

The Press and General Review.

ROME AS IT IS.

(Cor. of N. Y. Courier and Enquirer.)

In estimating the probability of a permanent reconciliation between Pius IX and his subjects the rank and religion of the Romans, and their profound hatred and contempt of the Cardinals and Priests are facts of paramount importance. The very first social peculiarity that struck me in Rome was the general want of respect for the clergy Ecclesiastics in the street, I observed, no where received any of those tokens of regard, so commonly rendered in other Roman Catholic countries. Even the religious processions bearing a holy image, or indeed the sacred host itself, I marked, went their way unsaluted and unnoticed. I have since in the course of my stay, visited a hundred different Churches, and from St. Peter's down whether at mass, at matins or at vespers, I have almost uniformly found a dreary void.—The Priests and the Choirs, an old woman or two, and perhaps a stray peasant from the country, have alone relieved the solitude. All is august and imposing, but the holy incense floats unwatched, the divine symphonies swell unheard, and the sacred altars blaze unregarded.

Roman Catholicism finds the fewest faithful in the very seat of its faith, and the coldest disdain in the very centre of its glory. The doctrinal elements of the religion are the same everywhere, but its spirit and its type vary exceedingly in different countries. In all places, except Rome, it is more or less modified by civil institutions, and by popular character; but here it is subject to no extraneous influence, and free scope is given to all of its worst tendencies. It is not Catholic, and liberal, and tolerant, but papistical, and bigoted, and persecuting. It seeks to prevail not by its own purity and wisdom, but by intimidation and by charlatanism; by

—“reliquies, beads, Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls.”

Adopting the maxim that ignorance is the mother of devotion, it systematically stultifies the human intellect. The people receive no religious instruction, are allowed no catechisms and have no knowledge of the elements of their creed. Tawdry wax figures, representing certain biblical scenes, and exhibited in public booths under the patronage of the church afford their most definite notation of Scripture history, and the six injunctions of the Santa Croce—to pray the masses, to hear mass on Sundays and festivals, to keep the fast, to confess during Holy week, to commence at Easter and not to marry during certain seasons—constitute the clearest idea of Scripture ethics.—Miracle-working images abound, and numerous relics are to be seen of every imaginable category, from the rock wherewith Abraham laid Isaac to be sacrificed, to the prints of our Saviour's feet in the pavement of the Appian way. No intelligent right-minded man can go through the churches of Rome, and survey all the miserable tawdriness employed in the name of Christianity, without the intensest disgust and indignation. But the people of Rome are not in a situation to make all these means and appliances successful. Their constant intercourse with enlightened foreigners, forbids, and they have learned full well that the purpose is to blind and degrade them. The natural effect is bitter animosity against the Church, and a rooted repugnance to the very religion whose name it bears.

The low intellectual and moral character of the priesthood reinforces this hatred with contempt. The number of ecclesiastics of all grades in Rome is about twenty thousand.—their education is chiefly confined to the scholastic learning of the middle ages, and they little appreciate either the ideas or the doings of modern civilization. There are, doubtless among their many devout men, but if universal assent is to be trusted, the great majority possess little private worth. The vast wealth of the Church supports them in indolence, and, under the garb of religion, they indulge their lowest appetites and passions. It is as notorious here as the noonday, that the profligacy which so fully blackens all Rome, has its chief source in the priesthood, and that the highest church dignitaries participate in the general corruption. Let one plain fact suffice to illustrate. In a single street, there are now living an illegitimate daughter of a late pope, and seven illegitimate daughters of cardinals, three of whom are public prostitutes. In honor of my race, I cannot credit all the depravity charged upon the Roman ecclesiastics; yet I am forced to conclude that the people of Rome despise their priesthood for the best of all reasons—because the priesthood, as a body, is despicable.

The wickedness and tyranny of the Jesuits greatly envenomed popular enmity towards the church by which they were tolerated. Until the late expulsion of the order, the inquisitorial system was carried out, with less hardihood to be sure than formerly in Spain, but yet with great daring; and surveillance and denunciation prevailed to an extent that filled all society with constant dread. The walls lined with instruments of torture, and the two hundred wretches bent and withered with misery, disclosed by the breaking open of the sacred chamber of the Holy Tribunal, excited a popular exasperation which years will not allay; and though the

Pope be restored with powers as absolute as ever on no terms will the Roman people submit to the re-establishment of his infernal coadjutors the Jesuits. According to a late pastoral letter of Cardinal Arch Bishop of Naples, the disciples of Ignatius Loyola are indispensable auxiliaries to true Catholicism; if this be so, true Catholicism has but a slender chance hereafter in the capital of the Catholic world.

