VARIOUS

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CHARLES READE

Some one lately took occasion, in passing, to class Charles Reade with the clever writers of the day, sandwiching him between Anthony Trollope and Wilkie Collins,—for no other reason, apparently, than that he never, with Chinese accuracy, gives us gossiping drivel that reduces life to the dregs of the commonplace, or snarls us in any inextricable tangle of plots.

Charles Reade is not a clever writer merely, but a great one, —how great, only a careful *résumé* of his productions can tell us. We know too well that no one can take the place of him who has just left us, and who touched so truly the chords of every passion; but out of the ranks some one must step now to the leadership so deserted,—for Dickens reigns in another region, —and whether or not it shall be Charles Reade depends solely

upon his own election: no one else is so competent, and nothing but wilfulness or vanity need prevent him,—the wilfulness of persisting in certain errors, or the vanity of assuming that he has no farther to go. He needs to learn the calmness of a less variable temperature and a truer equilibrium, less positive sharpness and more philosophy; he will be a thorough master, when the subject glows in his forge and he himself remains unheated.

He is about the only writer we have who gives us anything of himself. Quite unconsciously, every sentence he writes is saturated with his own identity; he is, then, a man of courage, and—the postulate assumed that we are not speaking of fools—courage in such case springs only from two sources, carelessness of opinion and possession of power. Now no one, of course, can be entirely indifferent to the audience he strives to please; and it would seem, then, that that daring which is the first element of success arises here from innate capacity. Unconsciously, as we have said, is it that our author is self-betrayed, for he is by nature so peculiarly a *raconteur* that he forgets himself entirely in seizing the prominent points of his story; and it is to this that his chief fault is attributable,—the want of elaboration,—a fault, however, which he has greatly overcome in his later books, where, leaving sketchy outlines, he has given us one or two complete and perfect pictures. His style, too, owes some slight debt to this fact; it has been saved thereby from offensive mannerism, and yet given traits of its own insusceptible of imitation,—for by mannerism we mean affectations of language, not absurdities of type.

There is a racy *verve* and vigor in Charles Reade's style, which, after the current inanities, is as inspiriting as a fine breeze on the upland; it tingles with vitality; he seems to bring to his work a superb physical strength, which he employs impartially in the statement of a trifle or the storming of a city; and if on this page he handles a ship in a sea-fight with the skill and force of a Viking, on the other he picks up a pin cleaner of the adjacent dust than weaker fingers would do it. There is no trace of the stale, flat, and unprofitable here; the books are fairly alive, and that gesture tells their author best with which a great actress once portrayed to us the poet Browning, rolling her hands rapidly over one another, while she threw them up in the air, as if she would describe a bubbling, boiling fountain.

Charles Reade is the prose for Browning. The temperament of the two in their works is almost identical, having first allowed for the delicate femineity proper to every poet; and the richness that Browning lavishes till it strikes the world no more than the lavish gold of the sun, the lavish blue of the sky, Reade, taking warning, hoards, and lets out only by glimpses. Yet such glimpses! for beauty and brilliancy and strength, when they do occur, unrivalled. Yet never does he desert his narrative for them one moment; on the contrary, we might complain that he almost ignores the effect of Nature on various moods and minds: in a volume of six hundred pages, the sole bit of so-called fine writing is the following, justified by the prominence of its subject in the incidents, and showing in spite of itself a certain masculine

contempt for the finicalities of language:—

"The leaves were many shades deeper and richer than any other tree could show for a hundred miles round,—a deep green, fiery, yet soft; and then their multitude,—the staircases of foliage, as you looked up the tree, and could scarce catch a glimpse of the sky,—an inverted abyss of color, a mound, a dome, of flake-emeralds that quivered in the golden air.

"And now the sun sets,—the green leaves are black,—the moon rises,—her cold light shoots across one-half that giant stem.

"How solemn and calm stands the great round tower of living wood, half ebony, half silver, with its mighty cloud above of flake-jet leaves tinged with frosty fire at one edge!"

This oak was in Brittany,—the very one, perhaps, before which,

> "So hollow, huge, and old,
> It looked a tower of ruined mason-work,
> At Merlin's feet the wileful Vivien lay."

Indeed, Brittany seems a kind of fairy-land to many writers. Tennyson, Spenser, Matthew Arnold, Reade, all locate some one of their choicest scenes there. The reason is not, perhaps, very remote. We prate about the Anglo-Saxon blood; yet, in reality, there is very little of it to prate about, especially in the educated classes. When the British were driven from their island, they took refuge in Wales and Brittany. When William the Norman

conquered that island again, his force was chiefly composed of the descendants of those very Britons; for so feeble was the genuine Norse element that it had been long since absorbed, and in the language of the Norman—used until a late day upon certain records in England—there is not one single word of Scandinavian origin. Thus it was neither French nor Norman nor Scandinavian invading the white cliffs, but the exiled Briton reconquering his native land; and, to make the fact still stronger, the army of Richmond, Henry VII., was entirely recruited in Brittany. Perhaps, then, the reason that Brittany is to many a region of romance and delight is a feeling akin to the pleasure we take in visiting some ancestral domain from whose soil our fathers once drew their being.

The Breton novel of Mr. Reade, "White Lies," although somewhat crude, otherwise ranks with his best. The action is uninterrupted and swift, the characters sharply defined, if legendary, the dialogue always sparkling, the plot cleanly executed, the whole full of humor and seasoned with wit. So well has it caught the spirit of the scene that it reads like a translation, and, lest we should mistake the *locale*, everybody in the book lies abominably from beginning to end.

> "'A lie is a lump of sin and a piece of folly,' cries Jacintha.
>
> "Edouard notes it down, and then says, in allusion to a previous remark of hers,—
>
> "'I did not think you were five-and-twenty, though.'

"'I am, then,—don't you believe me?'

"'Why not? Indeed, how could I disbelieve you after your lecture?'

"'It is well,' said Jacintha, with dignity.

"She was twenty-seven by the parish-books."

There is a good deal of picturesque beauty in this volume, and at the opening of its affairs there occurs a paragraph which we appropriate, not merely for its merit, nor because it is the only "interior" that we can recall in all his novels, but because also it contains a characteristically fearless measuring of swords with a great champion:—

> "A spacious saloon panelled: dead, but snowy white picked out sparingly with gold. Festoons of fruit and flowers finely carved in wood on some of the panels. These also not smothered with gilding, but as it were gold speckled here and there like tongues of flame winding among insoluble snows.... Midway from the candle to the distant door its twilight deepened, and all became shapeless and sombre. The prospect ended half-way, sharp and black, as in those out-o'-door closets imagined and painted by Mr. Turner, whose Nature (Mr. Turner's) comes to a full stop as soon as Mr. Turner sees no further occasion for her, instead of melting by fine expanse and exquisite gradation into genuine distance, as Nature does in Claude and in Nature. To reverse the picture: standing at the door, you looked across forty feet of black, and the little corner seemed on fire, and the fair heads about the candle shone like the heads of St. Cecilias and Madonnas in an antique stained-glass window. At last

> Laure [Laure Aglaë Rose de Beaurepaire,—would a rose by any other name smell as sweet?] observed the door open, and another candle glowed upon Jacintha's comely peasant-face in the doorway; she dived into the shadow, and emerged into light again close to the table, with napkins on her arm."

The book abounds, as indeed all its companions do, in quaint passages, comical turns of a word, shrewd sayings,—of which a handful:—

> "'Now you know,' said Dard, 'if I am to do this little job to-day, I must start.'
>
> "'Who keeps you?' was the reply.
>
> "Thus these two loved."

Dard, by the way, being an entirely new addition to the novelists' *corps dramatique*, and almost a Shakspearian character.

> "It was her feelings, her confidence, the little love wanted,—not her secret: that lay bare already to the shrewd young minx,—I beg her pardon,—lynx."

Another involves a curious philosophy, summed up in the following formula:—

> "She does not love him quite enough.
>
> "He loves her a little too much. Cure,—marriage."

But there are one or two scenes in this tale of "White Lies" perfectly matchless for fire and spirit; and to support the assertion, the reader must allow a citation. And he will pardon the

first for the sake of the others, since Josephine is the betrothed of Camille Dujardin.

"When he uttered these terrible words, each of which was a blow with a bludgeon to the Baroness, the old lady, whose courage was not equal to her spirit, shrank over the side of her arm-chair, and cried piteously,—'He threatens me! he threatens me! I am frightened!'—and put up her trembling hands, so suggestive was the notary's eloquence of physical violence. Then his brutality received an unexpected check. Imagine that a sparrow-hawk had seized a trembling pigeon, and that a royal falcon swooped, and with one lightning-like stroke of body and wing buffeted him away, and there he was on his back, gaping and glaring and grasping at nothing with his claws. So swift and irresistible, but far more terrible and majestic, Josephine de Beaurepaire came from her chair with one gesture of her body between her mother and the notary, who was advancing on her with arms folded in a brutal menacing way,—not the Josephine we have seen her, the calm, languid beauty, but the Demoiselle de Beaurepaire,—her great heart on fire, her blood up,—not her own only, but all the blood of all the De Beaurepaires,—pale as ashes with wrath, her purple eyes flaring, and her whole panther-like body ready either to spring or strike.

"'Slave! you dare to insult her, and before me! *Arrière, misérable!* or I soil my hand with your face!'

"And her hand was up with the word, up, up,—higher it seemed than ever a hand was lifted before. And if he had

hesitated one moment, I believe it would have come down; and if it had, he would have gone to her feet before it: not under its weight,—the lightning is not heavy,—but under the soul that would have struck with it. But there was no need: the towering threat and the flaming eye and the swift rush buffeted the caitiff away: he recoiled three steps, and nearly fell down. She followed him as he went, strong in that moment as Hercules, beautiful and terrible as Michael driving Satan. He dared not, or rather he could not, stand before her: he writhed and cowered and recoiled down the room while she marched upon him. Then the driven serpent hissed as it wriggled away.

"'For all this, she too shall be turned out of Beaurepaire,—not like me, but forever! I swear it, *parolé de Perrin!*'

"'She shall never be turned out! I swear it, *foi de De Beaurepaire!*'

"'You, too, daughter of Sa—'

"'*Tais toi, et sors à l'instant même! Lâche!*'

"The old lady moaning and trembling and all but fainting in her chair; the young noble like destroying angel, hand in air, and great eye scorching and withering; and the caitiff wriggling out at the door, wincing with body and head, his knees knocking, his heart panting, yet raging, his teeth gnashing, his cheek livid, his eye gleaming with the fire of hell."

Too much of this sort of thing becomes meretricious; a man is never the master of his subject, when he suffers himself to be carried away by it. And though a fault of haste is pardonable,

when lost in fine execution, we must acknowledge that there is certainly something very "Frenchy" in this scene,—a remark, though, which can hardly be considered as derogatory, when we remember that altogether the most readable fiction of the day is French itself. Our author is evidently a great admirer of Victor Hugo, though he is no such careful artist in language: he seldom closes with such tremendous subjects as that adventurous writer attempts; but he has all the sharp antithesis, the pungent epigram of the other, and in his freest flight, though he peppers us as prodigally with colons, he never becomes absurd, which the other is constantly on the edge of being.

