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ARTICLE I.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION IN ITALY.

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Over the door of the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome are the words: Sacro sancta Lateranensis Ecclesia, omnium urbis et orbis Ecclesiarum Mater et Caput. This is no idle boast. The realm over which Augustus Caesar swayed his sceptre was narrow compared with that of his spiritual successor. The encyclical letter which emanates from the Quirinal Palace is addressed to one half the civilized world, and binds the consciences of a fourth of the human race. What is the complexion of this religion at home? What are its features when seen on its native soil? Does the heart of the great system beat with energy, or does it give signs of decay and dissolution? We are naturally interested in visiting the spring of a mighty river, in examining the elements of an influence that has shaped the destiny of the world through one third of its duration.

When viewed historically the subject is one of extraordinary interest. It is often said that men are never aroused in the highest degree, except on religious grounds; that to accomplish a great and difficult political object, the conscience must be invoked; motives that reach beyond the grave must be appealed to. In Italy this complexity of motives, this intermingling of human passions with the awful sanctions of religion, this blending of civil and ecclesiastical interests have been witnessed as they have been nowhere else. Political con-

spiracies have been concealed or disclosed on pain of eternal death. The darkest crimes against the State have been committed on the promise of God's forgiveness. The police have found their readiest coadjutors or their bitterest foes at the confessional. Elsewhere the State has trampled on the church. In other countries, the church is the obsequious handmaid of the political power, is chained to the chariot wheel of kings and cabinets. In Rome an aged priest has united all the offices of the Jewish theocracy. Senators and armies, councils and courts, have done the bidding of a superannuated monk.

The extraordinary events which have rapidly followed each other, and which are now occurring, through all Southern and Western Europe, clothe this topic with especial interest. What effect will these political revolutions exert on the established and dominant Religion? Will they essentially weaken its hold on the affections of the people? Will they undermine all prescriptive rights? If ecclesiastical reforms shall follow in the train of those which are municipal or civil, will such reforms endanger the supremacy of the Catholic system? Should all State patronage be withdrawn, has the church a recuperative force so that she could adapt herself to the new order of society? Or if the Catholic system should be utterly subverted, would any desirable form of Protestantism take its place? Would the destruction of that old hierarchy put an end to the spirit of bigotry and persecution? Wherein is a radical and nominal Protestantism better than that ancient church tyranny?

The subject, moreover, vitally concerns us as American scholars and Christians. Papal Europe, even Italy herself, look to this country with eager curiosity and hope. Uncounted multitudes constantly find an asylum here. At the present time, in no national legislature except our own, would the members of the company of Jesus find upholders and apologists. With, in some respects, a feeble, negative, hesitating Protestantism, with paralyzing divisions in our own ranks, in the absence of comprehensive plans, and especially of a gentle and Christian spirit in our religious discussions, there may be imminent danger to our institutions. Exact acquaintance with the spirit of those with whom we have to deal, becomes a necessity which cannot well be exaggerated.

I. Our object, in the first place, will be to point out some of the causes of the growth of the Roman Catholic system in Italy, and of its existence through so many ages. It is customary to think of that hierarchy as founded on error exclusively, on childish superstitions, or on stupendous falsehoods. The judgments often passed upon it

are indignant and summary, rather than discriminating and just—the decisions of a heated zeal, not of patient and dispassionate inquiry. Now it is inconceivable that a system could have existed so long, unless it had some sound and vigorous roots. If it had not possessed ingredients of truth and permanence, it would have been torn up ages ago, utterly prostrated in some of the rude shocks it has encountered. Its inherent vigor is demonstrated by its existence for fifteen hundred years.

The Roman Catholic system is characterized by extraordinary contrasts and heterogeneous elements. In one aspect it is so weak that it seems to be tottering to its fall; in another, its strength is impregnable. Now it should seem that it must yield to the force of irrefragable argument and uncontradicted fact; now the Protestant advocate feels that he himself needs weapons of the keenest temper and an arm of practised ability. No one who has looked into the Romish system will despise it. No one who has encountered the Romish dialectics can fail to be impressed with their unmatched subtlety.

1. The long duration and flourishing state of the Roman Catholic system in Italy have been owing in a degree to the physical features of the country and to the historical associations. Italy is the native region of beauty. The water, the earth, the air, the sun-light seem to have an inherent and peculiar charm. A distinguished German painter, Angelica Kaufmann, said that she could not paint away from Rome; there was an artistic quality in the water. Much of the delightful scenery is admirably fitted to give effect to the gorgeous ceremonial of the Romish church. The volcanic regions of the South, with their constant chemical changes, afford many facilities for a deceptive and imposing superstition.

The papal religion is one that cometh by observation, by pomp and outward circumstance. It needs the open air. In the bleak regions of the North it is robbed of half its impressiveness. Some of the most striking portions of its ritual cannot be displayed within the walls of a church. Its crosses must be consecrated at the road side. Its torches and funeral wailing need the darkness and silence of the night heavens.

The country too is old; it is full of hoary reminiscences, reaching beyond the time of the Romans; the line between fable and history is ill defined. The country is most perfectly fitted to a religion which clings tenaciously to the past, which has an immutable faith, and which, instead of relying on reason, independent judgment, and a thorough private study of the Bible, has appealed to the sentiment, to the fancy and the outward sense. In short it is a religion which has

seized on every advantage furnished by its locality, adroitly turning the laws of nature to its own benefit.

2. The Romish system in Italy relies in a measure on its antiquity. It has existed almost from the apostolic age. The great sects of Protestantism seem but children of yesterday. This church says her masses at altars built or begun before the time of Constantine. It has placed its great symbol in the Flavian amphitheatre, commenced by Vespasian. It has charge of those solemn subterranean chapels, on whose dark walls is carved the palm-branch of the martyrs.[1] Her litanies were chanted by Ambrose and Augustine. On the stones of her Appian Way, as they now lie, apostles and evangelists walked.

This appeal to antiquity derives its support from several sources. It has its foundation in the nature of man, in one of his primary and strongest tendencies. We naturally reverence what is old. We cling to by-gone days. Amid the shifting scenes of the present and the uncertainties of the future, we fondly disentomb the long buried past. The feeling is not confined to one class of men. The illiterate and the learned alike share in it. Respect for the aged is the marked characteristic of the whole oriental world. The removal of ancient landmarks has been guarded by heavy imprecations. An old Bible, the heir loom of several generations, is often the most precious family treasure. Of this vital and universal attribute of man, the Italian church avails herself to the utmost. Mighty empires have disappeared; she remains. The palaces of the Caesars have crumbled long ago; the apostolic faith still lives in its primeval bloom, attracting fresh veneration, greeted with a more passionate love as ages pass away.

Again, she has adroitly strengthened this sentiment, by appealing to the abuse and perversion of the opposite. Innovation is sometimes followed by bitter fruits, often so at first, when the ultimate effect may be beneficial. A popular revolution ends in despotism, freedom of speech in licentiousness, freedom of thinking in heartless infidelity. Reform is only the cloak under which some discontented spirits hide their ambitious designs. Democracy in church and State is only another name for anarchy. Every unsuccessful experiment of this nature, and history is full of them, has been eagerly seized by this conservative church, and turned to the utmost practical account. Not a little of her power is traceable to this source. She has selected with a sagacious eye, and with a far reaching policy, the most disastrous

[1] Both the crown and palm-branch are borrowed from paganism; but they received additional significance to the Christian from the mention of them in the book of Revelation.—*Maitland's Church in the Catacombs*, p. 177.

events in Protestant history, the most melancholy facts in the annals of perverted reason. How much better, she has proudly asked, is the boasted country of Martin Luther, iron-bound by a godless rationalism, than what men call ignorant and superstitious Italy? Which is to be preferred, the order-loving and tolerant cantons in Catholic Switzerland, with a few peaceable, Jesuit schoolmasters, or those democratic, Protestant districts where a portion of the people at this moment cannot celebrate the Lord's supper but at the peril of life?