Many and various are the social evils which have alienated and still alienate the Roman people from the church, but their great political grievance is the rule of the Cardinal college.—In theory, the sixty-four members of this body are persons selected from all Catholic nations for their pre-eminent virtues and talents, but in reality they are all Italians, excepting seven and owe their place exclusively to wealth and family rank. The Pope, who appoints them has a direct personal interest in naming men of great pecuniary resources, since rich Cardinals are in the habit of ceding their annual stipend of \$4 500 to the increase of his yearly salary of \$20 000. The Cardinals are the Pope's authorized advisers in temporal as well as spiritual matters, and they determine upon every political measure of any importance. The majority of the college are said to be selfish, arrogant, unprincipled and unscrupulous men, and every wavering purpose and misstep of Pius IX. is attributed to their agency. It was the vindictive spirit of the cardinals that so long protracted the late negotiations. The French demanded a universal amnesty, because honor and humanity forbade them to do otherwise, the Cardinals refused it because their vengeance was too sweet to forego. Both parties were a last obliged to concede, but the people have no faith in the efficiency of the compromise. They believe that the Cardinals are implacable, and that secret poisonings and assassinations will sooner or later do the work of the public executions upon all seriously implicated in the establishment and maintenance of the Republic.—The Romans regard the Cardinals as their deadly foes, and fairly quail before the power of their malice. None of the virtues and none of the acts of Pius IX. yields them a ray of hope for they know that the Cardinals are still their masters. Bitter experience has subdued all republican aspirations, and if the Papal Government could rid itself of its ecclesiastical element, and become assimilated to other liberal monarchies, it might, perhaps, eventually win popular confidence and support. But so long as the Cardinal College retains its present political power and influence, no concession of any character whatever will reconcile the Roman people to the temporal power of the Pope.

BOSTON OPINIONS OF A BOSTON JURY'S VERDICT.

From the New York Herald.

The newspapers of Boston sustain the verdict of the jury on the Webster trial, as a just and true one. This is not surprising. They had tried and convicted the prisoner before the subject underwent a legal examination. The secret inquest—which, in itself, should have vitiated the whole of the subsequent proceedings—furnished the evidence of guilt; and upon this evidence there was much more reason for making up a fatal verdict, than upon that motley array of opinions upon handwriting and teeth which went far to bias the mind of the jury.—We do not assert that the prisoner was not guilty; but we do assert, that he was not proved to be guilty, by any legal evidence of a reliable character, and we defy all the lawyers to the contrary. However strongly circumstances may persuade us of the guilt of the accused, nothing has appeared to assure us, beyond all doubt, that Dr. Parkman's body cannot be found elsewhere. Our duty in such a matter is not to be guided by apprehensive impressions, but by evidence at once clear and uncontradictory. From the first, we have feared that the public opinion of Boston had settled into a firm belief in the prisoner's guilt, from the mere presumption of evidence; and the sequel has confirmed our most serious misgivings. The public share in the surprise that has been created by the verdict, drawn out, if we are to credit the proceedings in the jury room, by three questions, in no one of which was any suggestion made that the government had failed in making out its case.

It may not be out of place here, to refer more fully to the coroner's court in this case. It was a secret tribunal, as in the Coolidge affair in Maine. The public were not admitted, or the reporters of the public press. Now, though the statutes of Maine and Massachusetts provide for a coroner, they have not assigned to him any duties. It is an office established upon traditions, and but little understood. One thing is certain, however, that though the powers of the coroner are arbitrary in some measure, and superior, under some circumstances, to all judicial powers yet it has never been established that he can hold a secret investigation. The English law, from which we derive our action does not permit it; and it would be impossible to say by what authority our coroners are guided. The fourth statute of Edward First defines a coroner's duties—and among these he is empowered to sit only *super visum corporis*, and “at every place” where the body is found. It is certain that the Boston coroner was not led by this statute—for he held his investigation in the Old State house, a mile from the medical College. These coroners must be looked after, and their

duties made known. Meanwhile, we hope the Boston editors will revise their judgement upon the verdict.

EPIDEMICS

Art. I.—1. *Epidemics of the Middle Ages*, from the German of J. F. C. Hecker, M.D. Translated by B. C. Babington, M.D.