The next scene which we adduce is that where the battered figure of a pale, grisly man walks into the garrison-town of Bayonne, after a three-years' absence, explained only to his disgrace, mutely overcomes the guard, and rings the bell of the Governor's house.

> "The servant left him in the hall, and went up-stairs to tell his master. At the name, the Governor reflected, then frowned, then bade his servant reach him down a certain book. He inspected it.
>
> "'I thought so: any one with him?'
>
> "'No, Monsieur the Governor.'
>
> "'Load my pistols: put them on the table: put that book back: show him in: and then order a guard to the door.'
>
> "The Governor was a stern veteran, with a powerful brow, a shaggy eyebrow, and a piercing eye. He never rose, but leaned his chin on his hand, and his elbow on a table that

stood between them, and eyed the new-comer very fixedly and strangely.

"'We did not expect to see you on this side of the Pyrenees.'

"'Nor I myself, Governor.'

"'What do you come to me for?'

"'A welcome, a suit of regimentals, and money to take me to Paris.'

"'And suppose, instead of that, I turn out a corporal's guard, and bid them shoot you in the court-yard?'

"'It would be the drollest thing you ever did, all things considered,' said the other, coolly; but he looked a little surprised.

"The Governor went for the book he had lately consulted, found the page, handed it to the rusty officer, and watched him keenly: the blood rushed all over his face, and his lip trembled; but his eye dwelt stern, yet sorrowful, on the Governor.

"'I have read your book: now read mine.'

"He drew off his coat, and showed his wrists and arms, blue and waled.

"'Can you read that, Monsieur?'

"'No.'

"'All the better for you! Spanish fetters, General.'

"He showed a white scar on his shoulder.

"'Can you read that, Sir?'

"'Humph?'

"'This is what I cut out of it,'—and he handed the Governor a little round stone, as big and almost as regular

as a musket-ball.

"'Humph! that could hardly have been fired from a French musket.'

"'Can you read this?'—and he showed him a long cicatrix on his other arm.

"'Knife, I think?' said the Governor.

"'You are right, Monsieur: Spanish knife!—Can you read this?'—and opening his bosom, he showed a raw and bloody wound on his breast.

"'Oh, the Devil!' cried the General.

"The wounded man put his coat on again, and stood erect and haughty and silent.

"The General eyed him, and saw his great spirit shining through this man. The more he looked, the less could the scarecrow veil the hero from his practised eye.

"'There has been some mistake, or else I dote—and can't tell a soldier from a'—

"'Don't say the word, old man, or your heart will bleed!'

"'Humph! I must go into this matter at once. Be seated, Captain, if you please, and tell me what have you been doing all these years?'

"'Suffering!'

"'What, all the time?'

"'Without intermission.'

"'But what? suffering what?'

"'Cold, hunger, darkness, wounds, solitude, sickness, despair, prison,—all that man can suffer.'

"'Impossible! a man would be dead at that rate before this.'

"'I should have died a dozen times, but for one thing.'

"'Ay! what was that?'

"'I had promised to live.'

"There was a pause. Then the old man said, calmly,—

"'To the facts, young man: I listen.'"

And high time, be it said; since it begins to read very much like one of Artemas Ward's burlesques. The upshot of which listening was, that the man left for Paris directly in the demanded regimentals, and wrapt about with the Governor's furred cloak to boot; that he would not delay in the metropolis one moment, even to put on the epaulets they gave him, but saved them for his sweetheart to make him a colonel with, and, though weary and torn with pain, galloped away to the Chateau de Beaurepaire, to find that sweetheart another man's wife.

"He turned his back quickly on her. 'To the army!' he cried, hoarsely. He drew himself haughtily up in marching-attitude. He took three strides, erect and fiery and bold. At the fourth the great heart snapped, and the worn body it had held up so long rolled like a dead log upon the ground, with a tremendous fall."

Which scene must be followed by its pendant, taking place during the siege of a Prussian town, when, from the enemy's bastion, Long Tom, out of range of Dujardin's battery, was throwing red-hot shot, sending half a hundred-weight of iron up into the clouds, and plunging it down into the French lines a mile off.

"'Volunteers to go out of the trenches!' cried Sergeant La

Croix, in a stentorian voice, standing erect as a poker, and swelling with importance.

"There were fifty offers in less than as many seconds.

"'Only twelve allowed to go,' said the Sergeant; 'and I am one,' added he, adroitly inserting himself.

"A gun was taken down, placed on a carriage, and posted near Death's Alley, but out of the line of fire.

"The Colonel himself superintended the loading of this gun; and to the surprise of his men had the shot weighed first, and then weighed out the powder himself.

"He then waited quietly a long time, till the bastion pitched one of its periodical shots into Death's Alley; but no sooner had the shot struck, and sent the sand flying past the two lanes of curious noses, than Colonel Dujardin jumped upon the gun and waved his cocked hat. At this preconcerted signal, his battery opened fire on the bastion, and the battery to his right hand opened on the wall that fronted them; and the Colonel gave the word to run the gun out of the trenches. They ran it out into the cloud of smoke their own guns were belching forth, unseen by the enemy; but they had no sooner twisted it into the line of Long Tom than the smoke was gone, and there they were, a fair mark.

"'Back into the trenches, all but one!' roared Dujardin.

"And in they ran like rabbits.

"'Quick! the elevation.'

"Colonel Dujardin and La Croix raised the muzzle to the mark,—hoo! hoo! hoo! ping! ping! ping' came the bullets about their ears.

"'Away with you!' cried the Colonel, taking the linstock

from him.

"Then Colonel Dujardin, fifteen yards from the trenches, in full blazing uniform, showed two armies what one intrepid soldier can do. He kneeled down and adjusted his gun, just as he would have done in a practising-ground. He had a pot-shot to take, and a pot-shot he would take. He ignored three hundred muskets that were levelled at him. He looked along his gun, adjusted it and readjusted to a hair's-breadth. The enemy's bullets pattered over it; still he adjusted and readjusted. His men were groaning and tearing their hair inside at his danger.

"At last it was levelled to his mind, and then his movements were as quick as they had hitherto been slow. In a moment he stood erect in the half-fencing attitude of a gunner, and his linstock at the touch-hole: a huge tongue of flame, a volume of smoke, a roar, and the iron thunderbolt was on its way, and the Colonel walked haughtily, but rapidly, back to the trenches: for in all this no bravado. He was there to make a shot,—not to throw a chance of life away, watching the effect.

"Ten thousand eyes did that for him.

"Both French and Prussians risked their own lives, craning out to see what a colonel in full uniform was doing under fire from a whole line of forts, and what would be his fate: but when he fired the gun, their curiosity left the man and followed the iron thunderbolt.

"For two seconds all was uncertain: the ball was travelling.

"Tom gave a rear like a wild horse, his protruding muzzle

> went up sky-high, then was seen no more, and a ring of old iron and a clatter of fragments were heard on the top of the bastion. Long Tom was dismounted. Oh, the roar of laughter and triumph from one end to another of the trenches, and the clapping of forty thousand hands, that went on for full five minutes! then the Prussians, either through a burst of generous praise for an act so chivalrous and so brilliant, or because they would not be crowed over, clapped their ten thousand hands as loudly, and thundering heart-thrilling salvo of applause answered salvo on both sides that terrible arena."

If all this was melodramatic, it should be remembered that the time was melodramatic itself; it is, however, saved from such accusation by the truthfulness of the handling; and the homeliness of a portion of it recalls the ballad of "Up at the villa, down in the city," with its speeches of drum and fife. Nevertheless, here are combined the true elements of modern sensational writing: there are the broad canvas, the vivid colors, the abrupt contrast, all the dramatic and startling effects that weekly fiction affords, the supernatural heroine, the more than mortal hero. What, then, rescues it? It would be hard to reply. Perhaps the reckless, rollicking wit: we cannot censure one who makes us laugh with him. Perhaps nothing but the writer's exuberant and superabundant vitality, which through such warp shoots a golden woof till it is filled and interwoven with the true glance and gleam of genius. The difference between these pages and that of the previously mentioned style is the same as exists

between any coarse scene-curtain and some glorious painting, be it Church, with his tropical lushness, or Gifford, with his shaking, shining mists,—

> "mist
> Like a vaporous amethyst,
> Or an air-dissolved star
> Mingling light and fragrance far
> As the curved horizon's bound,"—

some canvas that seems to palpitate and live and tremble with the breathing being confided to it by the painter. Indeed, Charles Reade has a great deal of this pictorial power. A single sentence will sometimes give not only the sketch, but all its tints. Take, for instance, the paragraph in which, speaking of the Newhaven fish-wives, he says, "It is a race of women that the Northern sun peachifies instead of rosewoodizing"; and it is as good as that picture of the "Two Grandmothers," where the rosy woman with her rosy troop is confronted by the tawny sunburnt gypsy and her swarthy group of dancing-girl and tambourine-tosser.

When "Peg Woffington" first fell upon us, a dozen years ago or so, Humdrum opened his eyes: it was like setting one's teeth in a juicy pear fresh from the warm sunshine. Then came "Christie Johnstone," a perfect pearl of its kind, in which we recognize an important contribution to one class of romance. If ever the literature of the fishing-coast shall be compiled, it will be found to be scanty, but superlative; let us suggest that it shall open

with Lucy Larcom's "Poor Lone Hannah," the most touching and tearful of the songs of New-England life,—followed by Christie Johnstone's night at sea among the blue-lights and the nets with their silver and lightning mixed, where the fishers struggle with that immense sheet varnished in red-hot silver,—and at the end let not the "Pilot's Pretty Daughter" of William Allingham's be forgotten:—

> "Were it my lot—there peeped a wish—
> To hand a pilot's oar and sail,
> Or haul the dripping moonlit mesh
> Spangled with herring-scale:
> By dying stars how sweet 'twould be,
> And dawn-blow freshening the sea,
> With weary, cheery pull to shore
> To gain my cottage-home once more,
> And meet, before I reached the door,
> My pretty pilot's daughter!"

But it is a fine fashion of this noble world never to acknowledge itself too well pleased. Men are ashamed of satisfaction. So soon as they have exhausted the honey, they condemn the comb; it will do to wax an old wife's thread;—they forget that the cells whose sides break the usual uniformity contain the royal embryos. Humdrum read these little novels through and through, laughed and cried over them in secret, then pulled a long face, stepped forth and denounced—the

typography. Now we admit that the page presents a fairer appearance with single punctuations, unblurred by Italics, and its smooth surface unbroken by strings of capitals;—but let us ask these criticasters for what purpose types were cast at all. To assist the author in the expression of his ideas, and to elucidate subtile shades of meaning? or to prove his let and hindrance, and to wrap his expression in mystery? Whether or no, it is patent that Charles Reade makes an exclamation—and an interrogation-point together say as much as many novelists can dibble over a whole page. Nevertheless, in his latest work these eccentricities are greatly modified; yet who would forego in the sea-fight that almost inaudible, breathless whisper of "Our ammunition is nearly done"? or again the moment when Skinner pokes Mr. Hardie lightly in the side and says, "But—I've—got—THE RECEIPT"? And could anything express the state of young Reginald's mind so ineffably as the primer type of his letter to Lucy?