Another source of this influence is the mellowing effect of time. The evil that men do is buried with them; the good lives and is evermore hallowed. Errors and weaknesses disappear behind the dusky veil of time; good and great actions stand out in the boldest relief. Critically to analyze the character of the men whom we idolize, would be like desecrating the tomb of a father. Hence there prevails an idea of the faultless character of the piety of the primitive church, which has no foundation in reality. Hence the Italian Catholic looks only on the great illuminated points in the history of his church, passing over the vallies covered with darkness, the marshes stagnant, and redolent with all corruption. To his eye, his mother church in her long, bright history seems like the queen of oriental cities, sitting on the shore of the narrow sea in paradisiacal beauty. We listen to some of the Ambrosian chants or the mediaeval hymns, sung in a temple moss-grown through seven hundred years; the words have an indescribable tenderness, an unearthly solemnity as they float among the arches and linger around the marble columns, and wander along the fretted roof. As the *Stabat mater dolorosa* peals from the organ and from voices without number, we seem to hear those wailing tones and catch the very accents of the holy women who came to see that great sight; and we forget the fatal theological error which lurks in those awful sounds or in those words which embody the very soul of music. No other church has such treasures, because every other is comparatively modern.

3. The Italian church has been sustained in part by permanent funds or by a large, fixed capital. We do not refer so much to the religious foundations, monasteries, nunneries and institutions of the like nature, as to the endowments which support the parish churches, and those which are devoted to the direct extension of Papacy. The former stand on a more precarious tenure, and have often been confiscated or swept away in a revolution. But the capital which has maintained the parochial clergy has been, whatever may be the case in the future, one of the firmest supports of the system. In Tuscany, which has about two thirds of the population of the State of New

York, the permanent funds for the maintenance of the regular clergy amount to several millions of dollars. Whatever is not necessary to the support of the priest is scrupulously distributed to the poor.[1] This provision places the clergy in a position independent in a measure of the people, while it does not diminish their influence over their flocks. What an efficient instrument for the extension of the Catholic faith has been the Congregation de Propaganda Fide at Rome—an entire street filled with its imposing edifices? Its presses in number, its types in variety of languages, its pupils gathered literally from the four quarters of the earth, are a most striking practical proof that the ubiquity of the Catholic church is not a mere rhetorical exaggeration. It is sometimes said that nothing but ardent love to Christ and true faith in his word will sustain a foreign missionary for a series of years in a barbarous and pagan country. Yet the pupils of the Propaganda and other adherents of this religion, have exhibited in unnumbered instances and through long centuries, the most unshaken zeal and the most heroic courage. Either they have been animated by the true Christian spirit, or else the general proposition just referred to is not founded in fact. No isolated efforts, no merely voluntary contributions could ever accomplish what that celebrated society have done. The order of Jesuits is not an exception. They have been, as is well known, the founders of the most splendid churches, the authors or promoters of the largest permanent foundations belonging to the Catholic hierarchy, themselves in turn supported by these foundations.

St. Peter's church itself may be regarded as a permanent fund, whose value for the papacy arithmetic can hardly compute. It stands as the noblest representative of the unity of the Catholic faith, in unapproached grandeur by any edifice now standing, or that was ever built by Greek or Roman, and which Michael Angelo said he labored upon for the love of God. This church by its history, by its associations with the earlier edifice which stood on the same spot, by its faultless proportions, by its effects every year on the thousands who behold it, Protestants and Catholics, the guides of taste and public sentiment in their respective countries, becomes a support to the system, which words have no power to delineate, is an investment for

[1] Florence, e. g. is divided into parishes; there is generally in each parish one parish church, besides other churches and chapels; to each church belong benefices more or less, which are in the hands of patrons, rich families and others; these benefices vary in value from fifty to one hundred or two hundred dollars; there is often great competition for them among the young priests, there being more applicants than places. The candidate must possess a living worth fifty dollars before he can make application. The funds of a church are in the hands of the sacristan.

that church immeasurably richer than the marble and the gold which so profusely adorn it.[1]

May it not be a question, whether we have not seriously and unnecessarily weakened the influence of Protestantism by encouraging the tendency which would abandon all aid from permanent endowments, which would teach us to rely exclusively on the spontaneous liberality of the Christian church? May we not thereby have reason to apprehend evils of no inconsiderable magnitude? Have we not, on this subject, anticipated a period which is yet far off, relying on a steady philanthropy, a warm and uniform Christian charity which does not now exist? May we not expose an institution of great importance, or what is of more value, minds of fine accomplishments in the Christian ministry, whose training has been very costly, to the caprice of a fickle and arbitrary majority, or to the persecution of an unrelenting minority, where all independence of mind, all honorable feeling, is sacrificed to the fashions or caprices of an hour, where the only alternative is cowardly compliance with what conscience and reason do not approve, or starvation?

By fostering this prejudice, this ill-considered tendency, we have manifestly put it out of our power to promote certain objects, which urgently need a permanent basis, which cannot from the nature of the case appeal to popular support, and which—such is the hostility that has been excited against every proposition of the kind—cannot receive the aid of those individuals, who might otherwise possess that enlargement of mind which would lead them to become efficient patrons. Because of some minor evils, or of some fancied and groundless fears, we reject that which the wisdom of ages has approved, and which has been essential to build up both the true and the false systems of learning and of faith.

The two ancient universities in England have never been what they ought to have been; neither are they now what they should be. These great endowments have been the sources of evils both to church

[1] The ancient basilica had existed above one thousand years. The first stone of the new edifice was laid in 1506 by Julius II. The plan was traced by Bramante, who conceived the idea of the dome from Brunelleschi's effort at Florence. His successor, under Leo X., was Giulio di San Gallo; then Raphael with five assistants; then Antonio di San Gallo; then Michael Angelo, who erected the greater part of the dome; he was succeeded by several architects, till 1654, nearly two centuries from the time at which the idea of building it was entertained, when the essential parts were completed, at a cost of 47,000,000 of scudi, about £11,000,000. "The gorgeous dome, suspended in mid air is a firmament; the place indeed has an atmosphere of its own, and in this vastest of cathedrals, the temperature knows no change; neither the enervating *scirocco*, nor the piercing *tramontana*, nor winter nor summer, influence the soft air of this mighty temple"—*Cooke's Rome*, p. 40.

and State. Yet no one could have the hardihood to assert that the evils have been preponderant, that these foundations have not been the sources of good, great and inestimable. The warmest friend of spontaneous charity, and of an unceasing appeal to popular sympathy, could not wish to see them demolished, or their princely revenues dissipated.

4. Italian Catholicism has one of its main supports in the Fine Arts.

Three questions here naturally occur. What is the value of these objects of art? What connection have they with the Roman Catholic religion? What will be their probable influence hereafter?

In answer to the first question, it may be said that no value can be placed upon the principal objects. The price is beyond estimation or conjecture. Perhaps no article of property, movable or fixed, can be compared with them in worth. They could not be exchanged for fine gold. Crown jewels, the regalia of kings, the revenue of diamond mines would be no temptation to the owners of these objects. Gold can be purchased; it is a vulgar article of commerce; diamonds can be dug out of the earth; but no Promethean art can reillumine the soul of Raphael, or spread before him those visions of superhuman beauty. The wealth of the Indies could not replace the Apollo, were it destroyed. The Sistine chapel could be painted only by him who hung the dome of St. Peter's.