2. *The Remote Causes of Epidemic Diseases*. By John Parkin. Hatchard and Son.

3. *Report on Quarantine*, from the General Board of Health. Hansard.

4. *Experimental Researches on the Food of Animals*. By Robert Dundas Thompson, M.D. Longman.

5. *The Domestic Practice of Hydropathy*. By Edward Johnson, M.D. Simpkin, Marshall & Co.

THE late epidemic has revealed the existence, and fearfully illustrated the destructive power, of some unknown agents of mortality, the precise nature and cause of which, in their connection with known and more familiar morbid influences, have hitherto been suffered to remain involved in the deepest obscurity. It leaves us with the unpleasant conviction that the accounts handed down to us of the ravages of pestilence in ancient times, were not historical exaggerations, as they have generally been considered, and that we have been laboring under a mistake in supposing that modern civilization had attained an immunity from similar desolating and wide-spread calamities. The work of Dr Hecker on the epidemics of the middle ages, recently translated by Dr. Babington, has now become one of serious interest, as belonging, not to the past alone, but connecting the past with the present, and relating to physical phenomena which there is now reason to believe to be constantly latent, and the manifestation of which may be expected at frequently recurring intervals.

With a view to the practical conclusions which may perhaps be drawn from this volume, and from other sources, we propose to give some account of its contents.

The work of Dr. Tralles (*Historia Cholerae Atrociſsimæ*), must completely set at rest the controversy about the modern Asiatic origin of malignant cholera. The received opinion of the medical profession, with few exceptions (Mr Phacelray and Dr Chambers among the chief,) has been that malignant cholera is altogether a new disease, first appearing in August, 1817, in the delta of the Ganges, at Jessore, after the annual inundation of the marsh lands by which it is surrounded, and there carrying off 10 000 persons (a sixth of the population) in a few weeks; thence proceeding to Calcutta, and devastating every town and village within an area of several thousand square miles. It is admitted, however, that Brahminical records notice a disease of a somewhat similar character to have prevailed among the Hindoos of emote antiquity, and our own occupation of India is not so recent, but that a little research has now established the fact that it appeared in 1781 at Ganjam, 500 miles to the north-east of Madras, where 500 men sunk beyond recovery within an hour; at Madras, the following year, when it attacked the army of Sir John Burgoyne; and the next year at Hurdwar, where it swept off 20 000 pilgrims. It was then called by the Muslims *mordechim*, or bowel-death, corrupted by the Europeans into *mort de chien*; and it was remarked that at the same period a severe epidemic influenza, or catarrhal fever, visited Russia, England, Germany and France, and occasioned a great mortality.

The doctrine, therefore, that malignant cholera is new in India, rests entirely upon assumption; and that it is new in Europe, can hardly be maintained as in the slightest degree probable by any one who has attentively considered the analogous effects of several of the epidemics of the middle ages, as described by Dr. Hecker. The testimony, however, of Dr. Tralles is decisive of the fact that epidemic cholera was known in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Those who hold the contrary opinion have generally maintained that the cholera morbus of antiquity was a violent dysentery, characterized by the presence of bile; but Dr. Tralles shows that in his time the absence of bile had not only been noticed, but various theories formed to account for the want of this secretion. He notices the serous and aqueous discharges by vomiting and purging; the draining of the body of all its fluids; the thickening of the blood by the loss of its serous portion, and consequent arrest of circulation; the icy coldness; the consecutive fever; the rapid death in a few hours, with cramps and spasms in severe cases, and their frequent sudden occurrence in the middle of the night; all of which have been marked features of the epidemic recently prevailing among us. Commenting upon this evidence, the editor of the “London Medical Gazette” observes—

“We began the investigation already prejudiced in favor of the view entertained by Dr. Copland and other reputable authorities, namely, that before the year 1817 it was altogether unknown either in India or Europe, and that the *materies morbi* first sprang from the jungles of Jessore in that year. We must admit, however, that the description given by Dr. Trotter of cholera, as it was known to medical writers in 1753, has satisfied us that a much older date must be assigned to the first outbreak of this pestilence. His description is, perhaps, as complete

as the state of pathology at that time would admit, and if we except the want of reference to any account of the state of the renal secretion, all the marked peculiarities of the present disease are clearly indicated.”