A much less venial fault than any typographical trifle is a tendency belonging to this author to repeat both incident and colloquy. This of course is merely the result of negligence,—and negligence no one likes to forgive; only Shakspeare can afford to be careless of his fame, and the rags that his commentators make of him are a warning to all pettier people. We have seen the manuscript of a man already immortal, so interlined, erased, and corrected as to be undecipherable by any but himself and the printer who has been for twenty years condemned to such hard

labor; surely others can condescend to the same pains;—yet we doubt if Mr. Reade so much as looks his over a second time.

Many persons have a trick of writing their names, not on the fly-leaf of the books they possess, but on the hundredth or the fiftieth page. Perhaps it is according to some such brand of the warehouse that we find in "Very Hard Cash," or in "White Lies," indifferently, such brief dialogues as this:—

> "'No.'
> "'Are you sure?'
> "'Positive.'"

Then, Reade's characters are perpetually doing the same thing. Josephine and Margaret both seize their throats not to cry out; Josephine and Margaret both kiss their babies alike,—a very pretty description of the act, though:—

> "The young mother sprang silently upon her child,—you would have thought she was going to kill it,—her head reared itself again and again, like a crested snake's, and again and again, and again and again plunged down upon the child, and she kissed his little body from head to foot with soft violence, and murmured through her starting tears."

But not content with that, Margaret must reënact it. Then Gerard and Alfred, returning from long absences, both find their only sister dead; and the plot of three of the novels turns on the fact of long and inexplicable absences on the part of the heroes. The Baroness de Beaurepaire, who is flavored with what her maker calls the "congealed essence of grandmamma," shares her

horror of the jargon-vocabulary equally with Mrs. Dodd, (the captain's wife, who "reared her children in a suburban villa with the manners which adorn a palace,—when they happen to be there"). There is a singular habit in the several works of putting up marble inscriptions for folks before actual demise requires it,—Hardie showing Lucy Fountain hers, Camille erecting one to Raynal. All his heroines, as soon as they are crossed in love, invariably lose their tempers, and invariably by the same process; all, without exception, have violet eyes and velvet lips, (and sometimes the heroes also have the latter!) and all of them should wear key-holes at their ear-rings. Indeed, here is our quarrel with Mr. Reade. The conception of an artless woman is impossible with him. Plenty of beautiful ideals he creates, but with the actual woman he is almost unacquainted: Lucy Fountain, of all his feminine characters, is the only one whose counterpart we have ever met; Julia, the most perfect type of his fancy, impetuous, sparkling, and sweet, has this to say for herself, on occasion of a boat-race:—"'We have won at last,' cried Julia, all on fire, '*and fairly; only think of that*!'" Through every sentence that he jots down runs a vein of gentle satire on the sex. Every specimen that he has drawn from it possesses feline characteristics: if provoked, they scratch; if happy, they purr; when they move, it is with the bodies of panthers; when they caress their children, it is like snakes; and in every single one of his books the women listen, behind the door, behind the hedge, behind the boat.

"'He would make an intolerable woman,' says the

Baroness. 'A fine life, if one had a parcel of women about one, blurting out their real minds every moment, and never smoothing matters!'

"'Mamma, what a horrid picture!' cries Laure."

When upon this subject our author leaves innuendo, and fairly shows his colors, he writes in this wise:—

"For nothing is so hard to her sex as a long, steady struggle. In matters physical, this is the thing the muscles of the fair cannot stand. In matters intellectual and moral, the long strain it is that beats them dead. Do not look for a Bacona, a Newtona, a Handella, a Victoria Huga. Some American ladies tell us education has stopped the growth of these. No, Mesdames! These are not in Nature. They can bubble letters in ten minutes that you could no more deliver to order in ten days than a river can play like a fountain. They can sparkle gems of stories; they can flash little diamonds of poems. The entire sex has never produced one opera, nor one epic that mankind could tolerate a minute: and why?—these come by long, high-strung labor. But, weak as they are in the long run of everything but the affections, (and there giants,) they are all overpowering while the gallop lasts. Fragilla shall dance any two of you flat on the floor before four o'clock, and then dance on till peep of day. You trundle off to your business as usual, and could dance again the next night, and so on through countless ages. She who danced you into nothing is in bed, a human jelly crowned with headache."

Certainly, the concluding sentence shows that the writer is

unacquainted with the Fifth-Avenue Fragilla. And, moreover, we were unaware that she had ever entered herself as competitor with Dr. Windship in the lifting of three-thousand-pound weights. But this is poor stuff for a man of talent to busy himself with,—as if the Creator intended rivalry between beings complementary to each other, and of too diverse physical organization to allow the idea. Yet a fair friend of ours would meet him on his own ungallant ground. If Mr. Reade will trouble himself, says Una and the Lion, to turn over a work of Frances Power Cobbe's on Intuitive Morals, he will see that the first two impossibilities in his catalogue are lessened so far as to allow hope; as for Handella, there is reason to believe in her advent,—many women have written faultless tunes,—all that is wanted is mathematical harmony,—and Mary Somerville, Maria Mitchell, and the sister of the Herschels forbid despair on that point; and God forbid the Victoria Huga! the male of the species is more than enough. We must look upon any wide departure from the prevailing pattern either as a monstrosity or as a development of the great plan; therefore, if one of these women is a monstrosity, Laplace and Aristotle are to be considered equally so. And then, also, Mr. Reade, masculine as he is, finds eclipse in the shade of either Mrs. Lewes, (Marion Evans,) or Charlotte Brontè, or Madame Dudevant. As for men, they are themselves just emerging from barbarism; a race rises only with its women, as all history shows. The whole sex has produced no operas? they are modern things; when men have advanced a little, when our

audience is ready, we shall write operas. Epics? how many has the entire opposite sex produced? well, four: terrible disparity, when we count by billions! These are not in Nature? Whose assertion for that? till he can prove it, the word of "some American ladies" is as good as the word of Mr. Charles Reade. For myself, continued the outraged Una, I know a beautiful woman who left lovers, society, pleasures,—absorbed in her moulding and modelling, day by day and year by year, with no positive result except in her own convictions and consciousness,—who spent the long summer hours alone in the little building with her white ideas, and who, winter night after night, rose to cross street and garden and snowy fields to tend the fire and wet the clay, and who, on more than one morning finding the weary labor of months wasted where the frozen substance had peeled from the framework and lay in fragments on the floor, without a murmur began the patient work again. That was during the trial; afterwards attainment. Was there no long strain and steady struggle there?

Una's enthusiasm infects us; and very *apropos* to all this do we hear Mr. Reade's Jacintha remark,—

> "We are good creatures, but we don't trouble our heads with justice; it is a word you shall never hear a woman use, unless she happens to be doing some monstrous injustice at the very moment."

And with the best-natured contempt in the world, Dr. Sampson exclaims,—

> "What! go t' a wumman for the truth, when I can go t' infallible inference?"

Even Lucy Fountain saw many young ladies healed of many young enthusiasms by a wedding-ring,—but a wittier woman has said it better, Una declares, in asserting that a married woman's name is her epitaph. If, however, Mr. Reade's opinion of womankind is at any time justifiable, we must bring Una to witness that it is so in the following instance:—

> "Realize the situation, and the strange incongruity between the senses and the mind in these poor fellows! The day had ripened its beauty; beneath a purple heaven shone, sparkled, and laughed a blue sea, in whose waves the tropical sun seemed to have fused his beams; and beneath that fair, sinless, peaceful sky, wafted by a balmy breeze over those smiling, transparent, golden waves, a bloodthirsty pirate bore down on them with a crew of human tigers; and a lady babble babble babble babble babble babbled in their quivering ears!"

We have heard numberless inquiries as to Mr. Reade's private life, with which, whether they have the right or not, the public will concern itself. So at home is he on every subject that each appears to be his specialty. One asserts that he follows Galen: witness his mania on medicine. Certainly not, another replies; are not his principles erroneous, and second-hand at that? Does he not dredge the science with ridicule? No practitioner would gravely assert the feasibility of transfusion, an operation never

yet performed with success, since the red globules of his own blood seem to be as proper to each individual as his identity, and allow no admixture from alien veins; in surgery he has but one foe,—phlebotomy; in pharmacy, but one friend,—chloroform; he asserts of Dr. Sampson, (Dr. Dickson, the writer of "Fallacies of the Faculty"?) that "he was strong, but not strong enough to make the populace suspend an opinion; yet it might be done: by chloroforming them." (Which leads one parenthetically to remark that it is great pity, then, that, in the prevalent headlong precipitancy of public judgment, anæsthetics have not been more generally employed on this side of the water of late.) Certainly he is no physician, they say. But, on the other hand, a conjecture that he has been before the mast is as plausible a one as that ever Herman Melville was; there is the true sailor's-roll about him; nobody less skilful than the captain of a three-decker could have run the Agra through such a gantlet of broadsides and hurricanes; the manœuvring of the ship, when her master puts her before the wind that he may rake one schooner's deck and hurl the majestic monster bodily upon the other, is unequalled by anything in nautical literature, and approached by nothing in verity, except it may be Admiral Dupont's waltz of fire around the two forts of Hilton Head. Another, who laughs at both of these amateur statements, has a Grub-Street one; but, except to a favored few, to everybody in this country he is only an impersonal existence. In this general dearth of useful information, there are, however, one or two biographical sketches afloat,—possibly hints of those

waiting their chance in the pigeon-holes of the Thunderer,—of which we are tempted to give the reader a sample, brought to us by Una in substantiation of her hostilities.

The subject of the present notice was picked up at sea, a child, and, under the provisions of maritime law concerning flotsam, jetsam, and lagan, was appropriated by the crew. He then followed their fortunes for several years, with various adventures, among which is the one wherein he is said to have accompanied Arthur Gordon Pym (disguised in the published account of that voyage under the name and appearance of one Peters) upon his fearful South-Sea sail towards that vapory cataract at the world's end which was seen "rolling silently into the sea from some immense and far-distant rampart of the heaven," from the horrors of which he escaped in the same miraculous manner that Mr. Pym did. He must still have been young at the time, as this occurred in 1838. Unable to find any credence to these extraordinary statements upon his return, he found an asylum from the unbelieving world, where, in order not to become a permanent resident, and being capable of impartial judgment thereon, he employed himself in a profound study of finance. Emerging from this seclusion, lest he should defraud his natural element entirely, he plunged into the hot water of the revolutions then ravaging Europe. Receiving wounds, he was laid up in hospital; and being of an active turn of mind and debarred from other pursuits, he fell (like Dr. Marie Zakrzewski) to studying the cards renewed every day above the patients' beds with the

disease written thereon, its symptoms, and its treatment; in this manner he acquired quite a knowledge of medicine. He was, however, mercifully prevented from practising by the fact, that, upon repeating his story to an acquaintance, he met, as before, with such total disbelief, that, most fortunately for many readers, he determined at once to devote the remainder of his days to fiction.

How much faith such a narrative deserves we leave others to decide. It, however, has the virtue, as Una declares again, of plausibly explaining Mr. Reade's entire misapprehension of the feminine portion of humanity,—since, during the whole course of such a career, it would have been impossible that he should have made intimate acquaintance with a single specimen of the sex. It is true that in "Christie Johnstone" he speaks of the musical performances of certain female relatives of his own; but of course that is to be taken only as a part of the fiction. One thing, however, is evident,—that, if this sketch is not true, the converse of it must be, and where the reader has paid his money he may take his choice.