All the capitals of Italy, and most of the principal cities, contain galleries filled with objects, which become the more precious as time advances. Years of intelligent and patient and genial study cannot exhaust them, can only help one to begin to understand them, any more than the genius of Homer or of Milton can be comprehended in a day or a year. Two or three of these Italian masters stand on the same unapproachable elevation with those great poets that shine with a never setting light. These galleries, these immortal works are not locked up, are not secluded from the vulgar gaze, like the idols of the East, but they are visited and studied by all Christendom, Catholic and Protestant. They are the goal of pilgrims as fervent as ever wound their way to the shrine of a prophet. They are moulding the taste, shaping the sentiments and determining the character of some of the leading minds of the age, of all who have any power to appreciate beauty in its deathless forms.

The second inquiry is, How are these objects of art connected with the Roman Catholic religion? Rather we may ask, Wherein are they not interfused and incorporated, made to breathe an influence which is ever insinuating and all but universal? The religion is ad-

dressed in a preëminent degree, especially in its practical workings, to the imagination, the fancy, the feelings, the outward sense. It seeks to take the reason captive by filling the eye with tears, by enchanting the ear, and by stirring all the sensibilities of our nature. Admiration is the mother of devotion; God, through the medium of the virgin, is influenced by tears and passionate outcries and wailing lamentations. To the building up of this stupendous system, kings, patriarchs, popes, councils, theologians, monks, missionaries have not been the sole, perhaps not the principal contributors. The gods of papal Rome were made by the chisel and the pencil of more cunning workmen than these. Craftsmen more honored in life than any of the Gregories or Leos; since their death canonized with a profounder homage, lent all the charms of their inimitable genius to support and adorn what they could not enough honor. One of them sleeps in the Pantheon, whom, when he was alive, men regarded with religious veneration as if God had revealed himself through him, as he did in former days by the prophets. The tomb of another is in the Westminster Abbey of Florence, by the side of those of Machiavelli, Galileo and Dante.

The position of the holy virgin in the Romish system is well known. It has been often observed that the degree of reverence paid to the sacred persons is in the following order: the virgin, her Divine Son, God the Father. Fourteen festivals in the calendar are dedicated especially to her honor. Churches innumerable bear her name. Altars the most sacred and cherished are fragrant with incense to her coëqual glory. Everywhere and in all possible forms, she is adored. Yet the most worthy offering ever presented to her was the genius of Raphael. She was the ideal of all heavenly beauty forever floating before him, the subject of his dreams by night, his toils by day. Nowhere does his genius revel so as upon her form. Never have all the types, and symbols, and conceptions of beauty been so etherealized as in the touch of his pencil on this entrancing theme. The gems of the richest collections in Europe are Raphael's Madonnas.

The same remarks apply substantially to most of the other masters of painting. The great attraction at Parma is Correggio's picture, the most remarkable figures in which are the Madonna and child, Mary Magdalene and Jerome. "The eminently grand picture" of the academy at Venice is the Assumption of the virgin by Titian. A Madonna, unlike any other, sweet and beautiful exceedingly, is that by And. del Sarto in the Pitti palace at Florence. In the academy at Bologna, the visitor is instantly attracted to the Madonna della Pietà of Guido; and so in many other places. The artists have lav-

ished the resources of the highest genius in making the Roman Catholic religion visible, in embodying it in breathing forms, in commending its most objectionable features, through the fascinations of an inimitable coloring, to all men of accomplished minds. To reject a doctrine presented in this form seems to be a rebellion against the canons of taste, an extinguishing of the lights of learning and civilization. Not to palliate or overlook an anti-scriptural dogma, or a fatal error, when it is surrounded with all the illusions of genius, is a barbarism which multitudes of Protestants would shrink from being guilty of. Those who would on no account kiss a relic or worship the host, will, yielding up their better judgment, bestow their warmest admiration upon the still more objectionable forms of pictured or sculptured beauty. An idolatrous attachment to some of the Christian fathers is one of the sins of the Roman Catholic church. But this is a peccadillo, or in a great measure atoned for, if the artist has added his imperishable sanction. The worship of images has been the reproach of the Papal church for ages; yet, in the view of many Protestants even, it seems a venial offence, as they gaze on the fresco and mosaic, or the marble standing before them, wrought with cunning skill and almost warm with life. It is a total perversion of the design of a church to crowd it with specimens of art or antiquity, to make it, as it often is in Europe, a museum or a picture gallery. It is said that there are nearly fourteen thousand granite columns in Rome, relics of the times of the empire, and more than six thousand antique columns of marble, many of which are in the churches, and thus become to multitudes objects of intenser interest than the worship of God, or the doctrines of Christ.[1]

The remaining question is, What will be the position and influence of the Fine Arts hereafter? How far will the Roman Catholic church rest on them as among its firmest supports?

That they will supply one of the moulding influences of society, even in its best and most Christian state, there can be no doubt. Some of the productions of the great masters, should they be spared in the accidents of time, can never cease to be the teachers of the world, because they are addressed to a primary and imperishable part of our nature, because they furnish correct and most awakening conceptions of truth, and excite the religious feelings in a degree compared with which spoken words have little power. For example, the pictures of the Crucifixion and the Last Judgment by Rubens, and of the Transfiguration by Raphael, are coincident with Scriptural truth, and will haunt the memory and awaken awful fear, or profound adora-

[1] Burton's, Rome II. p. 115.

tion, or tender love, days and weeks after they are withdrawn from the sight. These works are an index of what the human soul is capable of effecting, and their direct tendency is to fill the mind with exalted views of the glory of Him who breathed into man the breath of genius. They present before him who gazes upon them an ideal of excellence in the highest degree exciting and influential, whatever be the nature of his pursuits. In possessing susceptibilities that can derive satisfaction from such sources, he is inwardly exalted. By the aid of this almost spiritual pencilling, he can grasp some of those conceptions which would be otherwise dim and shadowy. In this world we do not need intellect nor truth, but that power that will excite the soul and fasten it on the truth and beauty with which its own depths and all objective nature are filled.

Now it is in vain to say that this is mere fancy, a momentary impression which exerts no practical effect on the heart and life. A man may be educated for heaven by the reflex influence of the thoughts and aspirations of his own soul, as truly as by a precept or an objective motive. The more pure and elevated one's feelings are on any subject, the more laden his mind is with all the symbols of grace and beauty, the more able he will be to resist the allurements to evil by which he is beset.

No true Protestant would, indeed, undertake to apologize for the creations of taste and art in Italy, so far as they misinterpret or confound Scriptural truth, or inculcate theological error, or excite unworthy passions and criminal desires. In the reformed and better age, which, we believe is coming, all such productions will be swept away, or estimated, as we now estimate the fables of the Greek mythology. In that better period, too, these pursuits will not usurp a place which does not belong to them, but will assume their appropriate and subordinate position. But till that purer state of society arrives, the Roman Catholic church in Italy will continue to rest on the Fine Arts as one of its surest foundations. The growth of ages, what is so incorporated into the habits and feelings, associated with the most affecting periods of human life, the most touching offices of the church and the holiest recollections of history, will not be easily relinquished.