Celsus, the Hippocrates of Rome, is quoted by Dr. Chambers to prove the existence of cholera, with serous discharges, in the first century; and in looking attentively at Dr. Hecker's summary of the statements of ancient medical writers, respecting the *cardiac*, or heart disease, referred to as early as the time of Alexander the Great, 300 years before Christ, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that they were describing, under another name, the last stage of malignant cholera. The disease was called *morbus cardiacus*, not by medical writers, but by the people, who concluded the heart to be the seat of the malady from the irregular beatings and violent palpitations which were one of its symptoms. Other symptoms were “cold numbness of the limbs” (*torpor frigidus*;) “profuse and clammy perspirations;” “a feeble and almost extinct pulse;” “a thin and trembling voice;” “a countenance pale as death;” “an insufferable oppression on the left side, or even over the whole chest;” “eyes sunk in the sockets, and, in fatal cases, the hands and feet turning blue;” “and while the heart, notwithstanding the universal coldness of the body, still beat violently, they for the most part, retained possession of their senses.” Finally, “the nails became curved on their right hands, and the skin wrinkled.” These are nearly the very expressions used by Dr. Adair Crawford, in describing the last stage of malignant cholera, as it occurred in St. Petersburg in 1848,

“The whole surface of the body became as cold as marble, and covered sometimes with a clammy moisture; the pulse extremely feeble, and often imperceptible; the face sunk, and the features contracted to, sometimes, nearly half their usual size; the eyes sunk deep in their sockets, and surrounded by a dark circle, and the pupils generally dilated. The cheeks, hands, feet and nails assumed a leaden-blue or purplish colour, and likewise, though in a less degree, the entire surface of the skin, whose functions seemed completely paralysed. One remarkable phenomenon was the sudden collapse of the soft parts of the body, the effect necessarily of all the vessels being nearly emptied of their fluids, and of the rapid absorption of the adipose substance; so that patients were reduced, sometimes in twenty-four hours, perhaps one-third or more of their previous size. The skin of the hands and feet were shrivelled up; the violence of the cramps usually diminished, though not always, and they were limited chiefly to the hands and feet, which often remained contracted after death. The vomiting and diarrœa were also less urgent; the tongue was moist, flabby, and cold; the respiration hurried or else slow, and much oppressed with frequent deep sighing; the breath cold, the voice plaintive and reduced almost to a whisper. There was great heat, oppression, and anguish in the epigastrium and about the heart, to which regions all the suffering was referred.”

These facts are important, for they help to dispel much of that mystery about cholera which has made it the object of superstitious terror, and point out the path to be followed by those who would learn the cause of epidemics, and the means of obviating their effects. It is a great step towards a true knowledge of the evil, to discover that epidemics are not caprices of nature, to be regarded as original maladies, but periodical visitants, obeying therefore fixed laws which it may be possible to trace out by closely watching the recurrence of their operation.

It is of vast moment, also, to the interests of humanity, in a moral as well as a commercial view, to be thus enabled to get rid of that most mischievous of medical errors—the doctrine that epidemics, like the cholera, are propagated by contagion. We would guard this observation by an admission that in all cases of disease the air of an unventilated room may be rendered poisonous to the healthy by the sick; and that the sick may otherwise predispose the healthy to attack, by the influence upon the nervous system of fear and sympathy; but that the casual contact of strangers with the person or the clothes of a sick man has ever been a cause of the spread of cholera, or of any other epidemic, is a notion at variance alike with probability and fact. In a paper presented by Dr. Strong, of the Bengal army, to the Statistical Society, he states, that during the twenty years ending with 1847, there were deaths annually from cholera in goals under his superintendance, but that it did not spread; never attacking more than one in nine of the inmates. But the sudden cessation of cholera in London at the close of the last autumn, and its equally sudden disappearance from other cities, after ranging for an average interval of eight or ten weeks, demonstrates the fact that its propagation depends upon atmospheric conditions, and not upon human intercourse. Even in the height of an epidemic season, the nurses and physicians in constant attendance on cholera patients, have not suffered more than the rest of the community, from the supposed danger of their exposed position, and have enjoyed comparative immunity where the arrangements of ventilation and drainage have been perfect. In the general hospital of Hamburg, no case of cholera occurred among its 1 600 inmates, although 117 cholera cases were admitted between the 7th and 22nd of September; and in London, at St. Bartholomew's hospital, where 473 cholera patients were admitted during the past summer, of whom 199 died, the disease proved fatal to only one of the nurses of that institution. The attacks in other cases being confined to premonitory diarrœa, which, by prompt attention, were speedily subdued.

If it be said that its appearance in different countries has not been exactly simultaneous—that it is in India one year and in Europe the