Mr. Reade's latest novel, "Very Hard Cash," is a continuation of a previous one, "Love me Little, Love me Long." A great charm of Thackeray's books was, that in every fresh one we heard a little news of the dear old friends of former ones; and "Very Hard Cash" has all the advantage of prepossession in its favor. Its forerunner was a startling thing to the circulating-library, for the hero was an entirely new character, dashing among the elegancies

of the habitual hero like a shaggy dog in a drawing-room; and though the author admires him to the core of his heart, he never once hesitates to put him in ridiculous plight, and sets at last this diamond-in-the-rough in his purest and most polished gold. It is a delightful book, with one scene in it, the memorable night at sea, worth scores of customary novels, and, apart from the noble and beautiful delineation of David Dodd, would be invaluable for nothing else but its faultless portraiture of that millinery devotee, Mrs. Bazalgette.

From two such natures as David and his wife nothing less noble should spring; and therefore, through necessity, their daughter Julia, the heroine of "Very Hard Cash," is that ideal of vehemence and sweetness which we find her, not by any choice or fancy of the writer, but on account of fate, natural deduction, and *a priori* logic. She is, however, for all that, to some extent a creation; one may imagine her, long for her, look for her,—one will not immediately find her. Youth never was painted so well as here; both Julia and Alfred are aureoled in its beauty; they are not reasonable mortals with the accumulated perfections of three-score and ten, but young creatures just brimmed, as young creatures are, with the blissfulness of being. Nobody ever appreciated youth as this writer does, nobody has so entered into it; he never fails, to be sure, to make you laugh at it a little, but all the time he confesses a kind of loving worship of that buoyant time when the effervescence of the animal spirits fills the brain with its happy fumes, of that fearless, confident period that

"Is not, like Atlas, curled
Stooping 'neath the gray old world,
But which takes it, lithe and bland,
Easily in its small hand."

We have often wondered that no one ever before grappled with the material of this last volume. The easy ability of one person to incarcerate another in a mad-house is as often abused in America as in England, and circumstances in this drama which might strike a casual reader as preposterous we can match with kindred and more hopeless cases within our own knowledge. Perhaps one of the ablest portions of the treatment which this book affords the theme is in the singular collocation of characters,—the hero being wrongfully imprisoned as insane, the heroine's father really made so by medical malpractice, the hero's sister dying of injuries received from another maniac, his uncle being imbecile, and his father and one of his physicians becoming monomaniac. Nicer shades than these allow could not be drawn, and the subject stands in bold relief as a monument of dauntless courage and enthusiasm.

No one can hesitate to declare this novel, as it is the latest, to be also the finest of all that Charles Reade has given us. In saying this we do not forget the "Cloister and Hearth," which, however tender and touching and true to its century, is rather a rambling narrative than an elucidated plot. "Very Hard Cash" is wrought out with the finest finish, yet nowhere overdone;

it so abounds in scenes of dramatic climax that we fancy the stage has lost immensely by the romance-reader's gain; yet there is never a single situation thrown away, every word tends in the main direction, and after that the prolific mind of the writer overflows in *marginalia*. There are one or two striking improbabilities, which Mr. Reade himself excuses by asserting that the commonplace is neither dramatic nor evangelical,—and therefore we confess, that, so long as Reginald Bazalgette had a ship, Captain Dodd was as likely to turn up on that as on any other, the purser as likely to make his communication at that moment as later, and the fly as likely to resuscitate the patient as the surgeon. But the characterization in this book is wonderful; every name becomes an acquaintance, from Mrs. Beresford, dividing Ajax's emotion and declining to be drowned in the dark, with her servant Ramgolam and his matchless Orientalisms, up to the loftier models, one of whom he endows with this exquisite bit of description:—

> "A head overflowed by ripples of dark-brown hair sat with heroic grace upon his solid white throat, like some glossy falcon new-lighted on a Parian column."

We must, however, object to Fullalove, who is quite unworthy of the author, though perhaps complacently regarded by him as a success, being merely the traditional Yankee compound of patents and conjectures, a little smarter than usual, as of course a passage through Mr. Reade's pen must make him;—he never touched his brain. Vespasian, also, is not so good as he might

be, although one enjoys his contempt for the pirate's crew of Papuans, Sooloos, and Portuguese, as a "mixellaneous bilin' of darkies," and finds something inimitable in his injured dignity over the anomalous *sobriquet* afforded him, whose changes he rings through analogy and anatomy till he declares himself to be only a "darned anemone." The real charm of the book, however, lies in the beautiful relation which it pictures between mother and children, and in the nature of the daughter herself, so exuberant, so dancing, yet the foam subsiding into such a luminous body of clearness, which so lights up the page with its loveliness, that, seeing how an artless woman is foreign to Mr. Reade's ideas, we are forced to believe that Nature was too strong for him and he wrote against the grain. Nevertheless, there is enough of his own prejudice retained for piquancy,—and since the poor things must be insignificantly wicked, see how charming they can be! There are many scenes between these covers that would well bear repetition, were they not too fresh in the reader's mind to require it; we will content ourselves with a single one, which contains the only pretentious writing of the whole novel, done at a touch, with a light, loose pen, but showing beyond compare the soul of the poet through the flesh of the novelist.

> "At six twenty-five, the grand orb set calm and red, and the sea was gorgeous with miles and miles of great ruby dimples: it was the first glowing smile of southern latitude. The night stole on so soft, so clear, so balmy, all were loath to close their eyes on it; the passengers lingered long on

deck, watching the Great Bear dip, and the Southern Cross rise, and overhead a whole heaven of glorious stars most of us have never seen and never shall see in this world. No belching smoke obscured, no plunging paddles deepened; all was musical; the soft air sighing among the sails; the phosphorescent water bubbling from the ship's bows; the murmurs from little knots of men on deck subdued by the great calm: home seemed near, all danger far; Peace ruled the sea, the sky, the heart: the ship, making a track of white fire on the deep, glided gently, yet swiftly, homeward, urged by snowy sails piled up like alabaster towers against a violet sky, out of which looked a thousand eyes of holy, tranquil fire. So melted the sweet night away.

"Now carmine streaks tinged the eastern sky at the water's edge, and that water blushed; now the streaks turned orange, and the waves below them sparkled. Thence splashes of living gold flew and settled on the ship's white sails, the deck, and the faces; and, with no more prologue, being so near the line, up came majestically a huge, fiery, golden sun, and set the sea flaming liquid topaz.

"Instant the lookout at the foretop-gallant-mast-head hailed the deck below.

"'Strange sail! Right ahead!'

"Ah! the stranger's deck swarms black with men!

"His sham ports fell as if by magic, his guns grinned through the gaps like black teeth; his huge foresail rose and filled, and out he came in chase.

"The breeze was a kiss from Heaven, the sky a vaulted sapphire, the sea a million dimples of liquid, lucid gold."

In conclusion, we must pronounce Mr. Reade's merit, in our judgment, to belong not so much to what he has already done as to what, if life be allowed him, he is yet to do. All his previous works read like 'studies,' in the light of his last. For "Very Hard Cash" is the beginning of a new era; it shows the careful hand of the artist doing justice to the conceptions of genius, in the prime of his vigor, with all his powers well in hand. The forms of literature change with the necessities of the age,—to some future generation what illustration the dramatists were to the Elizabethan day the knot of superior novelists will be to this, and among them all Charles Reade is destined to no subordinate rank.

HOW ROME IS GOVERNED

There are a thousand descriptions of Rome, its antiquities, galleries, ceremonies, and manners, but hardly any, that I remember, of the organization of the Papal Government,—that wonderful power which long played the chief part in the social and political revolutions of Europe, which, even in its decay, preserves so much of its original grandeur, and still clings to its traditions with a tenacity of conviction that commands our respect, although the remembrance of the evil that it has done compels us, as men and as Christians, to rejoice at the prospect of its fall.

This omission on the part of so many thoughtful travellers is by no means an unnatural one. We go to Rome in order to see and to feel, rather than to study and to think. The past crowds upon us overladen with history and poetry; and the present is so full of new forms of life that it is only when we come to sit down at a distance and gather up our recollections that we ask ourselves how all the instruments of that gorgeous pageantry are put together and moved. The Pope has palaces and villas. The cardinals live in splendid apartments, and ride in massive coaches of purple and gilt, drawn by horses richly caparisoned, and attended by servants in livery. Bishops and prelates and monks and priests and friars fill long processions on public occasions, and move about in their daily life with the air and bearing of men

who belong to a sphere that common men have no concern in.

There is a church or a chapel for every day in the year, and some emblem of external recognition for every saint in the calendar. There are lenten days, when the rich eat fresh tunny from the Adriatic or eels from Comacchio, and the poor whatever they can get; and holidays, when the shops are shut and the churches and theatres open, and everybody amuses himself as well as his tastes and his means allow. Nowhere are processions so splendid, festivals so magnificent, the whole body of the population accustomed, either as actors or as spectators, to such daily displays of opulence and grandeur.

How is all this done? How do all these men live? What do they do for themselves and for one another? What is the object of this multiplication of insignia and titles? What is the meaning of the red stockings and the purple stockings, and the red and the purple hat-band, and the various decorations of the horses, and the infinite varieties of cut and color and device in dress and equipage, which you begin to distinguish only when you become accustomed to objects so unlike anything you have ever seen before? For every one of them has a meaning, and tells the instructed eye the hopes and aspirations and half the history of the bearer as plainly as a tablet or an inscription.

Without attempting, on the present occasion, to answer all of these questions in detail, I shall endeavor to give such an outline of the organization of the Roman Government as shall cover the most important of them.

The head of this vast body, the Pope, is better known than any of the inferior members; for, as spiritual head of the Church and absolute sovereign of her temporal dominions, his peculiar position has always made him the object of peculiar attention. Officially, he was for centuries the acknowledged chief of Christendom, jealous of his prerogatives, bold in his assumptions, often feared where he was not reverenced, and often courted and flattered where he inspired neither reverence nor fear. Individually, his education and habits, the books he reads and the company he keeps, have seldom led him to study the causes of national prosperity, and still more seldom taught him to sympathize with the feelings or respect the rights of mankind.

From his childhood, the purest source of sympathies and affections is closed for him rigorously and hopelessly. He grows up as a stranger at the family-hearth; for, as he sits there, he is taught that he can never have a family-hearth of his own. He begins life by renouncing its dearest privileges, and training all his faculties for a relentless war upon himself,—for repressing natural impulses, not guiding them, extirpating his passions, not subduing them, and aiming at an insensibility that can be attained only by the sacrifice of every human instinct, rather than that serene tranquillity of spirit in which every passion is recognized as a power for good as well as for evil, and all are subjected alike to the guidance of a discriminating and conscientious self-control.