Besides, there are powerful influences in the Protestant world, which are coincident and corroborating. The ritual and the practices of the Lutheran Communion on the continent of Europe are but very partially reformed. Many of their church edifices can with difficulty be distinguished from the papal. Much of the finest poetry of the present day, the best of the romances, and of the most splendid essay

writing lend all their charms and power in strengthening the very tendency on which the Papal system reposes. The claims of theological truth and the great interests of mankind are made to yield to the charms of diction, to poetic fancy or to a false liberality. The worshippers of the fine arts in most of the Protestant countries of Europe were never more numerous or enthusiastic than they are at this moment, never more willing to sacrifice truth to outward beauty, never more willing to promote by their example, what in profession they would disown. The fascinations of genius are in some instances, an apology for what is no more nor less than undisguised sensualism. The pious and Protestant king of Prussia has now in his national collection in Berlin, two or three productions exquisite in art, but which would not be openly exposed in the States of the church in Italy.

5. The system has been sustained by means of the truth which it includes in its creeds and formularies. It is owing to the same reason in part that the Mohammedan faith has been able to maintain an independent existence so long. Truth cannot be wholly buried up. It has a certain innate and recuperative energy. It may be darkened and perverted; it may be mixed with sophisms, or ingeniously explained away, or caricatured; during long ages it may seem to have left the world to a dead formalism or to a malignant fanaticism; yet it secretly operates in some hearts. Like those influences which are at work in the hard, wintry ground, it is silently preparing its forces and will in due time reveal some little spots of cheerful verdure.

The Decrees of the Council of Trent are the authorized standard of the Catholic church. No fault can be found with a considerable portion of these articles, and of the explanations which are subjoined. All Protestant churches would fully accord with important parts of the Confession. Indeed, the creeds of some of the Protestant churches are in a large measure only a translation from the Romish. Unwise explanations, acute and groundless distinctions, the insertion of positive error, the multiplication of unauthorized observances, or even the immoral lives of not a few who administer the system, do not wholly change its nature, cannot entirely exclude its redeeming influence. Not seldom, some individuals, whose hearts have been touched by divine grace, have been able to maintain their ground in the Catholic church, though they have boldly preached some saving truths, and neglected or denounced the pernicious errors by which they were surrounded.

Such appear to be some of the principal reasons for the protracted existence and comparatively flourishing state of the Italian church.

Her errors in doctrine, and her anti-Christian practices find, indeed, a vigorous nourishment in the tendencies of depraved human nature. But unmixed error and superstition, or unadulterated depravity, cannot be the sole cause of the long duration of this church. Her strength lies in the artful commingling of good and evil elements, in having at her command resources for most adroit management, in being able to appeal to some of the most innocent, as well as powerful, tendencies of our nature, in taking advantage of varying events in Providence and of the changing aspects of society, and in being able to point to such men as Bernard and Borromeo, Pascal and Fenelon and the present bishop of Rome, as undoubted proofs of the excellent fruits which the system is fitted to produce.

II. We shall now proceed, in the second place, to adduce some of the causes of the weakness of the Roman Catholic system, especially, though by no means exclusively, as it exists in Italy; and shall enumerate some of the facts which prove that this system is in conflict with the Bible, with sound reason and with the advancement of society, and which assure us of its reformation or its ultimate overthrow.

One preliminary remark is important. The Italian Catholic does not see with our eyes. He does not examine his system through a Protestant medium. His principles of inquiry are not drawn from the inductive philosophy. The priest, educated under a different system of dialectics, is not familiar with that large, round about, common sense of which Locke writes, and which we are accustomed to apply to a religious system. We are sometimes amazed that a Roman Catholic does not look at a church question as we are taught to examine it. In his religious services, we may continually witness scenes so trivial and contemptible, that we are astonished at the gravity of the principal performers, and at the gullibility of the awe-stricken crowd. But the Romish priest is trained to substitute ingenuity for argument, plausible suppositions for facts, subtle discrimination for solid reasoning. There is indeed little common ground between the Protestant and Catholic theologian. The mind of the latter has been trained for ages in a manner so unlike that of an intelligent Protestant, that it seems to be a hopeless task to try to overthrow the Catholic hierarchy by argument. So it is with the mass of the devotees. They seem to have lost or never possessed the power to perceive what is ludicrous or utterly trivial. But while we pity their credulity, they are grieved at our infidelity or shocked at our irreverence and the frigid unconcern which we exhibit in witnessing the celebration of the most awful mysteries of their faith.

These considerations should teach us to judge of the Romish practices with all Christian candor and charity; they may also lead us to moderate our expectations of the very speedy overthrow of the system. It has such a tenacious hold of the senses and the imagination, the hopes and the fears of the people, that the process of extinguishing it, or of thoroughly reforming it, may be difficult and protracted.

1. The Roman Catholic system is not favorable to the industry and physical prosperity of a State. No comparison is more fair, none can be less easily set aside than that which is often instituted between the principal Protestant and Catholic countries of Europe. The argument is open and read of all men; it cannot be met, nor its force evaded. Protestantism is favorable to the temporal prosperity of nations; Roman Catholicism is not, or in proportion as it is, it departs from its spirit and usages.

The reasons of this contrast are perfectly obvious. The general influence of the Papacy in repressing freedom of thought, independence of opinion, the sense of personal responsibility, the motives to individual exertion, is not confined to the territory of morals and religion; it has extended over the entire physical life, all the departments of industry and action. If the members of a community are not allowed to think on questions affecting their spiritual interests, they will be apt to be sluggish and thriftless in all which pertains to their temporal well-being.

Again, through its innumerable festivals and holy-day observances, Romanism essentially interferes with habits of industry and the regular business of life. The command, "Six days shalt thou labor," is interpreted to mean, "three or four days shalt thou labor; all the rest shall be fasts or holidays." The number of canonized saints on its calendar is eleven hundred and twenty-eight,[1] the annual festivals of multitudes of whom are celebrated by the church universal, or by large portions of it. The checks upon industry, and the habits of idleness arising from this source, where the fasts and festivals are observed with any degree of strictness, are innumerable.

Besides, the number of ecclesiastics, who pursue no useful occupation, and who are not needed for any spiritual purpose, is enormously great. The city of Rome, with a population of 175,000, has more than three hundred churches and one ecclesiastic to every thirty of its population.[2] The kingdom of Naples, not including Sicily, with a pop-

[1] Catalogue Alphabetique des Saints et Saintes, avec la date de leur mort et de leurs fêtes, Annuaire Historique, Paris, 1847.

[2] The city of Rome, according to the official census, reported in the Augsburgh Allgem. Zeit., 1847, had 54 parishes, 27,532 families, 39 bishops, 1514 priests,

ulation of about six millions, has nearly one hundred thousand priests and persons belonging to the religious orders. The barren island of Sardinia is furnished with one hundred and seventeen convents.

Idleness, rather than positive immorality, is the charge which is most commonly laid at the door of the priesthood in the city of Rome. They are promenading the streets, lounging at the museums and picture galleries, and are not occupied in their appropriate calling. The Roman Catholic church is the mother of idleness as well as of ignorance. The great mass of the population in many parts of Italy are indescribably poor; the property is in the hands of the bankers and of a few other rich men. The vast Campagna near Rome, the immense Pontine marshes lining the Appian Way towards Naples, impregnated with disease and death, would become within two years, in the hands of an Englishman or New Englander, the garden of the world.[1] So far as industry and the true principles of Political Economy take root in a Roman Catholic country, it is by a departure, and only by a departure, from the spirit of the system.[2]

2. The Catholic system is preëminently a materializing system. It measures spiritual truth, to a great extent, according to a gross and earthly standard. It clothes pure and elevated ideas in a garb foreign to their nature, or connects with them mean and repulsive associations. Instead of raising mortals to the skies, it robs angels of their spiritual glory. The sublime and dreadful mysteries of the invisible world, into which the seraphim would fear to intrude, are opened to the vulgar gaze, and are made so definite and mensurable and earthlike, as

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2471 monks, 1754 nuns, 521 seminaries, and a population of 175,883. Naples, with a population of 360,000, has 300 churches.

