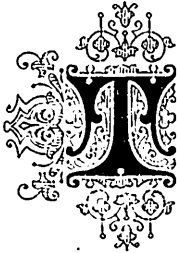


ROME, CAPITAL OF UNITED ITALY.



SEVENTY-FIVE years have elapsed since the armies of Victor Emmanuel, King of Piedmont, entered Rome through the breach near Porta Pia. On the 20th day of September, 1870, was accomplished the final act of the hypocritical diplomatic comedy which had engaged the attention of the world since 1859. The first act opened with the annexation of the duchies of Central Italy and the Papal States of the Legation. This farce which lasted eleven years and had its end in the taking of Rome, was prophetically described by Montalembert in 1860. "The drama," he wrote, "is played in three acts: the defamation, the invasion, the voting. A sovereign is denounced; . . . his subjects are discontented, oppressed and exasperated. He maintains himself by foreign arms; he is without moral or material force. This is the defamation. . . . Suddenly we hear that this weak sovereign has become threatening, that he is planning an attack, that he is getting soldiers together. . . . He is now a source of fear instead of pity. Precautions must be taken: his frontiers crossed, his territories invaded. This is the second act. Then being masters of his country, the invaders consult his subjects. Are you happy? No? Do you wish to be so? The cause of your misfortune is Pius IX; Victor Emmanuel will bring you happiness. Long live Victor Emmanuel! The drama is played out, and the curtain falls. Romans, they went to sleep; they wake up Piedmontese — but subject nevertheless to taxation and to conscription as well." The taking of Rome gave life to the political monster which to-day shocks the world under the name of United Italy.

With what truth this title is applicable to Italy may be seen from the recent celebration of the 25th anniversary in Rome. The liberal and revolutionary

parties put forth all efforts to commemorate with special pomp the year of "the liberation." A law was passed raising the 20th of September to the dignity of a "festa nazionale" for all Italy. Subscriptions were sought throughout the Peninsula to provide funds for the celebration. Yet after all these preparations the result was a pronounced fiasco. After several months the amount of money collected scarcely exceeded 6,000 francs, and then through shame the lists were closed. Of the 8,000 municipalities invited to send delegates (expenses paid) to the Capital for the great day, less than 100 accepted. The Neapolitan students replied to the invitation that "they would not go to Rome where were to be found i primi malfattori d'Italia." Cadorna, the Piedmontese General who commanded the invading army, refused to attend on the plea of old age and ill-health, but from his letter to the committee it was evident that other and graver reasons influenced him. Ambassadors and other foreign dignitaries were conspicuous by their absence from the ceremonies and even the army lost its enthusiasm by being obliged to take second place to the Freemasons, who headed the national procession. So much for the unity of the country.

Such a general failure was only natural. How could any patriotic Italian, be he anti-papal or Catholic, take part in celebrating the anniversary of a day which had been the beginning of such political and moral ruin to his country and to the Eternal City. The breach at Porta Pia was to have inaugurated a new era of happiness for Italy and for the Romans: "the fountains of Rome will run wine" was the boast of one of the chief actors in the unification comedy. Has the result proved the truth of this prophetic assertion? Has any good, material or spiritual, resulted to the nation during the quarter of a century that Rome has been the capital of United Italy? Let us examine a little.