He is in a false position from his first step in life, and strays farther and farther from the true course to the very end of it. His hopes and aspirations are all directed to one object, trained to flow in a dark and narrow channel, on which the sunbeams never play, and which the pure breath of Nature never visits. His brothers and sisters have a thousand things to talk about and think about which he has no part in. If he joins in their games, it is still as the *abbatino*: the formal small-clothes and narrow neckband and three-cornered hat that contrast so strongly with their gay dresses are ever present to remind him and them that they have different paths to travel, and have already entered upon them. It is a dreary process that education of his, and one that makes your heart ache to look upon. A rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed boy, with boyish blood in his veins, running through them quick and warm, and every now and then making them tingle with some boyish longing that will out, although he is a priest in miniature and a Pope in prospective. I never could look at it without thinking of the gardener, in the fulness of his topiary pride, cutting trees and shrubs into towers and walls, and every shape but that which Nature designed them for. Clip, clip, go the long, scythe-like shears, and with every clip down comes a branch with its thousand songs unsung, or a shoot with its half-blown promise of spring. Cut away earnestly, patiently. You have your faith to help you; and though your eyes are of the strongest and keenest, you have never been taught to use them. Cut away till your arms ache and your head swims with the strain of measuring

angles and inches and pyramids and obelisks; Nature is working at the root while you are warring on the branches. True, the birds will not build where your shears have passed; and the winds will wail where they would have piped it merrily, if the young boughs had been there to dance to their breathings. But the roots are tough and the trunks are strong, and the sap wells surely up from those mysterious sources where, in darkness and silence, Nature works her wondrous transformations,—proving, through each waxing and waning year, by bud and leaf and branch, that, thwart and mutilate and deny her as you may, she is the same kind mother still.

As life advances, the dividing lines grow sharper and more defined. He has got his Latin, and, in getting it, read Virgil and Horace and Cicero, as his brothers did. But henceforth St. Augustine becomes his Cicero; and he already begins to suspect that the best service his Homer and Thucydides and Demosthenes have rendered him has been by enabling him to understand St. Chrysostom. What is Herodotus to the Lives of the Saints, or Livy to Baronius? Why should he waste his time on human nature in Tacitus, or follow, with Guicciardini, the tortuous paths of princes, when he can find lessons more to his taste, and wisdom more to his purpose, in Mabillon and Pallavicini? His daily conversation is about the interests and concerns of his order, and, as he enters upon its duties, about the questions which those duties raise, and the rewards which their fulfilment promises or brings. It was a great day for him and for

his friends, when he first ascended the altar in cope and stole; but mass soon becomes a daily exercise, and, like all things done daily, sinks into routine. A still more anxious day was it, when he first took his seat in the confessional to absolve and to condemn, to interpret and to enjoin, to listen to secrets which are like the lifting of the veil from one of the darkest mysteries of life, and feel the breath that bore them through the punctures of the thin partition fall on his cheek with a warmth that made his veins glow and his own breath come fast and thick.

I once heard a confession of murder from the murderer's lips, as we sat alone, side by side, on the same sofa. It was of a Sunday morning, bright, beautiful, and still, one of those days in which earth looks so pure and lovely that you can hardly believe sin could ever have found a home thereon. He was a Sicilian, a gentleman by birth and fortune; and when he first came into the room, apologizing for the intrusion, and regretting that he was taking up my time with the business of a stranger, I thought that I had never seen a more intelligent face or felt more immediately at home with an utter stranger. He began his story in a low, musical voice,—Italian loses none of its softness in the mouth of a Sicilian,—and I had followed him through a midnight ride over a wild and solitary road before I began to suspect how it was to end. Then came the details: a sudden meeting,—angry words, heating to madness blood already too hot,—a shot,—a body writhing on the ground in its own blood. His voice hardly changed, though the tones, perhaps, were somewhat deeper; but

his cheek flushed and his eye kindled, and I felt such a sickening shudder come over me as I had never felt before. He was dressed in white, too,—spotless white, as it seemed to me, when he first came into the room; I had even admired the neatness of his trousers and waistcoat: but as I looked and listened, big drops of blood seemed to come out upon them,—a drop for every word, slowly exuding from some mysterious source, till he was bathed all over in it from head to foot. A day or two afterwards, I met him upon the Pincian, in the midst of walkers and riders and all the gay throng of a crowded promenade at its most crowded hour. But the blood was on him still, and, under the locks that clustered darkly over his forehead, the ineffaceable mark of Cain.

But even the story of murder may become familiar. Human nature at the confessional is the dark side of human nature, and it is as hard for the moral eye to preserve a healthy tone in the midst of this moral darkness as for the physical eye to preserve its clearness and strength in the constant presence of physical darkness. Curious questions come up there, undoubtedly, of a deep, strange interest, and often, too, of a deep and strange fascination. But it is not Nature's generous impulses, its tender yearnings, its noble aspirations, that the stricken conscience pours into the confessor's ear. The strugglings and writhings of the soul, the convulsive efforts to cast off an insupportable burden, to escape from an insufferable anguish, to find rest for itself in its weariness, peace for its warring passions, an answer and a solution to its doubts,—these are the events of the

confessional. And its fruits are the folios of Molina and Vasquez and Filutius and Lessius and Escobar, wherein sin and temptation are weighed in scales so delicate that the tenderest conscience can hardly hesitate to indulge itself now and then in the flowery little by-paths that run so pleasantly close to the straight and narrow way. It was not in the confessional that Filangieri and Gioja and Romagnosi studied, that Adam Smith sought the secret of national prosperity, or that Sismondi found that perennial fountain of generous sympathies, which, through his fifty years of incessant labor, welled up with such a quickening and invigorating vitality from the profound investigations of the historian and the patient statistics of the economist.

Not all, however, who wear the priest's dress are confessors and priests. There is a body of reserves always in waiting upon the vast army of regular ecclesiastics: men ready to push forward into the ranks, but who stop short at the *prima tonsura* till they have ascertained how much their chances will be bettered by taking the final and irrevocable step. Yet, although they now and then bring somewhat more of worldly leaven into their intellectual and moral training, they well know that there is but one road to the red hat and the tiara, and that they who give themselves up to this ambition must give themselves up to it with undivided hearts. Thus the models which they set before themselves, the ideals after which they strive, are all taken from successful aspirants to the honors of the Church. And the interests of that great body, as a body independent of laymen, and which can

preserve its immunities only by preserving its independence, and its independence only by a rigid exclusion of foreign elements,[1] become as dear to them as if they already enjoyed all its privileges and had assumed all its obligations.

If any one wishes to know what sort of statesmen such an education makes, let him go thoughtfully over the twenty legations, prolegations, delegations, and governments into which the twelve thousand nine hundred and twenty square miles of the Pontifical States were still divided only four years ago, and see how the two million nine hundred and eighty thousand subjects of the Pope lived and throve under the care of cardinals and prelates. Subtle negotiators, skilled in the crooks and tangles of a wily and selfish policy, they have always been,—for they have studied well the selfish elements of the human heart; patient, too, and persevering and keen-eyed, as they must needs be who walk in tortuous ways,—but cold, contracted, and arrogant, mistaking artifice for statesmanship, unwilling to learn from the lessons of the past, and unable to comprehend the changes that are going on around them, or to see that every forward step of the human race is the result of causes which man has sometimes been permitted to modify, but which he can never hope to control.

It is from men thus educated that the Pope and his counsellors are chosen.

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[1] I was once trying to convince an eminent prelate—one of the most learned and liberal of his order, and even then close to the red hat—of the importance of admitting laymen to certain State functions. "All right," said he, "from your point of view; but still I shall oppose it always, tooth and nail; for, if they come in, we must go out."

As far as theoretical origin goes, the Pope is the most democratic of sovereigns; for there is nothing to prevent his being taken from any rank or order of the faithful. The sons of peasants and mechanics have sat upon the Papal throne, and the thunderbolts of the Vatican have been launched by hands familiar with the pruning-knife and the plough. But in practice these bounds were effectually narrowed, when the college of cardinals tacitly restricted the choice to the members of their own body,—and still more effectually, when, by the same silent usurpation, they resolved that Adrian of Utrecht should be the last of foreign pontiffs. For three hundred and forty years none but Italians have been called to the chair of St. Peter's, thus, by an inevitable result of the unnatural alliance of temporal with spiritual sovereignty, confining the birthright of Christendom to the nation which all Christendom delighted to humiliate and oppress.

Theoretically, also, the election of the Pope is made by the special intervention of the Holy Ghost, although the doings of most conclaves fill many pages of very unholy history. Intrigues begin the moment the Pope's health is known to be failing, and grow thicker and more intricate with each unfavorable bulletin. There are few among the cardinals who do not feel that they have at least a chance of election; and not one, perhaps, but enters the conclave prepared to make the most of his individual pretensions. Some even, like Consalvi at the conclave of Leo XII., set their hearts so strongly upon it that they have been supposed to have died of the disappointment. Great services are

not always the best recommendation; for it is difficult to serve the public well without making some private enemies. Little griefs, long forgotten by the offender, but carefully treasured up in the more tenacious memory of the offended, have more than once proved insurmountable obstacles in the path to the throne. Each, too, of the great Catholic powers has a right to exclude one among the candidates, if the exclusion be announced before the votes are all given in: a privilege which, as it narrows the circle of the eligible and increases individual chances, seldom fails to be faithfully exercised. Indeed, up to the last moment, no one can tell who may and who may not be chosen. The most prominent candidates are often the first to be set aside; and the election, like all elections, from that of a President of the United States to that of a village-constable, is oftener decided by a combination of personal ambitions and interests than by those pure and elevated motives which look so attractive in the programme.

The death of the Pope is announced by the tolling of the great bell of the Capitol, and with all convenient haste the nine days' funeral begins. Everybody that has been at Rome will remember the beautiful little chapel on the right hand as you enter St. Peter's; for in the niche above the altar is the group of the Virgin with the dead Christ on her knees, one of the few works which the volcanic genius of Michel Angelo could bring itself to finish in marble. In this chapel, directly in front of this marvellous group, the body of the dead Pope, embalmed and clad in Pontifical robes, is laid on a sumptuous bier, amid a blaze of tapers, with

sentinels from the Swiss guard at his feet, leaning on their long halberds, and officers of the household in official costume, and all that imposing mixture of sacred and profane which Rome knows so well how to use upon all great occasions. And here, day after day, the faithful still crowd to take the last look of their "Holy Father," and kiss the cross on his slipper, and repeat a prayer for his soul. And hundreds among them, especially the very young and the very old, go a few yards farther on to the bronze statue of St. Peter, once the bronze statue of Jupiter, and with equal faith imprint a fervent kiss on the well-worn toe, and repeat a prayer for themselves.

On the opposite side, over the doorway that leads to the dome, is a large sarcophagus of white marble, looking down, if marble can be supposed to look, upon the monument of the last of the Stuarts: dead Pope and dead King almost face to face; crown and tiara mouldering within a few paces of each other; for in that sarcophagus Pope after Pope has silently taken his place, till summoned by the death of his successor to go down to the darker slumbers of the vaults below. And at the close of the ninth day of the funeral, when the crowd is gone, and the doors are closed, and the evening shadows begin to fall upon chapel and altar, and the votive tapers twinkle like dim stars through the gathering gloom, the sarcophagus is opened, the coffin taken out and examined and then carried down to the vault, the newly dead is raised to his temporary resting-place, and amid a silence seldom broken by lamentation the apostolic notary writes by

flickering torchlight that once more the successor of the throne has become the successor of the grave.