[1] In 1797, when the Papal government was overturned by the French, the Board of Public Subsistence exhibited a deficit of 3,293,000 crowns, incurred in retailing bread to the people.

[2] We learned the following facts at Naples in 1847 on the best authority. The government at that time had a complete monopoly of tobacco, salt, playing cards and snow. The last article is considered indispensable. Salt was $2,50 a bushel. The land-tax was sometimes enormously high, amounting to one fourth of a man's income. But it was very unequal, as a small bribe would induce the assessors to lay a light tax on one, while that laid upon another who happened to be absent, or who would not pay the bribe, was ruinous. The country enjoys one of the finest climates and has a most fertile soil, yet there is little general prosperity and little foreign commerce. The state of morals in the city is deplorably low. Pimps abound in the streets, who solicit passengers and strangers to criminal indulgence. According to the testimony of Dr. Cox, an English physician, one fourth of the diseases of males at Naples, is either depending on or complicated with diseases caused by dissipation. Contentions and quarrels frequently occur among different priests and parishes.

to lose their legitimate influence and become nearly transformed into material substances.

Proofs and illustrations of these remarks might be accumulated almost without end. After the communicant makes the sign of the cross at the sacrament he says: "May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to eternal life,"[1]—his body really, truly and substantially. When the last notes of the Sanctus have died upon the ear, a small bell tinkles, and our Lord is physically present on the altar, under the emblems—his literal body and blood are partaken of —a physical, materializing interpretation of Scripture, which is only a specimen of a system which is applied to a large part of the entire volume.

Some of the numerous rules laid down in the Roman Missal for the taking of the sacrament are disgustingly minute, surrounding a spiritual truth with the most familiar and degrading images. Some of the articles are not fit for quotation. "If any one does not fast after midnight," the rubric prescribes, "even after the taking of water only, or of any other drink or food, even in the shape of medicine, and in whatsoever minute quantity, he cannot communicate or celebrate. If the residue of the food remaining in the mouth be swallowed, the residuary particles do not prevent communion, since they are not swallowed after the manner of food. The same is to be said, if in washing the face, a drop of water should be swallowed, contrary to the intention."[1]

So the doctrines of repentance and the forgiveness of sins are miserably degraded by the penances and indulgences of the Romish system, even if we admit the most plausible explanations of the Catholic theologians. The intercourse of the soul of man with its Maker, in its most solemn moments, in the deciding crises of its destiny are tampered with by the arts of a mercenary traffic. Temporal rewards and punishments, if not eternal, are made a marketable commodity.

Over the gateway of many churches in Rome is to be seen posted up the words: "Indulgentia plenaria, perpetua et quotidiana, pro vivis et defunctis." Sometimes the sentence is on a marble slab in the church; sometimes it is a written, framed tablet of parchment, hanging upon a column; sometimes in gilt letters on a metal plate; at others, on a loose printed paper. On the inner wall of the church of St. Sebastian, which stands without the walls on the Appian Way, is a marble inscription which declares that "whosoever shall have entered it (i. e. the catacomb) shall obtain plenary remission of all his

[1] Bishop England's Explanation of the Construction, etc. of a Church, Rome, 1845, p. 144.

sins, through the merits of the one hundred and seventy-four thousand holy martyrs, and of forty-six high pontiffs, likewise martyrs," who were interred there. "So many are the indulgences of the Lateran church," it is declared, "that they cannot in any wise be numbered but by God alone."[1]

The great facts of our future, spiritual existence, so simple and sublime, so incapable of being symbolized by the gross objects of sense, are robbed, in the sermons of the Italian preachers, of their true efficiency, and made to assume the most grotesque, or repulsive, material forms. The Paradise and Gehenna of the Moslems, the Elysium and the Hades of Virgil might find exact counterparts in the discourses of many professed Christian preachers.

Three or four years ago an eloquent Italian friar preached in Rome. His subject was the Last Judgment. And he handled it in a manner to terrify the poor audience to the utmost degree, using every art his imagination could suggest. Sometimes he threw a veil over the Madonna's face, or turned her round, for she moved on a pivot, and exhibited her back to his audience in token of alienation of feeling; sometimes he shook her garments which were black, allusive to the train of thought in which he was indulging; he then produced an iron chain and scourged himself violently with it, the harsh clank of which against the panels of the pulpit, united with the heavy sounds of the ropes with which some of his hearers were lacerating themselves, together with the sobs and shrieks of the females, were terrifying to the firmest nerves.

On the following evening, his subject was Hell. It might have been Omniscience itself that was speaking, so intimate was the knowledge displayed of the secrets of that unknown world. Towards the end of the discourse, he called for a lighted pitch torch, which was in waiting, and deliberately rolling up his sleeve, held his wrist imme-

[1] The following are taken from various churches in Rome. In St. Luigi dei Francesci, "whoever prays for the king of France has ten days of indulgence," by pope Innocent IV. In St. Pietro in Carcere, "S. Sylvester granted every day to those who visited it 1200 years of indulgence, doubled on Sundays and commanded festivals, and besides, every day the remission of a third part of sins." In St. Cosmo and Damian, "Gregory I. granted to all and each one visiting this church of St. Cosmo and Damian, 1000 years of indulgence, and on the day of the station of the same church, the same Gregory granted 10,000 years of indulgence." On a marble slab near the door of the church of St. Saviour di Thermis, is the following: "Indulgences conceded in perpetuity by high pontiffs in this church. Every day of the year there are 1230 years of indulgence; for all Lent there is plenary indulgence; for the pilgrims there is every day plenary indulgence."—*Romanism as it exists in Rome, by the Hon. J. W. Percy*, pp. 48—53.

diately over the flame. Such was the torment, he said, to which every member of the sinner's body would be subjected through all eternity. There was no flinching on the part of the friar, so strongly were his nerves strung; nor was there any deception.[1]

Now this method of exhibiting truth was extraordinary only in degree. It habitually appeals to the inferior part of our nature. It seeks to reduce every proposition to sensible proof. It likes to trust in nothing which cannot be seen and weighed and measured. In short its tendency is to supercede the use of the reason by reducing the highest and most spiritual truths to the level of the outward sense.

