayers for the dead, on the tombs. If the sick persons are cured, we shall see later what becomes of them.

To keep up the spirit of charity which produces the wonderful effects we have just related, they take care of the numerous persons attached to the hospital. At the approach of the principal feasts, all the family are reunited in the chapel to receive instructions to dispose them to frequent the Sacraments, on the day of the solemnity. During Lent, all make a retreat preparatory to the Paschal communion. Rome which art accused of doing nothing, behold what thou hast done for centuries without noise or ostentation! Such is the respect which you profess for suffering members of Jesus Christ; such the maternal charity with which you surround the bed of sorrow. Amongst all the cities of the Christian world, are there many? Is there one, which can flatter herself with surpassing, or even equalling her mother?

NEW ENGLAND PROTESTANTISM AND PUBLIC MORALS.

The Shepherd of the Valley translates the following from the Propagateur Catholique of New Orleans:—

"We have always admired two things in the people of New England—the confidence with which they claim the first rank among civilised nations, and quote themselves as models in the way of liberty and perfectionism; and in the second place, the imperturbability with which they trample on all laws that are not to their taste, and laugh at the most sacred rights and liberties of others.

"The first point needs no proof. Take the first Yankee you meet with—and they are to be found everywhere—and he will tell you with genuine Protestant modesty, that the Yankee is the most perfect type of humanity,—man arrived at his highest point of development. We ourselves are, indeed, disposed to grant that, of all the bipeds who walk the earth, the Yankee, as a species, is the most singular and the most interesting to study.

"If we examine their claims to be a law-abiding people, let us ask an answer to our inquiries from the city of Boston—the Puritan pearl and pride of Protestantism—the model city of the model State. Boston, albeit all its Puritanical prudery, has mobbish tendencies; but as it cannot consent to lay aside the religious mask which Calvinism has placed on its face, its mobs are religious in principle, and religious in their instigators, the most notable of whom are preachers.

"To justify their mobs the Boston Puritans invoke a specious principle, which at bottom is the same that the radicals of Europe proclaim. These latter assert what they call their rights, as the pretext for violating the laws of their country: our Puritans invoke what they call 'a higher law' than that of man, which annuls all human laws incompatible with it. Doubtless, this principle is in itself just, because it may happen that laws made by men are opposed to the law of God, and hence have neither rational motive, nor moral sanction. But the certain application of this principle is only possible when there is recognised an authority which can infallibly interpret the law of God—an authority which can be found only in the Catholic Church, by which alone it is claimed. Catholics can then invoke this principle, as they frequently do against Protestants, who have, however, a marvellous facility of ignoring the principle, when they find it to be to their interest so to do.

"But in Protestantism, where there is no absolute authority,—no infallible interpretation—conscience and the law of God are given over to the arbitrary interpretation of each individual. Hence, in most cases, not to say in all, this higher law which Protestants invoke against human laws, is nothing more, in their system, than the personal opinion of each individual—his own will substituted for the law, or rather placed above the law, which is the very principle invoked by the radicals. Neither should we be astonished at this identity of principle between Protestantism and Radicalism. Protestantism is all built on an anarchical principle. This principle applied to religion, produces heresy; applied to politics, it has deranged the public law of Europe, and, at the same time, undermined the constitutions of the most vigor-