Then begins the conclave. Each cardinal comes in state with his two *conclavistas*, or conclave-companions, usually prelates, and always chosen with a view to the services they may be able to render in the approaching struggle; the mass of the Holy Spirit is solemnly said, if not always devoutly listened to; the ambassadors of the Catholic powers utter their official exhortations to harmony and a single eye to the good of the Church; and when they withdraw, the mason of the conclave steps gravely forth, trowel in hand, to build up a solid wall of brick and mortar betwixt the electors and that world which still looks forward with curious interest, although with diminished faith, to the result of the election.

The conclave, as the name indicates, is a room, and when the constitution of the customary circular letters announcing his election, the new Pope, John XXI., better known, if known at all, by his "Thesaurus Pauperum" than by his administration of the Holy See, issued a Bull confirming the suspension of the obnoxious constitution, as containing things "obscure, impracticable, and opposed to the acceleration of the election." The next conclave lasted six months and eight days.

Still the conclave is a kind of imprisonment, which nothing but that love of power which reconciles man to so many things he hates, and those hopes that never die in hearts that have once cherished them, could induce seventy men accustomed to

lives of luxury and indulgence to submit to. The usual place of holding it is the Quirinal, a cooler and healthier palace than the Vatican; and, in a spirit very different from that of the Gregorian constitution, everything is done to make it as comfortable as is consistent with narrow space and walled-up doors. Each cardinal has four small rooms for himself and his two companions, and the number and quality of the dishes at his dinner and supper depend upon his own habits and the skill of his cook. The approaches are guarded by the senators and *conservatori*, patriarchs and bishops, and at meal-times, a judge of the *Rota* is stationed at the dumb-waiter to examine the dishes as they are brought up, and make sure that the intrigues within get no help from the intrigues without. Daily mass forms, of course, a part of the daily routine, and is followed by the morning vote.

The voting usually begins with the *scrutinio*, or, as we should term it, the ballot. Each cardinal writes his own name and that of his candidate on a ticket. Then, with many ceremonies and genuflections, not very edifying to profane eyes, if profane eyes were permitted to see them, but each of which has its mystical interpretation, he ascends to the altar and lays his ticket on the communion-plate, whence it is transferred to the chalice, —communion-plate and communion-cup playing a part in the ceremony which has made more than one good Catholic groan deeply in spirit. The votes are then counted, care being taken that they correspond in number to the number of cardinals present, and if any candidate is found to have two-thirds of the votes cast,

the election is complete. If, however, the legal two-thirds are not reached, any voter may change his vote by saying that he accedes to the votes thrown in favor of any other candidate. This mode of election is called *accession*, and has often been found successful where the prominence of any candidate was sufficient to make it evident that two or three votes would secure a choice.

Inspiration is another mode of election, not so common as the ballot, but which, whenever any candidate has succeeded in forming a strong party, is not without its advantages. Several cardinals call out together the name of their candidate, and if many of them agree in calling the same name, the rest are seldom willing to hold out in open opposition to a choice which after all may be made without them: the successful candidate always being expected to remember those who favored, and seldom known to forget those who opposed his election.

A fourth and last mode, never resorted to except in desperate straits, and when the contest seems interminable, is by *delegation*: the power of choice being delegated by the cardinals to one or more of their number, and all solemnly pledging themselves to abide by the decision. It was thus that Gregory X. was chosen by a delegation of six,—and that John XXII. became Pope after two years of regular voting had failed to procure a successor to the Prince of the Apostles. It has been said, however, that John, who, partly by his talents and partly by fraud, had raised himself from the lowest walks of life, had no sooner secured a pledge of concurrence than he announced his own name as that

of the candidate of his choice. Surprised, but not edified, the cardinals made no opposition to his elevation, for Christendom and folio crammed with projects and reports: bishops and missionaries transport him in a moment from England to China, from Egypt to Peru. If you could look into those piles of papers which are awaiting his signature, you would find petitions and remonstrances, death-warrants and pardons, political processes and criminal processes, schemes for a new bishopric or a new canonization, plans for a cathedral in New York or a convent in Syria, for a new prison in the Patrimony or a new tax in the Marches, architecture and law, finance and theology, sacred and profane all jumbled together: and what wonder they should keep jumbled, from the beginning to the end, from his coronation to his funeral, leaving him, even with the best intentions and the most untiring industry, a helpless prey to intrigues and cabals and all the artifices and deceptions which beset a throne? Gioja and Romagnosi are under the ban, and he has no wish to ask them for the clue to the labyrinth he is wandering in, even if he had the time. He has no time to read the newspapers. His knowledge of them is derived from abstracts prepared for him by a clerk in the Governor's office,—containing, therefore, what the minister allows to be put there, and nothing more; while their living pictures, those columns of advertisements which bring before you day by day the wants and hopes and pursuits of so many of your fellow-creatures, carrying you, as it were, into hundreds of families, and laying open to your scrutiny hundreds

of human hearts, the different lights in which men and things appear to the organs of different parties, and the proof which, in the midst of their contradictions, they all concur in giving that there is a spirit abroad which cannot be lulled to sleep, are lessons all lost for him, and which, perhaps, would be equally lost, even if he had the leisure and the knowledge to study them.

He dines alone,—for in the city, in the dearth of publicans and sinners, no one can sit at table with the Vicar of Christ; and thus dinner-hour, the open-hearted hour, puts him almost more absolutely in the hands of his immediate attendants than any hour of the twenty-four. If he walks, it is in the garden or library; if he rides, it is surrounded by guards and followed by his household train. He took his last walk in the streets when he was a prelate, and thenceforth knows no more of the city than he can see through his carriage-windows; and now even that imperfect view is more than half cut off by the officers of the guard, who ride their great black horses close to the carriage-door.

But enough of the Pope, and much more than I had intended when I first took up my pen. That, even when he has studied them most, the temporal interests of his people must suffer in his hands, has been proved by the sufferings of millions through centuries of oppression and misrule. And must it not always be so, when the interests of husbands and fathers are intrusted to men cut off by education and profession from the domestic sympathies wherein these interests have birth, and that domestic hearth which is at once the source and the emblem and the

purifier of the State?

The electors and advisers of the Pope form the College of Cardinals, seventy in number, when full: six bishops, fifty priests, and fourteen deacons; once merely the parish priests of Rome, then princes of the Church and electors of its visible head. In this body, formerly so important and on which so much still depends, all Catholic Europe has its representatives, although it is mainly composed of native Italians. Many of them are men of exemplary piety, many of them eminent for talent and learning, but some, too, mere worldlings, raised by intrigue or favor or the necessities of birth to a position too exalted for weak heads, and too much beset with temptation for corrupt hearts.

The path that leads to the sacred college is neither a straight nor a narrow one. There are no prescribed qualifications of age or of rank. Leo X. was cardinal at thirteen; and although no such premature appointment to the gravest duties has been made since, or will ever, probably, be made again, yet there is always a salutary sprinkling of youth in this eminent body, if priests and prelates can ever be said to be truly young. And although families of a certain rank are sure of the speedy promotion of any child whom they may see fit to dedicate to the Church, yet the representative of untainted blood has often found himself side by side with the son of a peasant or of an artisan. The cardinal is not necessarily even a priest. Adrian V. died without ordination; and Leo X. held the keys of St. Peter four days with unconsecrated hands. He may even have been married, but must be single again

when he puts on the red hat.

The appointment is made by the Pope, and, although announced to the whole body assembled in consistory, requires no confirmation to make it valid. Certain offices lead to it, and are known as cardinalate offices. Every prelate looks forward to it with hope, and every priest with longing; and besides the priests and prelates, the regular orders also, the monks and friars, claim a representation in the college. But whatever the pretensions or expectations of individuals may be, the decision rests with the Pope, whose good-will, adroitly managed, has often let fall the coveted honor upon men who had little else to recommend them. It was certainly honorable to this reverend body in our own day that they numbered Mai and Mezzofante among their brethren; but in Rome the story ran that neither the palimpsestic labors of the one nor the fifty languages of the other would have won him the well-earned promotion, if the Pope's favorite servant had not set his heart upon making his children's tutor assistant-librarian of the Vatican.

Although nominally the council of the Pope, the consistory or official assembly of the cardinals has few of the characteristics of a deliberative body. The Pope addresses them from his throne; but the substance of his address is already known to most of them beforehand, and his opinion upon the subject, as well as theirs, made up before they come together. They have no constituents to enlighten, nothing to hope and nothing to fear from public opinion. They are all so near the topmost round that each of them

is justified in feeling as if he already had his hand upon it; but to whichever of them that envied preëminence may be destined, it is neither the favor nor the gratitude of the people that can raise him to it. What they already hold they are sure of; and it is only to the good-will of their colleagues that they are to look for more.

But it is in those public meetings that the Roman court puts on all its splendor. The very hall has a grave and imposing air about it that inspires serious thoughts in serious minds, and checks, for a moment, the frivolous vivacity of lighter ones. You cannot look at the walls without feeling a solemn sadness steal over you, as you think of the thousands of your fellow-creatures who have gazed on them with the same freshness and fulness of life with which you now gaze on them, since Raphael and Michel Angelo first clothed them with their own immortal conceptions, three hundred years ago. It was in an assembly like this, and perhaps in this very room, that the condemnation of Luther was pronounced, that Henry was proclaimed "Defender of the Faith," and that Cardinal Pole rejoiced with his brethren of the purple over the approaching return of England to the bosom of the Church. And as you are musing on these things, and centuries seem to pass before you like the figures of a dream, the room gradually fills, the cardinals come in and take their places, each clad in the simple majesty of the purple, and last of all comes the Pope himself, the steel sabres of his guard ringing on the marble floor with a clang that breaks the harmonious silence most discordantly. Then in a moment all is hushed again. The cardinals

go one by one to pay their homage to their spiritual father, kneeling and kissing the cross on his mantle, he blessing them all, as duteous children, in return. If you are an American and a Catholic, you look on devoutly, feeling, perhaps, at moments, although you take good care not to say so, that, although highly edifying, it is a little dull; if an American and a Protestant, you think of the morning prayer in Congress, and members with newspapers or half-read letters in their hands, a very busy one now and then forgetting that he is standing with his hat on, and all of them in a hurry to have it over and enter upon the business of the day,—or of a reception-night, perhaps, at the White House, with the President shaking hands as fast as they can be held out, and trying hard to smile each new-comer into the belief that the "present incumbent" is the very best man he can vote for at the next election.

But hush! the Pope is speaking,—not always as orators speak, it is true, but gravely, at least, and with that indefinable air of dignity which the habit of command seldom fails to impart. The language is sonorous, and if you have had the good sense to unlearn your barbarous application of English sounds—cunningly devised by Nature herself to keep damp fogs and cold winds out of the mouth—to Italian vowels, which the same judicious mother framed with equal cunning to let soft and odoriferous airs into it, you will probably understand what he says, for his speech is generally in Latin, and very good Latin

too.[2]

But still you grow tired, and, like the actors in the splendid pageant, are heartily glad when it is all over,—well pleased to have seen it, but, unless a sight-seer by nature, equally pleased to feel that you will never be compelled by your duty to your guide-book and *cicerone* to see it again.