3. One of the most striking forms under which Italian Catholicism appears is that of a baptized paganism. It is an extraordinary mixture of Roman polytheism and Christianity. The stranger at Rome can at times with difficulty recollect whether he is walking in the streets of Augustus's Rome or in those of Pius the Ninth. He turns a corner and passes out of Jesus Street and enters Minerva Street. He gazes upon Vespasian's amphitheatre and then listens to a friar preaching in the centre of it. Looking at the inscriptions on the churches, he reads "Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Santa Maria in Lucina, Santo Apollinare, Santo Martino." The saints Cosmo and Damiano are worshipped where there was a temple of Romulus and Remus. A noble building, at this moment nearly perfect, dedicated to Antoninus and his wife Faustina, is now the church of St. Lorenzo. One descends out of a church into the Mammertine prison where Catiline's fellow conspirators were confined. The ancient Romans had a great number of local gods, who presided over particular places or occupations. St. Martin is now the protector of the millers. St. Luke is the patron of sculptors, painters and architects. A likeness of the Madonna, painted by him, says the Roman almanac, exists in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore. St. Erasmus is the advocate against spasmodic sufferings, St. Rocco against plagues, St. Bonosa against the small pox and St. Martha against epidemic diseases.[2] People take their feeble children to the Church of St. Theodore, at the foot of the Palatine hill, where the Roman matrons formerly dedicated their children to Romulus. On a certain day, the cardinals are seen sweeping up the nave of St. Peter's, in their scarlet robes, in order to kiss the bronze statue of the apostle, which, it is said, was once dedicated to the worship of Jupiter Capitolinus. No Roman Catholic will pass it without going through the ceremony. Three of the toe-nails of the right foot are worn away. Cicero, describing a statue says, that its mouth and chin were somewhat worn, because the people

[1] Rome Pagan and Papal, 1846, p. 244.

[2] Ibid. p. 24.

in their prayers and thanksgivings were accustomed not only to worship it, but to kiss it. On the left side of the Church of St. Mary, on the Capitoline hill, are exposed at Christmas, two images of Augustus and the Cumaean Sibyl, respectively, in memory of the popular tradition, that the Sibyl predicted the birth of our Saviour, and that Augustus, therefore, erected an altar to her memory. Particular churches in Rome are filled with votive offerings, from penitent criminals, or from those who have escaped various dangers. The ancient mariner vowed to Castor and Pollux, or to Neptune; the shepherd dedicated his pipe to Pan; the poet vowed to Apollo, and the successful general to Jupiter Feretrius.

Nothing is more striking than a Roman Catholic funeral, especially when it occurs about midnight. The body, placed on a bier, is borne on men's shoulders, with the face exposed. Two files of hooded monks, chant the offices for the dead in a low and melancholy tone, each bearing a gleaming torch. The exact counterpart of this might have been witnessed in Rome two thousand years ago. The pagan brought an animal or the fruits of the earth as an offering on the altar. He performed a lustration with water and incense. He supplicated Vesta and Janus with grain and wine. The Christian brings a composition, which to the senses, appears to be nothing but flour and water, but which, as he asserts, is the very body of the Lord Jesus.

Christmas is the Saturnalia of the Romans; New year's day too was a day of great account in ancient Rome, and it is equally so in modern Rome. The Carnival is a representation, in innumerable particulars, of the Saturnalia, and the Bachanalian Lupercalia of the ancients.[1]

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[1] The Carnival commences on Saturday and continues eleven days, excepting the two Sabbaths and Friday. A long and straight street—the Corso—is filled with masked persons, soldiers, horses and carriages, slowly passing in two lines and then returning again. The maskers are decked in all kinds of fantastic garments, women's clothes, horns on their heads, tails sticking out of their bodies, occasionally pretending to drink out of empty bottles in their hands, reeling as if intoxicated, etc. In each of the carriages are from two to eight or ten persons, largely provided with flowers tied together in knots, and with little balls made of lime in the form of sugar-plums. These flowers and balls are thrown with great vigor into the balconies and windows of the houses, or into the faces of those who are in the streets, and are returned in large measure from every direction. In some cases half-pints or pints of these plums are poured down in rapid succession upon the heads and faces of persons passing. This most grotesque scene, in which the whole population of the eternal city seems to be engaged, is finally closed by the racing through the street of five or six poor horses, without riders, urged on by the shouts of the people and by little goads or nails, fastened to tin plates which they wear.

In defence of this identification of the customs and usages of Pagan and Christian Rome, the Catholic maintains that the demon has been exorcised, the polytheistic rite has been sanctified, and that the vicegerent of the Almighty has laid his holy hands on the heathenish symbol and converted it into an instrument to God's glory. Christianity has thus obtained a visible and tangible victory over the ancient faith, more impressive than if the objects of this idolatry had been all extirpated.

But this confident advocate forgets that a law of the human mind is stronger than a decree of the pope; that none of his blessings or imprecations can annul or disturb the association of ideas. The imperial statue, the pagan rite, how many times soever the holy chrism has been poured upon them, will suggest the forbidden idolatry, may invite to a repetition of the unholy act.

This perpetuation of the old polytheism, this amalgamation of the rites of idolatry and of the Christian faith, constitutes one of the weakest points of the Romish system. It is a crude mixture, a heterogeneous conglomeration of particles which have no affinity. Pure Christianity indignantly spurns the compromise, disclaims all this attempted fusion of contrary elements, and will stand, if at all, on its independent simplicity.

4. Again, the Roman Catholic system, in some of its aspects, is preëminently childish and unreasonable. If its most earnest efforts had been directed to dissociate the understanding and faith, to separate belief from common sense, it could hardly have succeeded more perfectly. The tax which it practically lays on the credulity of human nature is almost incredible. This childish superstition would not be extraordinary, if it were confined to the unreasoning and illiterate multitude, or if it were exclusively seen in retired villages, or secluded country churches. Our commiseration would in that case be excited for the dupes of these wretched delusions. But when the most renowned churches of the metropolis of the world are the selected scenes of this jugglery; when the Holy Father himself and his most enlightened servants give the sanction of their authority and presence, in the nineteenth century, to fables, to alleged miracles of the most ludicrous and lying character, the pity ends in astonishment that a system with such elements could have survived a thousand years, in a country that claims to be the great source of civilization, and the central seat of the Christian faith.

On one of the days in January, 1847, the Church of St. Andrea delle Fratte, near the college of the Propaganda, was filled repeatedly; every individual of the throng, apparently, except a few foreigners,

went up to the priest, successively, and kissed a bone, said once to have belonged to the patron saint of the church. Not a few of the elite of the city, as well as the poor peasantry, were there. Children of a few months old were brought in to touch the mysterious relic. Those who were particularly devout had the privilege of kissing the fragment twice or thrice.

On the Coelian hill, just inside of the southern wall of Rome, stand two of the seven Basilican churches of Rome, St. John Lateran and the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. The view from the top of St. John Lateran has no equal in Rome, perhaps not on earth. There are but few modern buildings in the vicinity to mar the prospect. The ruins of old Rome rear their ivy-crowned summits, or crumble all around with a most melancholy impressiveness. On the west, beyond the Coliseum, the arch of Titus and the Palatine, the Tiber flows into the blue Mediterranean, both river and sea perfectly distinct. On the north-west, is the Roman forum, bounded by the Tarpeian rock and the Capitoline. On the north and north-east is the modern city, crowned by that one imperial dome. Far beyond, the prospect is limited by the single mountain—still in the winter, "alta stet nive candidum," the lyric poet's Soracte. On the east and south-east, bright in the sun's setting rays, are the Sabine hills, Tusculum, Preneste and other objects so famous in Latin story. On the south, stretches away the undulating Campagna, traversed by the old aqueducts with their vast arches, and dotted by the mouldering fragments of a buried world. Here, if anywhere, it would seem, the churches should be built in all purity and simplicity—the chosen seats of a worship befitting the locality, lifting the soul to Him, who, while he sees mighty empires decaying beneath, is himself from everlasting to everlasting. Yet these two churches are the selectest receptacles of superstition and impious fraud; of relics which are an insult to the human understanding, and which pour contempt on the great doctrine of the resurrection of the body.