There are three kinds of consistory,—the private, the public, and the semi-public. The most interesting are those in which ambassadors are received, for the ambassador's speech gives some variety to the routine. But in substance they are all equally splendid, equally formal, and—now that the world no longer looks to the Vatican for its creeds—all equally insignificant and dull.

Thus it is not as a deliberative body that the cardinals take part in the government. Their collective functions are for the most part purely formal, and the great wheel turns steadily on its axle without any direct help from them. But as sole electors of the sovereign, whom they are not only to choose, but to choose from among themselves, and as the body from which the highest functionaries of the State are drawn, their individual influence is always very considerable, often whatever they have the tact and skill to make it.

Another body which shares with the "Sacred College" the privilege of furnishing the instruments of government is the

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[2] Dr. Lieber, in his "Reminiscences of Niebuhr,"—a delightful book of a delightful class,—records the great historian's testimony in favor of Italian Latin.

Prelacy,—a term which must be taken in its restricted sense, of men, whether laymen or ecclesiastics, destined by profession to various offices of dignity and trust in the civil and ecclesiastical administration, some of which lead directly to the cardinalate, and all of them to personal privileges and a competent income. Their education is often less exclusive than that of the priests, for many of them have belonged to the world before they gave themselves up to the Church, and profane studies have employed some of the time which might otherwise have been devoted to Bellarmino and his brethren. In dress they are distinguished by the color of their stockings and hat-band. When they walk out, a liveried servant follows them a few paces in the rear; and while the cardinals, from "Illustrious" have become "Eminent," these aspirants to the purple are always addressed as "Monsignore," or "My Lord."

The first set of wheels in this complicated machine is composed of the twenty-three Congregations, a kind of executive and deliberative committees, consisting of cardinals and prelates, and first used by Sixtus V., as a speedier and more effective method of eliciting the opinions of his counsellors and bringing their administrative talents into play than the deliberations in full consistory which had obtained till his time. Sixteen of them are ecclesiastical, the remaining seven civil, although the number may at any time be restricted or enlarged according to the wants and the views of the reigning Pontiff. They have their stated meetings, their regular offices and officers; and while

theoretically under the immediate direction of the sovereign, they actually relieve him from many of the details and not a few of the direct responsibilities of sovereignty.

The first of these Congregations bears a name which sounds harshly in Protestant ears, although but a shadow of that fearful power which once carried terror to every fireside, and made even princes tremble and turn pale on their thrones. The Holy Office still retains the form and authority conferred upon it by Paul III., if not the spirit breathed into it by the grasping Innocent and fiery Dominic. Its dark walls, which so long shrouded darkest deeds, stand close to St. Peter's, under the very eye of the Pope, as he looks from his bedroom-window,—within ear-shot of the thousands whom curiosity or devotion brings yearly to the church or to the palace, little heeding, as they gaze on the dome of Michel Angelo or climb the stairway of Bernini, that almost beneath the pavement they tread on are dungeons and chains and victims.

But the Inquisition, you say, is no longer the Inquisition of three hundred years ago. Bunyan tells us that Christian, on his pilgrimage to the Celestial City, saw, among other memorable sights, a cave hard by the way-side, wherein sat an old man, grinning at pilgrims as they passed by, and biting his nails because he could not get at them. And now let me tell you a story of the Inquisition which I know to be true.

Some twenty-five years ago there lived in Rome a physician well known for his professional skill, and still better for his

good companionship and ready wit. He was, in fact, a pleasant companion, fond of a good story, fonder still of his dog and gun, fondest of all of talking about poetry and reciting verses, which he could do by the hour,—sometimes repeating whole pages from Dante or Petrarch or Tasso or his favorite of all, Alfieri,—and sometimes extemporizing sonnets, or *terzine*, or odes, with that wonderful facility which Nature has given to the Italian *improvvisatore* and denied to the rest of mankind. It has often been remarked that the study of medicine goes hand in hand with a certain boldness of speculation not altogether in harmony with the lessons of the priest. No one who has lived in Italy long enough to get at the true character of the people can have failed to observe this in Italian physicians; and our doctor, like many of his brethren, was suspected of carrying his speculations into forbidden fields. Still, his practice was large, and went on increasing. Laymen, if they must needs be sick, were glad to have him at their bedsides; and there were even men with purple on their shoulders who had strong faith in his skill, if they had strong doubts of his orthodoxy. Externally he conformed to the requirements of the Church: heard mass of Sundays, and went once a year to the confessional; for this much is a police regulation, a tax upon conscience which every Roman is bound to pay. But he was too much behind the scenes to do it with a good will, and saw professionally too much of the daily life of the clergy, looked too freely and too closely at some of their "pleasant vices," to feel much reverence either for them or for

their teachings.

Suddenly his chair, for he was professor in the medical college, was taken from him: a warning, thought his friends, that unfriendly eyes were upon him; and so, also, thought some of his patients, and called in a new physician. Still his general practice continued large; and although he found a little more time for his wife,—for a father to sit in, in darkness and silence, and recall the sunny faces and sweet prattle of his children. But he felt that unseen eyes might be watching him even there, and that a sigh, though breathed never so softly, might reach the ears of some who would rejoice in it and come all the more confidently to the work they had resolved to do upon him. So, setting down his lamp, he made two or three turns across the room, and then, drawing out his watch, as if to assure himself that it was bedtime, deliberately undressed and went to bed.

And to sleep?

You will not call him coward, if with closed eyes he lay wakeful upon his pillow, thinking over the last hour with a heart that beat quick, though it faltered not, listening vainly for some sound to break the unearthly silence, and longing for daylight, if, indeed, the light of day was permitted to visit that lonely cell. It came at last, the daylight,—though not as it was wont to come to him in his own dear home, with a fresh morning breath and a fresher song of birds, waking familiar voices and greeted with endearing accents. How would it be in that home this morning? How had it been there through the slow hours of that feverish

night? How was it to be thenceforth with those precious ones, and with him too, whom they all looked to for guidance and counsel?

He got up and dressed himself a little more carefully than usual, resolved that there should be no outside telltales of the thoughts that were struggling within. He had hardly finished dressing when the door opened. Neither footsteps in the corridor nor the turning of the key had he heard, but there stood a familiar of the Inquisition, friar in dress, and with the stony face of a man accustomed to live by lamp-light and talk in whispers. He brought the prisoner's breakfast,—coffee and bread. "You have been listening," thought M–; "but I will be even with you." And to make a fair start, he refused to touch either the bread or the coffee until the familiar had tasted both.

The morning passed slowly, though he helped it along as well as he could by repeating verses and writing a sonnet on the wall with his pencil. Dinner came: a good meal, more substantial than dungeon-air could give an appetite for; but he ate it. Supper followed,—brought by the same silent familiar who had served breakfast and dinner, and who still came with the same noiseless step, set the dishes upon the table, tasted the food as the Doctor bade him, and then went silently away.

Five days passed, slowly, monotonously, wearily. Five nights of unwelcome dreams and sleep that brought no rest. The close air and narrow bounds began to tell upon his appetite and strength. He had soon gone over his poets. Fortunately, they were well chosen and would bear repeating. The fountain in his own

mind, too, was still full, and he found great relief in declaiming extempore verses in a loud voice, and writing out those that pleased him best. But could he hold out? for it was evidently intended to wear him down by anxiety and solitude, and when they had broken his spirits bring him to an examination.

At last a new face appeared: not cold like that of the familiar, nor wreathed in smiles like that of a successful enemy, but wearing a decent expression of gravity tempered by compassion. And "How do you do, Doctor?" asked the visitor in a soothing voice, trained like his face to tell lies at his bidding.

"Well, Father, perfectly well."

"I am very glad to hear it. I was afraid your appetite might have suffered from the sudden change in your mode of life."

"Not in the least. I have a sound stomach, and can digest anything you send me."

"And how do you contrive to pass your time? For so active a man, the change is very great."

"Oh, that is easy enough. I am very fond of poetry, and have such a good memory that I know volumes of it by heart. There is nothing pleasanter than repeating verses that you like,—except, perhaps, making verses yourself."

"Do you ever compose?"

"I? It has always been my favorite pastime. Would you like to hear some of my verses?"

The sympathizing father was, of course, too happy; and M– recited, in his most effective manner, a sonnet, not very

complimentary to eavesdroppers and spies. A shadow passed over the monk's face; but he was too well trained to let out his feelings prematurely; and resuming the conversation as if nothing had occurred to disturb his equanimity, he told M– in his softest tone that he hoped there had been nothing in his treatment to complain of. M– sprang to his feet.

"Oh, this, by Heaven, is too much, even from you! Nothing to complain of! To tear the father of a family from the arms of his wife and children, a physician from patients who are looking to him for life and health,—and nothing to complain of!"

It was just the question he wanted; and partly from design, and partly from irrepressible indignation, he poured out a torrent of invective and reproach which soon sent his visitor away, perfectly convinced that the spirit they had undertaken to break had not yet begun to bend.

Five more weary days, and then began the examination, —cautious, minute, perplexing: questions framed to entangle; charges advanced, not for discussion, but for conviction; a review of the whole course and tenor of his past life; his stories and verses; his jests among friends; sayings that he had forgotten; things that he had done years before, mixed up with things that he had never done; all adroitly commingled, and so skilfully arranged, that, while each seemed comparatively unimportant in itself, each had its place prepared for it with malignant craft and wondrous subtlety; and all taken together forming a network of harmonious evidence from which there seemed no possibility of

escape. Familiar as he was with the history of the Holy Office, and aware as he had always been that his steps, like those of every man upon whom suspicion had ever fallen, were dogged by spies, he had never supposed that his daily life had been tracked with such persistence, and so carefully treasured up against him.

He saw his danger, and saw, too, that the course he had resolved upon in the first hour of his arrest was the only course that could save him. Denial would be useless. They expected it and were well prepared for it. But it remained to be seen whether they were equally well prepared for frank confession and adroit interpretation. To every question with regard to acts or words he answered, "Yes, I did so,—I said so,—but"—and then, by putting an unexpected interpretation upon it, he either stripped it of its offensive bearing, or reduced it to an idle jest of which nothing worse could be said than that it was indiscreet.

The fathers were puzzled. For denial they had proofs. Prevarication they were familiar with, and never so happy as when they saw a poor, perplexed, bewildered victim vainly struggling in the toils, driven triumphantly from subterfuge to subterfuge, and at last, with nerveless arms and faltering tongue, dropping hopeless upon his chair, as the conviction forced itself upon him that he was there, not for trial, but for condemnation.

But a bold, self-possessed, self-reliant man, looking them in the face with an eye as keen and scrutinizing as their own, answering every question promptly in a firm voice, and, just as the blow seemed ready to fall, parrying it by a movement so

skilful as to compel his adversary to change his ground and gird himself up for a new attack,—this was something which, with all their experience, they had not counted upon, and knew not how to meet. Day after day he was brought to the bar. Hour after hour they laboriously plied question upon question. On their side was the written record,—nothing omitted, nothing forgotten; the words of yesterday close by the words of ten years ago; each accusation propping the others; and every explanation and answer written minutely down, to be brought out unexpectedly, and compared with each new one as it came. On his, a ready wit, perfect self-control, a thorough knowledge of the character of those whom he was dealing with, a remarkable command of language, and a courage that nothing could shake.

It was an exhausting process, and the Inquisitors, like the royal patron of their institution, well knew that time was a powerful ally. Still they resolved to call in a new one to their aid. M– was known to be very fond of his family; and long experience had taught the reverend fathers that even the manliest heart may be shaken by a sudden awakening of tender emotions. The examinations were discontinued. For three days M– was left to the solitude of his cell,—a solitude deeper and more unnerving from contrast with the mental tension of the last fortnight. Then, at the usual hour of examination, the door opened. The usual attendants were in waiting. "Now for a new trial of wits," thought he, as he rose to follow them. Then it occurred to him that it might be for sentence that he was summoned; and while he

was weighing the probabilities, and calling up his strength for the occasion, he reached the door, the attendants threw it open, and he found himself in the presence, not of his judges, but of his wife and children. Pale, bewildered, looking timidly towards him, through eyes dim with tears, there they stood, utterly at a loss what to say or what to do.

He felt his heart bound. But he saw the snare, and, repressing his emotions by a powerful effort, held out his hand instead of opening his arms, and bidding them, cheer up and give themselves no uneasiness about him, and above all not to let their enemies fancy that either he or they would be cast down by anything that they could do, he calmly turned to the guards, and told them, that, if that stale trick was all they had brought him there for, they had better take him back to his cell.

Meanwhile his friends were not idle: and he had friends, as I have already hinted, even in the sacred college. With a cardinal on your side, you may do many things in Rome which it would hardly answer to venture upon without him; for who can tell but that that Cardinal may one day be Pope? The precise nature of the accusation lodged against him M– never knew; but he had gathered enough from the interrogatories to feel that he had got lightly off, when he found himself condemned to say his prayers and read books of devotion three months in a convent, with the privilege of walking in the garden and talking theology with the elder brethren.

And thus the old man whom Bunyan's English Pilgrim saw in

the cave by the way-side two hundred years ago still sits there, biting his nails and grinning, not altogether impotently, at Roman Pilgrims, to this very day.

The Congregation of the Holy Office is composed of thirteen cardinals, one of whom is secretary, and an assessor, a commissary, counsellors, and several officers taken from the prelates and regular orders. The Pope himself is Prefect. The counsellors meet on Mondays in the Palace of the Inquisition; the whole body on Wednesdays in the Convent of the Minerva, —where St. Dominic still smiles upon his faithful followers,— and Thursdays before the Pope. The examination of their records and the opening of their prisons, during the brief existence of the "Roman Republic" of 1849, showed that these meetings were not always mere matters of form.

The Congregation of the Index was founded by Pius V., in order to relieve the Holy Office of that part of its duties which relates to written and printed thought: censorship of the press would be the proper term, if censorship, even in its most rigid form, did not fall short of the attributes and functions of this odious tribunal. It is composed of cardinals and ecclesiastics, many of them distinguished by their learning, some, doubtless, by their piety,—but all leagued together, and solemnly pledged to sleepless warfare against every form of intellectual freedom. Without their approbation no manuscript can be seat to the press, no new editions issued, no thought promulgated. Even the stone-carver is not permitted to use his chisel until they have decided

how far love or pride may go in commemoration of the dead. They mutilate, with equal sovereignty of will, the printed pages of a classic and the manuscript of an unknown scribbler,—sit in judgment upon Botta and Laplace, as their predecessors sat in judgment upon Guicciardini and Galileo,—and, in the fervor of their undiscriminating zeal, condemn Robertson and Gibbon, Reid and Hume, the skeptic Bolingbroke and the pious Addison, to the same fiery purgation. That Italian literature was not crushed by them long ago is, perhaps, the strongest proof of the irrepressible vigor and marvellous vitality of the Italian mind. Not to be on the "Index" would call a blush to the cheek of the most unambitious of authors,—would carry a presumption of worthlessness with it from which even the penny-a-liner would shrink with dismay,—and to the poet and historian would sound like a sentence of perpetual exclusion from all those cherished hopes which irradiate with heavenly light the steep and thorny paths of intellectual renown.

Next to these in importance is the Congregation of the "Propaganda," or of that celebrated institution for the propagation of the Roman Catholic religion which, since the reign of Gregory XV., has governed, as from a common centre, the immense network of missions that Christian Rome has spread over the lands she hopes to conquer, as Pagan Rome spread her network of military roads over the lands which she had already reduced to subjection. Cardinals, with a cardinal for prefect and a prelate for secretary, compose this congregation, which

holds regular meetings twice a month, and, not unfrequently, extraordinary meetings in the presence of the Pope. In these the important questions of the missionary world are discussed, reports examined, new missions proposed, new missionaries appointed, new bishoprics founded "among the heathen," and all these complicated interests taken into impartial consideration.

For here, at least, there is little room for heart-burnings and jealousies. It is of equal importance to all that the conquests of the Church should be extended to the utmost limits of the earth, the heathen converted, and heretics won back to the fold. While John Eliot was translating the Bible into a language which no one has been left to read, and his Puritan brethren were hanging and shooting the Indians whom they had neither the patience to win by their teaching nor the charity to enlighten by their example, Indians from the true Indies were preparing themselves in the halls of the Propaganda to carry the healing promises of the gospel to the fathers and mothers who had watched over their heathen infancy. In the record of the great things that Rome has done, there is nothing greater than the foundation of the Propaganda,—no conception so worthy of a steadfast faith, or more in harmony with the spirit of the Saviour of mankind. To borrow the helpless child, and restore him a helpful man,—to enlist the sympathies of birth, and secure for themselves the eloquence of natural affection,—to overleap the barriers of race and elude the sensitiveness of national pride by putting the doctrines they sought to diffuse into mouths which,

untainted by repulsive accents, could enforce new truths by well-known images and familiar illustrations,—was like laying anew the foundations of the Capitol, and consecrating that spirit of worldly wisdom wherein ancient Rome was never found wanting by that spirit of Christian philanthropy which modern Rome has always claimed as her peculiar distinction.

But alas that a twenty-minutes' walk should take us from the Piazza di Spagna to the Via di Sant' Uffizio!

The other ecclesiastical functions of government are performed in a similar way: one congregation superintending the churches of Rome and its district, under the title of *Visita Apostolica*; one, the ceremonies of the Church; one, ecclesiastical immunities; one, sacred rites; one, indulgences and relies. Questions relative to bishops, bishoprics, and the regular orders are intrusted to four congregations, under different and appropriate names. St. Peter's has a special congregation for itself, and not the least dignified and important of them; for, besides eight cardinals and four prelates, it commands the official services of the Auditor of the Apostolic Chamber, the Treasurer, a judge of the *Rota*, a comptroller, an attorney-general, a secretary, and several counsellors-at-law. Not St. Peter's only, but all the churches of Rome, come in for a share of their attention; and what is more important, they form a court of probate, with exclusive jurisdiction over all wills containing charitable bequests, or bequests to heretics and strangers, fugitives, exiles, or the dead. Even a doubt as to the probability of being able to

execute the bequest according to the wishes of the testator, or an apparent contradiction in the devises themselves, brings the will within the jurisdiction of this tribunal; and should the legatee, after full experience of the law's delay, succeed in obtaining a favorable decree, the income of his legacy, from the death of the testator to the publication of the decision, is sequestrated to the treasury of the church of St. Peter's. Few congregations are more assiduous in the performance of their duties.

A criminal court of appeals, with the appellation of *Sacra Consulta*,—how this *sacred* meets you at every turn!—a council called *Buon Governo*, for the superintendence of municipal administration,—one for roads, fountains, and water-courses, called the General Prefecture of Waters and Roads,—a Council of "Economy," a Council of Studies, a Council for the Examination of Accounts, in which four laymen sit side by side with four prelates, under the presidency of a cardinal, and the Congregation of the Census for the apportionment of taxes on real estate in the country, form the seven civil congregations by which the Pope is assisted in his labors, and the cardinals and prelates brought in to a share of the administration. Add to these sixteen tribunals, or courts, civil and ecclesiastical, two Secretaries of State, a Secretary of Briefs and one of Memorials, a *Camerlengo*, a Treasurer, and a Governor of Rome, and you have an outline of the Roman Government under Gregory XVI.

The Secretaries of State are always cardinals; the *Camerlengo*, who is the official head of government during the vacancies of

the Holy See, a cardinal; the Treasurer and Governor of Rome, prelates, who, on leaving office, become cardinals by right. The only part of this complex machinery which was intrusted to laymen was the Tribunal of the Capitol and the Tribunal of Commerce: the latter an institution of Pius VII., and directly connected with the Chamber of Commerce, from whose fifteen members two of its three judges are chosen, while the third is furnished by the bar; the former, the feeble representative of all that is left of the municipal government of Rome.

Rome has sixty noble families who enjoy the title of Conscript. From these are chosen, every three months, three *Conservatori* and a Prior of the Wards, who form a committee for the superintendence of the walls and public monuments, and for the administration of the income of the Capitoline Chamber. If we look at them in connection with the ancient government of Rome, we shall find them employed in functions not unlike those of the *Ædiles*. From the same point of view, the Senator may be said to resemble the City Prefect; although, when you see him on public days, standing like a statue on the steps of the Pontifical throne, above the prelates, but a little lower than the cardinals, you can think neither of prefect nor of senate, nor of anything that recalls the days when Romans acknowledged no superior but the fellow-citizens whom they themselves had chosen as representatives of their sovereign will.

It requires no very profound examination of this system to see that it is purely and rigidly ecclesiastical. The ecclesiastical leaven

penetrates it in every part. Wherever you go, either for business or for amusement, you find some representative of the Church. Whichever way you turn, you see keen eyes peering upon you from under a three-cornered hat or a cowl. And even when the path seems for a while to be leading you back to the world, through rows of shops, under the windows of bankers, within sight of sails and steam, or within sound of humming wheels, there are still shrines and oratories numberless by the way, and a church or a convent at the end.

Elective sovereign by origin, the moment the Pope ascends the throne, he becomes absolute. Authority and honors proceed from him as from their legitimate source. Money bears his image and superscription. Monuments are inscribed with his name. Laws and decrees are promulgated as voluntary emanations of his sovereign will. As head of the Church, all spiritual interests are under his protection. As chief of the State, all temporal interests are subject to his control. He reigns, not merely like other sovereigns, by the "grace of God," but by a peculiar privilege and inherent right, as Vicar of Christ. Resistance to his will is not simply rebellion, but the deeper and deadlier sin of sacrilege. His interpretation relieves the mind from the agony of doubt; his blessing frees the conscience from the burden of sin. And how, if earnest-minded and sincere, can he fail to look upon the interests of the State as subordinate to the interests of the Church, and interpret his duties and obligations as the legatee of Constantine by his feelings and convictions as the successor of St. Peter?

In the practical exercise of this authority be feels the want of other eyes to help him see and other hands to help him do. He cannot read all that is to be read, or write all that is to be written, or even hear and say all that is to be heard and said. However great his love of detail, there are details which he cannot reach. However comprehensive his glance, or unwearied his industry, there are objects that lie beyond the compass of his vision, and labor to be performed which no industry can bring within the human allotment of twenty-four hours.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.