On a tablet hanging to one of the columns of the tabernacle over the high altar in St. John Lateran, is a list of the relics which are there preserved. Some of them are as follows: part of the arm of St. Helen, mother of Constantine; part of the bones of Salome, mother of John; a finger of St. Catharine of Siena; part of the brain of St. Vincent of Paul; the head of Zacharias, father of John the Baptist; the cup in which John the apostle drank poison by command of Domitian; part of his garments, and of the chain with which he was bound when he came from Ephesus to Rome; part of the chin of John the Baptist; part of our Lord's cradle at Bethlehem, and of the

napkin with which he wiped his hands after the supper; one of the thorns of the crown; part of the sponge, and of the blood and water which flowed from his side. In this church is also the veritable table around which our Lord and his disciples reclined when the supper was instituted.

In the Church of the Holy Cross, a few rods east, is a parchment list suspended on the wall on the right of the apsis. Here it will be decorous to quote only some items. Among them is the finger of St. Thomas, with which he touched the most holy side of our Lord, the same finger being preserved at four other churches; the altar of St. Helen, so holy that only the pontiff and one cardinal can celebrate there; a great part of the holy veil and of the hair of the virgin; and one bottle of the most precious blood of our Lord.

In this church, also, are the stone on which the angel stood when he announced the incarnation; the stone where the Lord wrote the law on Mt. Sinai; some of the manna of the desert; part of the rod of Aaron which budded; and relics of eleven of the Hebrew prophets.[1]

Between these two churches, and near St. John Lateran, is a building of singular form, partly resembling a church and partly a house, with an open portico in front. Within this portico, are three flights of steps. The middle flight—the Santa Scala—is that by which Jesus entered the palace of Pilate. The steps are made of marble, and covered with wood to guard against their further destruction. How they were brought there is a matter of devout conjecture. Sometimes more than two hundred persons are seen at a time ascending upon their knees this middle flight. Protestants are permitted to walk up and down the other two, though these are thought to have imbibed a portion of sanctity. Under the Sacra Confessione in St. Peter's Church, encircled by a beautiful balustrade, composed of marbles, and decorated with more than one hundred superb lamps continually burning, the mortal remains of the great apostle of the church repose. In the Diario Romano, for 1847, we read, "in the churches of Ara-Coeli, Francesco a Ripa and others, is performed the function of the replacement of the Holy Infant, Jan. 6." This image was said to be miraculously painted a flesh color, and it is held in the highest veneration by the citizens of Rome.

The contradiction and absurdities into which this relic-worship leads would be astounding were they found in any other connection than that of the Roman Catholic church. It may not be inapposite to quote a few of the details.

[1] See the complete lists of these relics in the churches, also in the common descriptions of Rome, e. g. *Percy's Romanism*, p. 82.

The body of St. Andrew is worshipped at Constantinople, Amalfi, Toulouse, in Russia, at the convent of the apostles in Armenia, without reckoinng a sixth head of the apostle which may be kissed at Rome. The body of St. James is venerated at Compostella, Verona, Toulouse, Pistoie and Rome, without mentioning a sixth head which is carried in procession at Venice, and a seventh which is preserved in the abbey of Arras in France. There are eight bodies of Luke, eighteen of Paul, and thirty of St. Pancratius in as many different cities. Constantinople formerly claimed to have possession of St. Peter's body, except the head which was left at Rome. His relics are venerated in the abbey of Claude in France and in the convent of Cluny at Arles. There is a finger in the monastery of the Three churches in Armenia, a thumb at Toulouse, and three teeth at Marseilles. The chair in St. Peter's church in which that apostle exercised his office, is said to have been examined by the profane French soldiers when they had possession of Rome, who copied the inscription, namely, "There is but one God and Mohammed is his prophet." The chair was probably among the spoils of the Crusaders.

There is another account which seems to show that there have been at least two chairs exhibited, each as identically the chair which St. Peter used. On the 18th of January, 1688, when the chair was cleaning, in order to be set up in some conspicuous place in the Vatican, there unluckily appeared carved upon it, the twelve labors of Hercules. Giacomo Bartolini, who was present at the discovery, affirms that their worship was not misplaced, since it was paid, not to the wood, but to the prince of the apostles. Another distinguished author attempted to explain the labors of Hercules in a mystical sense, namely, as emblematical of the future exploits of the popes.[1]

5. The Roman Catholic system, particularly as it is seen in Italy, is throughout in all its parts and in all its aspects, a religion of symbols, a system of types or sensible signs. The Romish ritual, the ceremonial, interminable in length, every part of a church, every article of the sacerdotal dress, every fringe on that dress, every provision which is made for man's spiritual nature from the cradle to the grave, in the most minute particulars, are significant, are crowded with a mystic importance. Myriads of instructors start up on every side, who will never allow the poor man to think an original thought, or step once out of the charmed circle.

The crucifix is placed on the centre of the altar where the bloody immolation is to be made; candles are lighted; by their blaze exhib-

[1] See Lady Morgan's Italy, and the Treatise by Dr. A. Sheler, on the question, Was St. Peter ever at Rome? London, 1846, pp. 117, 118.

iting the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of fiery tongues; the altar must be of stone representing the rock of salvation; the vestment must be white on the festival of those saints who, without shedding their blood, gave their testimony by the practice of exalted virtues; red on the festivals of martyrs; violet in times of penance; green on those days when there is no special solemnity; and black on Good Friday. In the alb of the priest the beholders see the white robe in which the Saviour was clothed when he was sent back by Herod to Pilate. The cincture reminds the faithful of the cord which bound the innocent victim. The stole is significant of the manner in which the Saviour was fastened to the cross; it forms a kind of yoke on the shoulders, reminding the wearer of Jesus who can enable him to bear his cross. The handkerchief suggests to the congregation the cord by which the Lamb of God was bound to the pillar when he was scourged. Another vestment represents the seamless coat of Christ.[1]

Thus it is in innumerable particulars, in a thousand branches and ramifications of this cumbrous system. It does not address the reason, it speaks to the eye; it does not lead to profound meditation; it kindles the fancy. It discourages all liberal inquiry, all manly investigation, all independent training.[2] It is founded on the assumption that the human race is to be forever in its childhood, always to be wrapped in its swaddling bands, never to go beyond its elementary lessons, never to be disengaged from the hand of its teacher, never to come into the glorious freedom of the children of God. It is, in many of its aspects, Judaism carried out into detail, omitting that common sense and those lofty views which characterize the earlier Economy. Now the question is, Will the world, will Italy, always be in bondage to these beggarly elements? to the provisions of an introductory dispensation, now utterly barren and effete? The question needs only to be stated to be answered. As surely as civilization and knowledge increase, some of the most objectionable characteristics

[1] See Bishop England's "Explanation," passim.

[2] "The church requires of her children, that they shall conform their minds to that meaning, which has been received in the beginning with the books themselves, from their inspired compilers; and that they will never take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of those fathers, who in every age have given to us the uninterrupted testimony of this original signification. She knows of no principle of common sense, or of religion, upon which any individual could, after the lapse of centuries, assume to himself the prerogative of discovering the true meaning of any passage of the Bible to be different from that which is thus testified by the unanimous declaration of the great bulk of Christendom."—*Bishop England.*

of the Romish system must be abandoned. The contrast between them and Christianity is as great as it is between the Mishna and the New Testament.

6. Again, the Roman Catholic system is based on the interpretation or the misinterpretation of a very few picked passages of the Bible. This is obvious, not only in her written Apologies, but upon and within her churches; in the inscriptions on her altars; in her monumental tablets for the dead; on her memorial crosses by the road side, and wherever she has been able to affix her watchwords. The text declaring the supremacy of St. Peter, "Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam, et tibi dabo claves regni coelorum," is written in colossal letters of gold upon a purple ground within the dome of her metropolitan temple. The one passage in which auricular confession finds its authority, is rung upon by a thousand changes. One isolated passage, ever on the lips of the priest, is the invariable support of the mysterious transubstantiation. Indeed it may be said to rest on the monosyllable. From a solitary declaration, is derived the power of the priest to absolve the sinner. The perpetual virginity of Mary is inferred from half a verse, which by natural implication, teaches the direct contrary. The celibacy of the clergy has its basis on a few passages which, according to the declarations of the inspired writers themselves, had only a local and temporary application. The doctrine of penances appeals to the mistranslation of a single Greek noun.

Now it is hardly necessary to say that any system of religious doctrine or of church government which can find no wider support must ultimately fall. No Christian hierarchy can stand which shrinks from an examination of any portion of the Scriptures, or which puts forth its claims on the strength of a few passages which are severed from their context. It is the glory of Protestantism that it has no favorite chapters and verses. It stands or falls on the spirit of the entire volume, on the widest induction of particulars, on the consentaneous support of all the sacred writers, and of all which they declare. It pretends to no darling apostle, to no artfully culled symbols; it shrinks from no argument, is afraid of no catechizing, never arrays faith against reason, and relies on that same broad, common sense interpretation of the Bible, which our great jurist would apply to the constitution of his country.

7. We may infer, finally, the ultimate downfall, or the essential reformation of the Roman Catholic system in Italy, from the character and history of the present pontiff.

When the historian Niebuhr was in Rome, about thirty years ago,

he said that the Italians were a nation of walking dead men. It is so no longer. About two years since, there was a concerted night celebration of the former expulsion of the Austrians from Genoa. The mountain tops, which no police men could reach, were at one and the same moment in a blaze. These midnight fires responding from summit to summit, were but a symbol of the fires that were burning in a nation's breast. It was the signal of the reunion, of the renationalizing of the Italian State. It had found in one name, as it thought, a binding watchword, in one man a living impersonation of its spirit. Pius the Ninth was not elected by accident. He did not owe his elevation to the intrigues of the French ambassador, or to a misapprehension of his character on the part of the conclave. He was elected because he had served in a civil employment before he became a priest; because he was a native of the liberal, the Adriatic side, of the Peninsula; because men had confidence in his frank, open and good face; in short, because he was the antipodes of that aged bigot, Gregory XVI.[1] Pius the Ninth was chosen because he would open the prison doors and let the captive go free; because it was hoped that he would do that which had so often, and in so many places, been attempted in vain, for which torrents of patriot blood had been shed, for which Austrian dungeons had been filled and thousands of exiles had wandered in distant lands. His election was a necessity of the times, to which a thousand influences had been for many years converging. A second Gregory could not have worn the mitre six months. No college of cardinals, or fortress of St. Angelo, or inherited sanctity could have saved him. The Roman States would have had a liberal pope, or the chair of St. Peter would have been left vacant.

What are, and what probably will be the consequences of his elevation, or what change will be effected either under his guidance, or in opposition to his will?

First, the idea of the pope's infallibility as a temporal or a spiritual prince has been rudely assailed, and can with difficulty ever regain its ascendancy. The absurdity of it is subjected to constant and most humiliating tests. So doubtful has it become, so ill fitted is it to meet the sudden emergencies of the present times, so extensively is its inefficiency known and canvassed, that its former strenuous advocates, as it should seem, must abandon it.

Secondly, the adoption of those civil and municipal reforms in the States of the church and throughout Italy which are most urgently

[1] It is said that this pope punished capitally in sixteen years, in a population of less than three millions, three hundred persons, and incarcerated, mostly for political offences, not less than thirty thousand.

needed. The days of misgovernment, of legalized oppression, of exclusive aristocratic pretension, and of a wretched serfdom, converting some of the fairest districts in the world into a desert, are fast passing away. Rome, if she would retain a tithe of her power, must practise the lessons of industry and a wise economy.

Thirdly, the separation of the civil and ecclesiastical power. This is virtually effected already. The pope at the present moment is an ecclesiastical sovereign and no more. It is not the cardinal legate who governs Bologna; it is the citizens themselves. It is not the pope who sends his troops into Lombardy or who disbands the Swiss guard, or exiles the company of Jesus; it is public opinion, acting through laymen at Rome. The country of Brutus and Cicero and Rienzi, which, three years ago, was a despotism as absolute as any which existed on earth, is now virtually a republic.

Fourthly, the immediate introduction, to some extent, of Protestant opinions, of free discussion on matters of religion and of an unrestricted press. The light has hitherto been systematically shut out. For ages an embargo has been laid on everything which would disturb the Catholic belief. The ports and custom-houses of Italy have sought to exclude Protestant opinions as zealously as they would the infection of the plague.[1] But this peremptory exclusion, it is to be hoped, is at an end. The Index Expurgatorius will, probably, be hereafter nothing but an historical curiosity on the shelves of the Vatican. Even should the hopes of the friends of civil liberty be disappointed, and the Austrian supremacy be again restored in Lombardy, still, it would be difficult, if not impracticable, to reïnstate the old system of papal exclusiveness. Vienna herself feels the quickening breath of freedom. This beautiful land, there is good reason to believe, will not again become the theatre of Jesuit intrigue and of inquisitorial cruelty. Whether monarchy, in a limited form, again obtain the ascendancy or not, the cause of Protestant liberty has received an accession of strength which must ere long sweep away all obstacles.

Fifthly, we may also hope that some of the more objectionable and comparatively modern features of the Roman Catholic system will be abandoned. An economical or civil reformation must modify, in a va-

[1] Three or four years ago, a gentleman found it impossible to procure a Bible in the vernacular tongue at any of the book-shops in Rome. In 1846–7, no copy of an Italian Bible could be found for sale in several of the largest cities of the country, except that of Martini, which is in several volumes octavo. Now it is stated in the public prints, that parts of the Bible, the Westminster Assembly's Catechism, extracts from the writings of Vinet and of other Protestants, are translated into Italian and freely distributed.

riety of ways, some of the practices and doctrines of the papacy. Certain usages and articles of belief cannot endure the ordeal which emancipated reason, popular education, or an enfranchised Bible would of necessity establish. The right of private judgment in matters of religious belief always accompanies the diffusion of the Scriptures, and must with the blessing of Heaven essentially reform, if it does not gradually destroy the Catholic hierarchy.

The degree of freedom which the Vaudois, who dwell in the mountains of Piedmont, after ages of persecution, now enjoy, and which has made a hundred Alpine vallies break forth into singing, is but an earnest, we trust, of that perfect liberty in Christ which shall ere long prevail from sea to sea, and from the Lombard Plain to the utmost South. Then it will be, indeed, fair Italy—sublime and graceful in outward nature, with the larger air, the purple light, and a sun sinking into the sea with a lustre peculiarly his own, full of old reminiscences that stir the soul to its depths, the parent of freedom, the home of art, the nurse of genius in its noblest forms, the guardian of those whose "dust is immortality," where sleeps on Ravenna's shore one who spake of "things invisible to mortal eye," where was revealed to another all deathless ideals of beauty, where apostles and martyrs still repose united to Jesus, where Ambrose sung and Augustine saw the vision of the city of God, whose very soil is instinct with thought, whose "ashes are yet warm,"—how fair she will be when there are no sad contrasts in her moral and religious state, when the spirit that once evangelized the eternal city shall again pervade her plastic, susceptible and most interesting people, when from all her vine-crowned hills and delicious valleys, the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy.