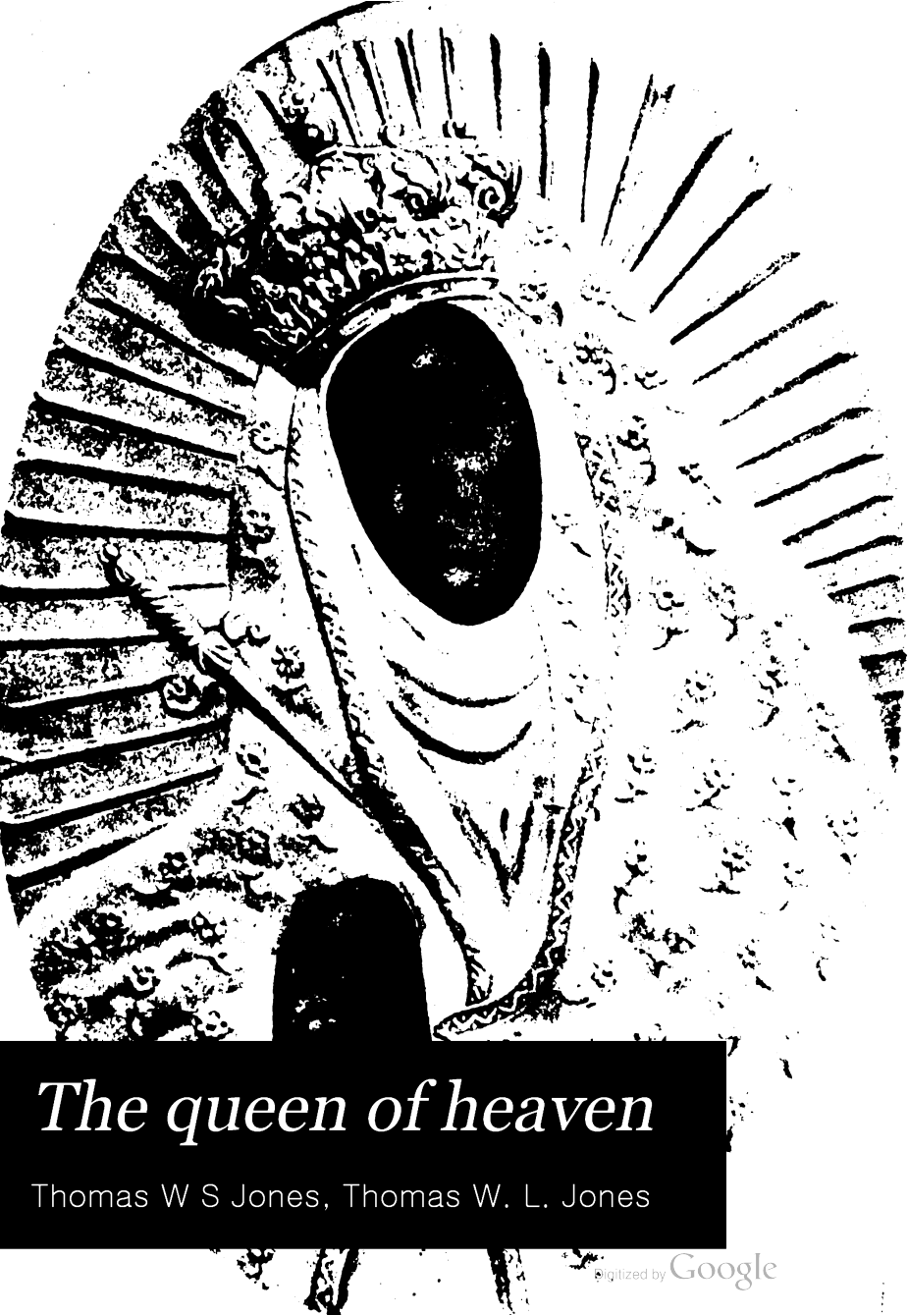
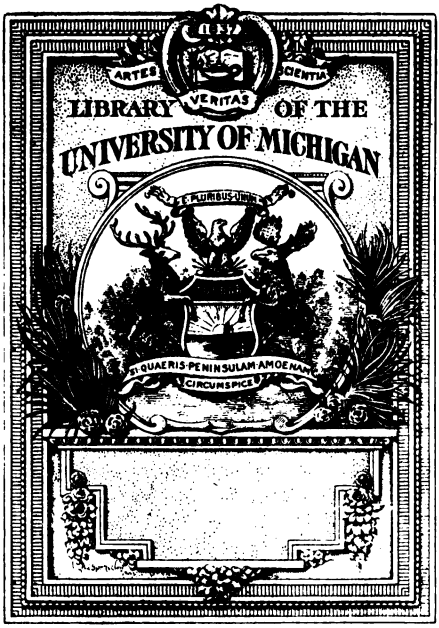


The queen of heaven

Thomas W S Jones, Thomas W. L. Jones



"THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN"

MÀMMA SCHIAVONA

(THE BLACK MOTHER,)

THE MADONNA OF THE PIGNASECCA

A DELINEATION OF THE GREAT IDOLATRY

TRACED IN FACTS AND CUSTOMS SANCTIONED AND PROMOTED BY THE TEACHING AND AUTHORITY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Thomas

T. W. S. JONES — NAPLES

NAPLES

TIPOGRAFIA, STRADA MADDALENELLA DEGLI SPAGNUOLI

1898.

TO THE

REV. W. L. WATKINSON,

President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference

In remembrance of his visit to this city with Mrs. Watkinson, — of the special interest they took in the distinctive characteristics of the ordinary life of the people;—acknowledging continued sympathy with the Workers and Work of our Southern Italian Mission, and in grateful recognition of personal kindness to me;—hoping this little book .

THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

may serve to give its readers a more vivid appreciation of the religious condition of Italy, and evoke new sympathy and prayer and help for those working

FOR GOD — FOR CHRIST — FOR ITALY

under the death-fraught shadow of the great Apostacy.

THOS. W. S. JONES.

February, 1898.

Largo St. Anna di Palazzo, Naples.

ILLUSTRATIONS

MARY—THE VIRGIN-MOTHER

It has been often written, — it has oftener been said,—that the Religion of Italy is not the worship of Jesus Christ—but an idolatry of the Madonna.

The life character and mission of the Virgin-Mother were certainly not ordinary and common place. Prophecy heralded her—It was the Seed of the woman that should bruise the Serpent's head. Isaiah also told of her :—a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel. ISAIAH VII, 14. Simeon, in the Temple, blessed Mary and the Child, as he saw in prophetic vision the uplifting and down-casting of nations and peoples. He foretold: A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also.

How lovely both to mind and heart comes the living and purifying ideal of this Blessed One amidst the Blessed, — of this daughter of the kingdom of light, of heaven, of God.—The humble Jewish Maiden

around whom circles the blithe air of youth's sweet freshness, and in whose spirit stirs the soul's awakening to the hope and wonder of the Mystery of Life and to the still greater mysteries and marvels of Redemption.

How entrancing the picture of that Virgin-Mother! It comes out, and forms, and fixes in the soul in the clear lines of Wonder and Miracle, of Womanhood and Motherhood. We read: « she brought forth her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in the manger! No wonder that the angels sang! There was glory in the heavens. — No wonder that their song should be: «Peace on earth!»

How full of life and harmony is her own inspired thanksgiving song; « My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour!» Sweet, majestic is her voice as it seems to fill the ages, coming from the festive hall in Cana of Galilee: Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. John II 5.

Oh with what divinest pathos thrills from the very cross itself that utterance of the Son of God, the Son of Man — that voice of the great, the divine Son, speaking his love for Mary, his earthly mother! A voice, a word that sounds forth from the tragedy of Calvary,—above the tumult of passion,—like the throbbing of the very heart of Jesus in that drear, dying agony: Woman: Behold thy son! —and to the disciple: Behold thy mother.

To us there is prophecy and charm in the Mary of the Gospel. There is music in the echo of the angelic salutation; *Hail Mary!* blessed art thou amongst women. Entranced we see the sorrow-stricken Mary lingering near the cross! We feel the impassioned constancy of the mother-heart as with her companions she seeks the grave! We love to think of her a woman midst the other women and the disciples who tarried at Jerusalem, who gathered in the upper room, who waited, and who prayed, till there came the sound as of a mighty rushing wind, until the cloven tongues of fire shone on each fair and noble brow!

* * * * * *

This ideal of Womanhood in Mary is to our minds a charm, an inspiration, a life gospel! And yet we see the transformation of the worship of Jesus into the worship of the Madonna and feel it to be high-treason against heaven, and dark and dread conspiracy against man!

* * * * * *

Then why tell how thus the light and wonder of prophecy give a starry yet mystic background to her life, so beautiful in its simplicity, and yet so intensely womanly and human? It is because we want all to know and feel that should they meet in these pages aught that is the perversion of the Ideal Mother of Jesus, the distortion is not ours. It is the mythic accretion of ages; the fetish idolatry of an interested

priesthood and of a people fanaticized by superstition.

It is because we want our friends to realize that we are not insensible to the divine poetry, to the manifold charms, to the lustre-light of faith, of gratitude and of obedient love foreshadowing the mystery of her coming, of her life, and the wonder of her mission; the play of her motherly anxieties, and the deep stirrings of her human anguish.—*The sword did pierce her heart!*

There is a gracious spell in all the story of the the Mother of Jesus as related by the Evangelists, but all the sacred charm lies in the lowliness of the maiden and in the exquisite humaness of the mother. All the real glory of the enchantment is the glory of Jesus, the reflected love-light of a redeeming God. A cloud on the sun, dark and earthy though it be, may catch the sun-light, and touched and tinged by the radiance, be transformed into a thing of brightness and of beauty, a joy for ever:—such is the Mary of the Gospels, brought as she was so strangely near to the glory-light, to the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness. But when the dark, dense cloud obscures and hides the Sun, what then? When the cloud would say I am the Sun! I am the light! I am your life! Oh then there is darkness, and the soul is dreary unto death!—So is it with Mary! The very mystery that robes her is bright with the radiance of eternal hope and mercy as she comes forth from her Jewish home, a maiden

pure and humble; when a mother she holds to her breast her first-born Son, — his bed, the straw — his cradle, the manger — the visitants who welcome him, the Shepherds and the Wise Men from afar! — But it is all and ever the glory of the infant Christ that makes that stable-home, the human mother, all so wonderful, so glorious; the star shines that it may guide to Jesus! — The angels sing: a Child is born! — The gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh are for the Baby, not for the mother! That Miracle of miracles, the Incarnation, is not the natural issue of Mary's purity, nor the mystic creation of mere Womanhood — it is of God alone: the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. *Luke* I. 35. Had Mary given us Jesus as the outcome of her mere Motherhood, there would be no place for miracle in the birth of Jesus.

What we shrink from is that Mary is made to displace Jesus, as though she had given us Jesus, and not Jesus given us Mary! — that the creature, beautiful and wonderful though she be, is clothed with deity; that the great Sorrow that redeems, the Sorrow of the Man of Sorrows, Mary's Son, is attributed to Mary, and that She becomes the object of gratitude, and hope, the Giver of salvation; that her motherly command, which Christ solemnly declared was limited to her

motherly relation, is projected into the sphere of his. Mediatorial life on earth, and into his Mediatoria work in the heavens: — that she is transformed into the Queen of Heaven, exercising the sole sovreignty over angels, men and devils,—The Ruler of Providence, the sole Dispenser of all Mercy, and holding that supreme authority in heaven even over her own Divine Son, by right of her motherly command, and of having accomplished the propitiatory sacrifice of Calvary — the immolation of herself for man!

It is this apotheosis of Mary; it is this paganizing of Christianity that we denounce. It is proclaiming her a co-equal sharer in the passion of Atonement as in the glories of Redemption, that we mourn as a blasphemy and horror; it is the attempt to wrest the sceptre of saving mercy from the hands of Jesus to place it in the hands of Mary, that we uphold to the execration of bewildered, perishing souls; it is the uncrowning of him who hath won the many crowns; the dethroning him whom God hath highly exalted to be *the* Prince, *the* Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins, which we would brand as sedition against the authoritative will of the most High. It is when Mary hides Jesus; when she is made to supplant him in his Mediatorial Providence of grace and benediction; when the creature is exalted above the Creator; when the human is worshipped as divine, — then is it we know and feel that the beautiful, the holy, the

Blessed, is transformed into a degrading delusion and a satanic lie.

This Madonna of the Church is not the Mary of the Gospel, the Mother of our Lord; much less is the vulgar Madonna of the People. If any reflection of the ideal still remain it is horridly distorted, and disfigured. Her vaunted Miraculous Conception mars most fatally all the reality and movement of the divine process of Redemption—Her professed Perpetual Virginity, casts a dark shadow over the immaculate purity of maternity and the sanctity of home. Her mythic exaltation to be Queen of Heaven and Souls, her meed as Co-Redemptress, — taught by Breviary and Massbook, and by Sainted Doctor of the Universal Church, with all the authority the Church can give, just make the multitude believe, what it is intended that they should believe—*That the Kingdom of Mercy has been by God given over into the hands of Mary: the Kingdom of Judgment only being reserved to Christ. That the Providence of Salvation is the Empire of Mary—That* SHE *is the only Saviour!*

* * * * *

All this is not an ideal, not an abstract creed, it is interwoven with the personal and everyday life of the people, it is scutcheoned on every work of art; it is taught from every pulpit and every confessional, it is wrought into the soul by every devotional book and service and symbol. — Italy bows

down in idolatrous worship before the mythic Mary. Naples kneels before the shrine of the *Madonna Addolorata* of the Pignasecca.

How the whole ideal of Christianity, which is: Christ in us the hope of glory,—is utterly falsified may be judged from the last « *Pastoral* » of the new Archbishop of Naples, in which, in announcing the Festa of the Assumption, he presents the ideal of his faith and hope. — In the whole of this long letter, which is a programme of faith and duty, there is no mention of our Lord Jesus Christ, except in one incidental allusion to Jesus having sent him as Pastor of the Church, entrusting Mary to his care — as the one object of his Ministry. But this we do read: « Mary is our hope: our love. We live day and night in her arms. »

The Christian sings:

Safe in the arms of Jesus
Safe on his gentle breast...

The Archbishop's song is

Safe in the arms of Mary
« *We live day and night in her arms.* »

* * * * * *

In the official discourse, pronounced in the Marian Congress, Florence, May 1897, this very year, in the presence of a crowd of Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, the Clergy and the people, and under the auspices and with the special benediction of the Holy

Father, Leo XIII, who is dec ared to be most distinguished as *the Immortal Pontiff of the Holy Rosary*, the distinct effect, the designed result of the promulgation of the worship of Mary is declared to be that it brings the mind, the conscience, the life to a certain and absolute obedience to the Pope.—« *It is impossible to prostrate oneself at the throne of the Virgin, and not find oneself lying at the same time at the feet of Him who is the Vicar of the blessed Fruit of Her womb.*

« *The two highest objects of the love of the Italian people are; the Virgin and the Pope* » Then as if not too sure of the matter, he adds :

« *Our supreme intention*, under the guidance of the pastorate, *is to bring back the peoples to Mary and the Pope,* »

The Rev. Father Alessio, insists on « *the Worship of the Sorrows of Mary as being the one remedy for all the evils of society at the present day.* »

Monsignore Pampirio says : « As Apollo by his lyre drew forth the very rocks from the river, so the music of Mary's name has drawn forth from the horrible torrent many reprobate souls.****The heavenly music that has this charm is the Rosary, so fully and earnestly recommended by the Holy Father Pope

Leo XIII. — *The Rosary of Mary will save the whole world.* »

« *Our intention and love is to honour the Mother of God and of all men.* » That is the way the *Unità Cattolica* writes.

Would our English friends test our accuracy in thus presenting the official proclamation of the displacement of Jesus and the enthronement of Mary as the Saviour of the world, they can do so easily by obtaining a copy of Saint Alfonso dei Liguori's « *Glories of Mary,* » used by the propaganda in England; this, at the Saint's Canonization as Doctor of the Universal Church, with all his other writings, was declared officially « *free from any shadow of error.* »

They will see that however Rome may seek to bewilder English mind into the belief that it presents Mariolatry in form less distinctive and corrupt, the essential elements of mythic and Marian Idolatry are there with all the fatal brood and train of Papal error and servitude to Rome.

Let them look at the Rosary Mysteries, which Leo declares must save the world, and they will see for themselves whether the Papacy means: Jesus and Jesus only — or Mary and Mary only.

* * * * *

It was to the Princes, the Prelates, the Clergy and the Laity assembled in this Marian Congress

that Cardinal Herbert Vaughan, the so-called Arch-Bishop of Westminister wrote his good-wishes and his fullest adhesion, in his own name and in the name of the Papal Bishops in England, gathered in a special assembly. He says : « Our Catholic England, in ancient times consecrated to the Most Blessed Queen, as « *Her special dower* » — a title recently confirmed by the Holy Father Leo XIII, is naturally attracted to unite with Catholic Italy in thus celebrating the privileges and the glories of our common Mother.

So, honestly, but fatally, does Cardinal Archbishop Vaughan give the sanction of English Romanism to proclaiming : not Christ, but Mary, the hope of humanity — the Regeneratrix of Society, — the Saviour of the world !

It is useless, or worse than useless, for the Cardinal Archbishop Bausa to cry : — « *We must replace Jesus Christ on His throne* » or that the Congress can tend to the restoration of Jesus Christ to his supreme authority ;—to say so is but a bitter irony, a veiled deceit. — According to his Church and the spirit and working of the Congress , — The throne of Mercy is filled by another — Jesus has been dethroned and relegated to the sphere of Judgment, The Cardinal we know full well is not prepared to say : « come what may, Jesus must reign alone, supreme. » To do so, would be to sound the

death-knell of the spiritual and moral servitude of the mind and conscience of Italy to the Papacy; and if he dared to say it, and to attempt to bring it into effect, he would be branded as a heretic accursed.

The whole idea and programme of the Papacy would be changed. That programme is given in the words of the Most Rev. Canon Pelagatti, pronounced with all authority and approval « *Woe to us if God and Mary do not save us.* » No mention of Jesus. He is relegated to the office of Judgment, and his name serves only as an incitement to more generous oblations, along side that of the Pope. On the box for the offering of Peter's pence we find the inscription:

SOLEMN HOMAGE
TO JESUS CHRIST THE REDEEMER AND TO HIS VICAR ON EARTH.

Our intention in these pages is to offer a glimpse of things as they are, of shrine and devotees, thus shewing how the working of the myth, naturally and necessarily, makes what is pure and beautiful become monstrous and disastrous too. We ask our readers to accompany us as we wander through some of the ways of Naples as it has been and as it is; we would tarry for a moment before a shrine famed for

prodigy and miracle; that shrine is a public altar dedicated to, and known as

MAMMA SCHIAVONA,

The Black Mother,

THE MADONNA OF THE PIGNASECCA.

The sight of those poor devotees who kneel and pray to the Black Mother as their only Saviour; the story of the idol now surrounded by most costly votive gifts; the memory awakened of Festas and Processions we have witnessed; the thrilling problems of religious and civil interest which cannot but arise from fetish worship such as this, is the best object-lesson we can give. A remedy perhaps more potent than tomes of learned, theological treatises—or hours of abstract discussion.

* * * * * * *

I once, on a memorable day, stood within the Sanctuary of the Madonna of New Pompei, accompanied by a friend, an eminent writer, a theological professor. All that was artistic and æsthetic in that lovely little church no doubt had cast its spell upon him. It seemed the home of rest:—but as a band of Pilgrims entered, and one poor woman, only a poor peasant, in passionate emotion, dragged herself upon her knees, and bowing to the very earth, licked her way along the pavement with her tongue, the manly heart was overcome, and manly tears suffused the

eyes that saw what he had never seen before. He turned and only said : « Take me out ! » — « Take me out ! » That sight was a revelation. It was penitence and prayer licking the foulness from the trodden aisle, craving of sinful man and through the Virgin-Mother the free mercy of the heavens. In that poor, prostrate peasant form is pictured beautiful Naples, and queenly taly.

Let us look ! Look, it is the Madonna of the Pignasecca you see ! Not as you see pictures in a book. Not a story of a far-off time ! You see a shrine and devotees as they are now, — there, in the piazza, there in Naples our present home.

THE PIGNASECCA.

ONE OF THE MANY SQUARES OF NAPLES.

The piazza of the Pignasecca is a curious place lying just half way between the main artery of the city once called Toledo from the Spanish Viceroy Don Pietro di Toledo, now known as Via Roma,—and the terminus of the line to Pozzuoli, Baiae, and Ischia—reaching to the farther confines of that busy world the *Sezioni* called Monte Santo, Avvocato and Stella. The Pignasecca really is only a street and square; but in the people's mind its name covers a great district. In coming from that railway station along the way that leads to the Piazza, odd streets, and alleys break up the monotony of the house lines continued on either hand: to the left, they radiate into labyrinths toward Via Roma, and on to Piazza Dante; to the right, from different points they scramble up each on its own way as though in search of other streets still higher up, some meandering round and round as

though they only delighted in turning and twisting themselves along in any and every way; others again setting off as if determined to go on and reach the first boundary line, the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, that magnificent ride or walk which overlooks the city on either side, taking in Vesuvius and the peerless Bay — one of the finest promenades in Europe.

These houses, streets, vicos, alleys,—some open, and some blind enough for anything,—are tenanted for the most part by people engaged in the city, by artisans, and little shopkeepers, and by the still higher classes, and by lower ones also. They are mostly houses of several stories high and of every kind and cut, but all look upward, somewhat askance it may be, at the Corso, as the lesser and poorer look upward to their greater and richer relations: others look higher and yet farther off and up to the world which piles itself against the azure sky and with a reverence still more profound, as they turn to the grand, old, grey Castle of St, Elmo, and the whited front of the Monastery of San Martino.

Halfway between the Railway Station and the Piazza is the great Hospital « *i Pellegrini* » — One of the places best known to the generality of the populace of Naples and for the saddest and most tragic reasons. It is the one great Hospital where as everyone knows all accident cases, all cases of cutting and wounding, from the tiniest hurt or the razor-slash,

to the deadly attack that has left the poor body maimed and mauled and hacked; or pierced by five, ten or twenty wounds. -- By day, its doors are ever open — and the pealing of its solemn bell ever and anon tells to the dwellers around of another and another deadly case to be admitted, calling for the greatest haste and most immediate care:—that bell tolls life or death. Who could with pen and ink pourtray the martyrdom of suffering endured there, or re-write one brief chapter of the black record of crime that there meets part of its deadly wage?—Who can re-tell the alleviation of suffering so kindly ministered; or story the grim, the ghastly surprise that glares upon the meeting there of deadly foes, wounded, it may be dying, — fallen, murdered by each other. How strange! Each one wears the scapula of some favourite Madonna: or is tatooed with some sign, or emblem, or monogram of the Madonna to which he is devoted.

And that register of the police on duty there to investigate each case, how dark the lines, how full each page of direst tragedy;—the vulgar, bloody dramas of everyday hate, and lasciviousness, and greed, of revenge like the Corsican Revenge! We pass the hospital, the courtyard, the piazzetta as though from beneath the shadow of the mystery of universal sin and suffering,—and a healthier sense and memory breaks in upon the soul, — we feel, we say: honour to the noble workers in the Hospital of the Pellegrini;

and augur to the Italian Government, that now has avouched to itself the overance of the « *Opere Pie*, » as such charitable institutions are called, that this noble institution may become still more a blessing and to all.

The street we have swiftly traversed now falls back to the right, forming an open space, a little piazza or larghetto, thus simply leaving an open square, bounded by houses on every side, the outlets being four streets. This is the Pignasecca, and before you is the shrine of Màmma Schiavona—the Black Mother.

* * * * * *

It is a typical Neapolitan square of the olden times, but now taking somewhat more of the style and colouring of the modern square. It is modest in size not caring even to assume the grandeur of the newer *Piazza del Municipio*, with its bonny gardens and acacia trees, and the new, fine Statue of Victor Emanuel.

It lives on content though it knows it cannot rival that most magnificent of the squares — *The Piazza del Plebiscito*, overlooked as it is by the Royal Palace, guarded by the *Prefettura* on the one side. and the *Comando Militare* on the other; girded in by the semicircle of splendid colonnades, which like drooping wings fall from the sides of the Royal Church of S. Francesco di Paola.—It matters not to the Pignasecca that unlike this great square, where hundreds of thousands have gathered to give welcome to their

king, or to enjoy some Festival, it has no bronze, equestrian statues like those two large ones of Charles III and Ferdinand of Bourbon of the Two Sicilies, which cost hundreds and hundreds of thousands of ducats. Our Piazza is proudly satisfied, it has something better than the statue of warrior or king, — it has its *Màmma Schiavona* — its Black Mother.

Little it recks that the *Piazza dei Martiri* stands out so gaily surrounded by fine large blocks of buildings, the homes of the wealthier, a trysting place for foreign commerce; with its noble, lofty column and its fine, four lions couchant, intended for the Madonna, but now designed to glorify instead the memory of the martyrs of the Italian Independence. — The Pignasecca has but little sympathy with newfangled notions and doings such as modern commerce, and freedom: it delves and delights in miracle, in votive offering, in gifts of tapers, and in the chink of change falling into the moneybox: « FOR THE MADONNA. »

It does not, cannot envy the *Largo del Castello* its own distinctive glory of the « *Castello Nuovo* » from which it takes its name, built by a Spanish viceroy; a magnificent building, designed to be some day furbished up and dignified into the *New Municipio* of Naples. It thinks little of the famous historic gateway, with its picturesque entablature, or of that huge building now utilized for barracks, which forms part of the Arsenal offices and works.

Then the Pignasecca is different too from that very curious *Piazza Francese*, which rather than a square is made up of crossways, running under arches and cut up into little ways seemingly going off anywhere and nowhere, but all lined by stalls, and stands on tressels, on which all sorts of things are sold second-hand,—old ironmongery, old every thing that can be raked up, or found, or stolen, or bought and then re-sold.—Piazza Francese may be the old curiosity shop of tools and trinkets for the whole city,—but the Pignasecca is the treasury of indulgence and pardon, the throne of miracle and grace.

The *Piazza del Porto*, a perfect hive of human life, so well known for its market-streets of fruit, vegetables, fish, meat, everything, is a bazaar in street or square. But this is for the body.—The Black Mother cares for soul and body too. Then, before the incoming of New Naples the Piazza del Porto is vanishing. The Pignasecca seems but little changed.

I had almost forgotten the *Piazza del Gesù Nuovo* (New Jesus) with its lofty and magnificent Column and Image of the Immaculate Virgin;—but that is so high up, who ever thinks of looking up, up, to see the Image; then, we never heard of it even pretending to work a single miracle. The image may be beautiful, a work of art, and bright may shine her golden crown, yet she is so above you,—no one prays to her. — But Mamma Schiavona, you can kneel at her

feet, you can look up into her dark face. You can see the great tears falling from her eyes, and there is the sword that pierces through and through her very soul!

The one great rival of the *Pignasecca* is the *Piazza del Carmine*, with its fine historic church, its eventful memories of Masaniello and the Revolution against the Spaniards; its old, picturesque Castle, overgrown with green, and haunted by the dramatic recollections of the princely Conradin whose head fell on the scaffold there, and whose statue now stands within the Church.

But the *Madonna del Carmine* hides away in the church, jealously attended by cassocked priest, by cowled monk, and many a boy-acolyte; and thus is is kept well pleased with herself and the prodigies she works, whilst the homage of the multitude ascends to her in fragrant clouds of incense, and is presented in all the parade and ceremony of her own ecclesiastic ritual, midst the melody of song, and voiced in her own litany of prayer.

You do not wonder at a Madonna honoured, even petted thus, working prodigy and miracle. But our beautiful *Màmma Schiavona* receives her children and hears their prayer, and bestows her favours, out there in the open square; out there alone in the heat and cold, by day, by night, as much at home there as in any church, dear in the homely wonder

of a miracle-working picture, of the people, among the people, for the people! — so much so, that though ecclesiastically recognized, for she is crowned, *she is private property* so far as legal ownership is concerned. Well may the Pignasecca prize and boast her own Black Mother.

It is true there is also the *Mercato*, the great centre to which the fruit and vegetables come in from all the country around,—and where horse and mule and donkey too change hands for gold or silver,—no! for paper notes. This *piazza* is a sight well worth a visit from any one who wants to study Naples life, — but it has no Màmma Schiavona.

The Piazza della Pignasecca is only like itself. It is a small piazzetta, rather than a piazza—It has its shops and stalls, it is a market, and better fruit and cheaper, fresher fish, you cannot perhaps find in any part of Naples; but that is nothing, it has, as every body knows, what no other of the great squares of Naples has,—I mean the wonderful Madonna,—Màmma Schiavona, — the Black Mother. Let us try to find out what we can of her history. Our picture of the square gives some idea of her home,

THE PIAZZA DELLA PIGNASECCA.

MAMMA SCHIAVONA

THE BLACK MOTHER.

The Madonna of the Pignasecca is a shrine which now is placed at the corner of a street leading to St. Liborio, and a continuation of the street Via Pignasecca leading out of the Piazza and on to the Largo della Carità, Via Roma. The shrine is a little strip of building jutting out of the wall and forming a sort of cowl or hood above, and thus surrounding the image, preserves it from some at least of the destructive influences of the wind and rain. It is as you see guarded by a door or iron railing, and before it there are little steps and stairs round which the people gather, and on which some kneel. The picture is covered with votive gifts. The image is that of the « *Madonna Addolorata*, » Our Lady of Sorrows, « — a sword pierces her heart; figurative of the prophecy of Simeon. (Luke II 35) And she is crowned, and crowned with a golden crown, — for is not her

sorrow turned to joy, is she not now the Queen of Heaven, of Angels, and of men; of earth and Hell ?— and she is crowned to show that this very Madonna, this very image, rightfully, and authoritatively, claims the veneration, the worship of the faithful throughout the world. What the rite of marriage is to the marriage vow, — the ordination to the ministry — the incoronation to the king — what canonization is to the Saint—such is the « crowning of the picture » in its relation to public veneration. It is the symbol of ecclesiastical approbation and authority.

What a field for thought and reflection and for salutary observation opens out to view as we think of the different phases of the Madonna's character and life thus breaking up, and thus forming into different ideal divinities—I am the «*Addolorata !*» «*I am the Immaculate Conception !*» — I, *Our Lady of the Rosary*— « I am *the Assunta !* » — just like the goddesses of Egyptian, Grecian or Roman Mythology ; and initiating and perpetuating a « *Cult* » as utterly pagan as theirs, an image worship as really heathen and idolatrous, and as formally and officially recognized by church and priesthood. Here are clear traces visible of the growth of the myth and the deepening of the idolatry as the natural and authorized issue of priestcraft and deceit.

Had we time and space, and were this the moment to shew the distinct traces of the mythic evolution

so evident in all this cult of the Madonna, we would be led on to note how accretion gathers on accretion, as different strata gather one upon another, evident as the age of the tree seen in the circles from the core to the bark ; Here we have legions of Madonnas; one lady tired of numbering them; having counted in Naples alone more than two hundred and fifty, she then gave up the reckoning: yet each has a distinctive picture, and conveys to the mind of the worshipper a distinctive idea; each has a distinctive supernatural power; each in certain circumstances commanding the party passion and specific devotion of the people. Suffice it that we now inform those who do not know, and remind those who may forget, that the idealizing of these different Madonnas which reproduce different aspects of her character, or events in her life; or legendary fables, hatched in the minds of the simple or astute, now floating on the surface of superstitious memory, all tend to break up the one simple, beautiful and human ideal into as many really distinctive divinities, as are the different forms under which the Madonna is worshipped.

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«I am the *Addolorata* »—« the Lady of Sorrows»— See the sword transfixes my soul! Here is the *one* sword of which Simeon spoke. But all that is mythic grows — evolves. — The worshipper of the Addolorata cannot be content with the one great life-sorrow of

Mary; that one life-sorrow is broken up into seven, and we have the creation of a new Madonna — the *Madonna de' Sette Dolori;* Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows — and she is pictured with seven swords all piercing her heart at once. No wonder there is such emulation, even strife, between Madonna and Madonna. Each has its special festa, its different shrine, its different devotional exercises, its different holy place where each different madonna enthroned shows signs of special favour and gives special blessing to her devotees, and dependant on the worship of each different Madonna is a special largess of diverse indulgences accorded by the Pope from the treasury of the Church of which he keeps the keys. — So grows up the differential, miraculous potentiality of Madonna, of Picture, or of Statue.

We see from this how there must arise between the different Madonnas and the special devotees a rivalry, as bitter and militant as between different schools of theology, or different houses of business or different lines of railways or steamers all terminating in one point, but each competing with the other for the mastery and gain! Touters and middle-men are not only employed for rival companies and rival hotels and warehouses, they may be utilized in the great religious competitions of the present day. Foreign Madonnas may be *a la mode* amongst the lady devotees who take their fashions from Paris,

and for a time too amongst the classes who love novelties and *bijouterie* from anywhere but home; but the National Madonnas seem in the end to be more trusted and more popular.

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A patent and curious illustration of the way in which the worship of the Madonna elbows out and practically over-covers, the presence and worship of the only Blessed Saviour, the Crucified, comes before our mind in the sad impression produced as one looks on this Shrine. Our Madonna of the Pignasecca when replaced in the square, has been put up against a crucifix or cross which still is there. That cross is now almost over-covered and hidden. Nothing is seen of it except the top of the cross. Who prays to Jesus? Who seeks Christ the Lord? You can see the inscription I.N.R.I. and dimly visible a head of Jesus below: but all this little matters as the Madonna comes out clearly; and all we Christians look for in Jesus, they are taught to find in the Madonna, and far more. She does more and better than the Christ. So they are told. Jesus is hidden—the Saviour is overclouded by the presence of Mary. If there be intellectual virtue in material symbolism; if there be soul-teaching in painted picture or in sculptured image; if sensuous typic idealism carry any meaning, any message to the people—it is evident that this hidden Christ, shadowed away and far away by the « Mamma Schiavona »

is terribly indicative of the real aspect of all the many and converging influences of the mythic working of the Papal system.—Christ thrown backward into the shade, veiled, covered, hidden; Mary brought out into fullest view, into clearest perspective — Mary the Sinner's all and in all! See—Nature will out!—Nature's faults and failings betray themselves. — Yes. Falseness, folly, the betrayal of truth cannot disguise themselves for ever, — the mask falls, — the domino works out of place,—the altered voice bewrays the speaker; — The cloven foot is seen! The gross, debasing idolatry reveals itself in the picture that it paints, in the statue or image that it carves, in the mystic symbols it adopts, in the very amulets and charms it uses; in the relative position of picture, or of statue. What seemed an angel of light is now seen the spectre of death.

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The Madonna Addolorata of the Pignasecca is « *Màmma Schiavona* » — the Black Mother—She is not alone in this—There is the Mamma Schiavona of Monte Vergine, said to be painted by St. Luke: — there is too Our Lady of Loreto—and a hundred, or hundreds more, all black Madonnas. Why they are thus idealized as black I cannot tell, unless it be to appropriate or monopolize the application of the « *nigra sed formosa* » « *black, but comely,* » of the Song of songs; and thus make scripture praise the physical appearance of the

Virgin, and give a semblance of propriety to the use of such like imagery, bolstering up the name and praise of her who is the victim of sacerdotal craft and popular superstition, and who never certainly would have filched away from the sisterhood of souls redeemed all the ideal virtue and glorious blessedness of the redeemed church, nor so bedeck herself in the borrowed plumes and shining raiment and even celestial glory of earth's holiest ones, that she might win unworthily that universal love and adoration which she confessed was God's alone : she could never desire to make herself wonderful and beautiful by centering in herself alone all the treasures which are through Christ the co-heritage of all who live in humble trust and faith's devotion to the Saviour.

We will allow Roman Catholic writers to give their own explanation of the pictures in which the Madonna is depicted as the Black Mother. It is said to be the reproduction by artistic effect of the characteristic of the bride, the church, as portrayed in the figurative and Oriental similes of the Song of Solomon, in which she declares to her companions, the daughters of Jerusalem : « *I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. — Ic. 5v.*

We avail ourselves, to show Romish teaching, of the comment of Father P. Carlo Baglione, a member of the Congregation of the *Oratorio*, Perugia,

where he quotes this passage in support of his theme, « the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Mary ever a Virgin, » page 50. If his exegesis of the passage seems rather an argument against than in favour of the Immaculate Conception that is not our fault, nor is this our special point just now. He says:

" The Spouse of the Holy Song whilst meditating realized two truths. *The first:* — the blackness she might contract either by nature or by the malignity of original or actual sin. *Secondly*: — The spiritual beauty obtained by divine help. She had known her natural vileness and at the same time the greatness of the divine benefits; by these she beheld herself beautiful, by the former ugly; wherefore she covered herself as the Kedar tabernacles, with the skin curtains of Solomon, sun-scorched, and covered with dust,—for it was with these skins the peoples of Palestine were accustomed to cover the outside of their tabernacles. „

" The church applying these scripture words to the Mother of God and speaking in her person says: *I am black, but comely*** as though she said; If I seem black and stained by original sin as daughter and child of Adam, I am by God's grace beautiful like the Kedar tabernacles which through being covered on the outside with the skins of Solomon although they are shrivelled, hide within them wondrous beauty. I would say: By nature I am black, but made beautiful by grace; within I am full of heavenly gifts and benedictions, the most sublime of all creatures; even though without I am not to be distinguished from others, nor do I appear different from other women. „

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Without more than merely challenging the right of the church to apply these words to the Mother of Jesus

in any other sense than they may be illustrative of each and every member of the church, the Bride of Jesus, whom He has redeemed by his most precious blood, and who have washed their robes from all the blackness and foulness of sin, making them white through the blood of the Lamb, — and whom he would present unto God without spot or wrinkle or any such thing : — We say we know of no indication that can warrant this monopolizing the sacred meaning of this highly figurative passage to the Mother of our Lord alone, and to the exclusion of all souls redeemed and saved.

But even were it to be allowed that there is here any special reference to the Mother of Jesus it appears a miserable way of attempting to sustain that novelty in the evolution of dogma, the Immaculate Conception. The very comment of the Marian champion whom we have quoted seems the rather to be a delineation of our Christian ideal of the Madonna, and of the process of salvation as verified in the spiritual history of the Virgin Mother. The blackness has been washed into the hallowed comeliness of those who have found favour with God, and thus filled with grace and benediction rejoice like Mary in God their Saviour — And as this finding peace with God, and entering into the favour of God, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, is by the universal law of spiritual life without any known exception, conditioned to the exercise of repentance and faith and consecration, we can only feel how miserable is the subterfuge that can present this as a scripture proof that the Virgin was conceived and born without sin!

May there not be the suggestion of "*black but comely*" in the consciousness of the Egyptian wife of Solomon. (1 Kings IX c. 24 v.) Would not this sun-scortched daughter of Pharaoh naturally regard herself, and be regarded by Solomon, as "*black but comely.*"

What are we to say of the Picture teaching of the Church of Rome — the painting and consecrating and worshipping of these Black Madonnas?

Certainly on the minds of the masses of the deluded devotees, no impression can rest of the blackness of sin as co-existing in the Madonna in any sense at all with the comeliness of womanhood and of heavenly benediction. But to how many minds does the spiritual blackness and comeliness come home? To the generality the conception idealized and realized is that the mother of Jesus was, a Negress, or of a very, very dark complexion.

The Church of Rome may perhaps find the Black Mother useful when it attempts to supplant the idolatry of some Indian goddess, black and uncomely, by introducing in its stead the more refined idolatry of the Black Mother of the Pignasecca as she represents *a dark type of beauty*. How far this may tend to spiritual edification and comfort, and to the intensifying the miraculous energy of the pictures, we leave to those initiated into the mysteries of modern prodigy and miracle to give official sentence.

A friend tells me I have forgotten a little square, *La Piazza degli Orefici*, and reminds me that it is the only square in Naples were there is a Christ, *i.e.* a crucifix. One image of Jesus — amidst all the crowd, the multitude of Madonnas. I remember another but it is the Sacred heart of Jesus; and another, an « *Ecce*

Homo ! »—Indeed not one alone is present to my mind; there is one cross near to our very home. Could we tell the legends gathered round each one of these, it would be a terrible revelation of the brutalizing influence of this worship of material representations of the divine, of Christ himself. * * * It was evening,—the night-shadows deepened and almost hid the cross, that stood out of the blank wall in the shadow-light, beneath which a workman passed. Glaring up at the Crucified, he cried out as in dire passion, as with defiant, unbelieving threat,—the muffled malediction smothering on his lips:—« If thou givest me to win, » he gurgled out, « I'll see that thou hast a better place than this ! » The dark and dirty hand, the clenchéd fist, outstretched as in futile passion, fell to the workman's side. But he *did* win, (in the Lottery of course,) and he kept the ungracious vow, and there is now a shrine. Hand in hand with all idolatry must go this worse than materializing, this brutalizing of all that is spiritual and heavenly. San Gennaro must be called bad names and cursed, or who knows how long he would lazy before working the miracle; and even that crucifix must be coaxed and threatened or it may not give the winning numbers in the Lottery.

No one who really understands the authoritative teaching of the Papal Church can wonder at a fact so familiar and so appallingly significant as this : Art is

prostituted to educate the people by sight and sound, by every sense and charm, to a Religion that is Saint Worship, Madonna Worship. Even the idolatrous worship of the Holy Sacrament is made to lend its fictitious enchantment to bolster up the worship of the Saints, and the adoration of the Madonnas. Worshipping the 'Word made flesh' in the Host, you worship Mary—we are told,—for was not that flesh and blood, the offspring of the Virgin's womb? To Her you must confess — and to the Saints. Can you then wonder that in the Picture teaching of the Church of Rome images of Jesus Christ are at a discount, and those of Saints and Madonnas multiply a thousand-fold? If all grace and mercy come to us by Mary; if all salvation is attained by Her intervention and intercession—there is no need that Jesus should be present to the people's view. The whole ideal of Papal Christianity is exactly what the Cardinal Archbishop of Capua says it is in his « *La Madre di Dio*, »—it is « *honouring Mary in Christ, and Christ in Mary.* » This is theory: but in practice the two worships do not hold even the same level; honouring Mary in Christ, the honouring Christ is ignored or cast far back into shadowland.

The enormous number of pictures, statues, and shrines of the legions of Madonnas and the Saints, outnumbering so immensely the statues and pictures of Jesus, shows the triumph of the mythic

and Marian element over the simple and primitive faith in the Redeemer, and writes Art's solemn testimony: Not Jesus but Mary; not Jesus,—save only as He is approached through Mary. Jesus the son of Mary, but not Jesus, Mary's Lord and Saviour.

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To heighten still more and more the religious effect of this Madonna's Shrine and Image, it is *all surrounded by votive gifts*, silver, waxen, painted; these half-cover and entirely surround the Madonna. Votive gifts—hands, arms, legs, feet, breasts, eyes, rudely sketched scenes of deliverance from danger and of direst peril escaped, just as there have been found around the old pagan temples all the paraphernalia of heathen votive gifts, hands, legs, etc. I have a most lovely female foot in terracotta, a votive gift found amidst some ruins in the immediate vicinity of one of the temples near to St. Maria Capua Vetere. Here was worshipped the «Mother God» the generative power of Nature; of whom scores and scores of images large and small, enrich the present Museum of Capua. — I have two or three myself in sun-dried clay or tufo.—Statues, which if you did not know they had graced altars or shrines hundreds and hundreds of years before the birth of Mary and her wondrous boy, you might easily mistake for Mary herself and the child Jesus. The mother and the child—like Mary and the child-Christ. A Mother throned and the child

upon her knee. A throned Madonna, with two or more children, one on each arm, a fair picture of motherly compassion—others with more children! Motherhood, — its pity and its care idealized and deified by the older idolatry. Well, to get back to the Pignasecca — Our Madonna, like the *Venus Genitrix* at Capua, has her votive gifts; some both rich and rare. Some of the silver ones remain. Some, the people say, have disappeared. But the Madonna is private property, and I suppose the votive gifts by living so near to her, by day, by night, have imbibed somewhat of the self-same spirit; and then, we repeat what the proprietors are always saying: there are the expenses of keeping up her worship; oil that is consumed, and tapers that burn down, and festas that must be celebrated to engage her favour.

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I had well nigh forgotten how amidst these signs and wonders her enthusiastic votaries tell that there is within the shrine a cannon-ball suspended. Although not itself exactly a votive gift, it is a witness or is supposed to be, of their Madonna's power. Our informant told us that once when the city was bombarded from St. Elmo, this shot fell amongst a number of people who were praying to the Virgin, and had it but taken its regular course, it would have destroyed not only property but life; — it only touched a column and fell harmlessly to earth. No

hurt was done. There seems to be some sense in a miracle like this, if miracle it was. At any rate the people knew, or say they knew, that only the Madonna could have saved them, and the cannon-ball is put there as a solemn witness that the Madonna has power to save, and ever watches those who love and serve her.

THE PICTURE—LEGEND AND HISTORY.

I have a friend whom we will call the Marquis and he thus relates the legend of the famous picture.

As no history of this miraculous Madonna seems to have been published he has gathered his information from those archives of legendary lore, the memories and the story-telling of the people. He has routed out old dusty chronicles from the lumber room of forgotten wonder, overhauling the sacristies, interrogating bigoted devotees, and interviewing the many able to tell at least how the story goes.

The worship of this picture can be traced back, they say, some two hundred years and more. Probably to the time of the great Plague which swept away the greater part of the inhabitants of Naples in 1656, and of which more anon.

The story of the finding of the picture is the story of the first miracle recorded of the wonderful Madonna, and the people tell it thus:

A servant maid was drawing water from the well in one of the houses of the Pignasecca. The apartment was high-up, either the fourth or fifth story. Our English friends must remember that in all these blocks of buildings, divided into floors or flats, and these again divided into smaller or larger apartments, which the Neapolitans generally dignify by the name of Palaces, there is, or used to be, a shaft running up or down, as your standpoint at the moment may be, from top to bottom, perpendicular to the well, which often lay at a great depth beneath the foundations of the whole building, when there were foundations, these appurtenances being not seldom a rarity, and some times a mere name. I suppose the houses bear each other up, like soldiers are supposed to do when they sleep back to back.

A Neapolitan well of the olden times must have been a mystery and wonder to the Anglo-Italian bride, just come out here to rough it amidst the strange circumstances and customs and kitchens of some fifth or sixth story of some apartment with its fine terrace, commanding an enchanting view of the Bay, and the city, and Vesuvius, and the Valley of Nocera where Pompei lies hidden, and Castellammare where Stabia lies still buried and forgotten, and the Sorrentine promontory, and Capri, the Syren Isle, and Ischia, with the earthquake-wrecked and ruined Casamicciola. I have known the well to lie sometimes 70 or 80 feet

below the foundation of a palace 100 feet high or more; the well would have then a dead fall of a hundred and fifty feet or more before the bucket let down from the highest floor could reach the water. What a very tedious, and merciless slavery for the poor servant was this drawing water from the well; and yet it was the only means by which the various and numerous tenants could get water for all the purposes of home and cleanliness, at least until a few years ago when the magnificent supply of the *Serino* water was brought into the city from the Apennines some forty miles and more away by a feat of engineering skill. One of the greatest boons the new city life has conferred on the teeming thousands of this, the most densely populated city of Europe, has been this gift of water for every house and family in Naples.

These wells of the olden time had also their romantic uses and associations. Many a love episode that in England or elsewhere might have had for site and scene the village fountain or the like, here was enacted up or down the well. This being a shaft — and each apartment having its communication with the well, the iron-arm holding in the centre of the shaft the pulley round which ran the rope to let the bucket down, and draw it up when filled with water from below, it is not difficult to see, that the well might serve as a great speaking

tube, whilst the shaking of the rope served as a forerunner of the electric bell that calls attention to the message coming, or asks that the communication may be hooked on. In times like those not long gone by, for every safe precaution, it was thought well and even only kind to the females of the family to lock them up,—for what could they want to go out for? The fruit even and the vegetables they can buy from the vendors who trot their donkeys, about the streets; — all they have to do is to let down the little basket by its string, with the copper *tornesi* in it from their window or balcony, and then draw up the oranges or peaches, or grapes, or cabbage or vegetable-marrow, or what not they may bargain for. As to the rest, Master will see about that.

We must get back from our wanderings to the Pignasecca and the servant girl at the well. They say this heroine had let down her bucket which was held by the long, strong line,—and down the bucket went by its own weight, running swiftly and still more rapidly, as the lengthened cord and distance increased the weight: I cannot tell how, but they say it lifted her from her feet, pulling her into the open shaft, and that somehow or other she went down the well.

The miracle was this:

She was not killed, — not even hurt. Somehow or other her fall was stayed, her feet having found

a resting place on an iron bar which crossed the shaft—Wondering she was not killed,—she stood and looked and looked, then bending down, there, floating on the water, she saw a picture — a picture of the Madonna — of the Madonna Addolorata—the Madonna of our story.

Of course what we have just narrated became the germ of a myth. — The picture must be miraculous. It was kept in the family, venerated by its owners, and gave from time to time many evidences of its supernatural powers. Then it was exposed to public view in a shabby little shrine in a secluded corner of the Square, with only one little lamp burning before it, and for years and years remained there, although no one ever heard of it performing any but common miracles: but then no wonder—only one little miserable lamp — and it was a miracle-working picture; and, hidden away there in an out-of-the way place, — what could be expected of a picture such as this and treated in a way so mean? Now this position so absurd to us seems from a Romish stand-point at least correct: for priest and people argue thus: If the picture of the Madonna, or the Madonna of a picture, is gratified by gift, and candle and position, so as to reward devotion by special manifestations of approval, why should she not withhold her wonders, and even show her displeasure, when neglected and despised?

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Another friend of mine a relation of the late Cardinal Archbishop of Naples, and connected with some of the most princely families of our city, gives me other items of interest in illustration of the vicissitudes of this miraculous Madonna, in still later times.

He gathered from the people that at one time the picture was the property of a cobbler called *Masto Ciccio*, a poor old man ninety years of age, who was the *Portinaio* of one of the Palaces. As caretaker of the building he could sit at the great entrance, the *portone*, and eke out his poor life by mending old boots and shoes. The picture was one of the few ornaments that brightened up the little hole beneath the grand staircase, the only dwelling-place that *Masto Ciccio* had to live in, to sleep in, to eat in, and indeed fulfil all the engagements and functions of human life.

Dark, dreary, unwholesome as would be the lair of *Masto Ciccio*, a mere hollow below the great staircase leading up to all the floors and apartments of the whole block of building, it was a mansion, he an aristocrat amongst the many of his class. for he was alone. Others, such as he, had a place no larger, it may be damper and darker than his *sottoscala*, and a family of four or five, and, and, a baby or two into the bargain to hive away in there,

Introducing our friend *Masto Ciccio*, we might give as an equivalent English—*Maister Frank*. Poor *Masto Ciccio* was alone in the great world of Naples, and friendless. There was none to weep for him at death as there had been none to care for him in life, Poor *Masto Ciccio* died, his humble funeral was paid for by the sale of his few miserable belongings, and the picture and its one lamp fell into the hands of a person who made a living by selling stockfish, dried cod, one of the favourite dishes of the Neapolitans of the lower and middle classes, and greatly sought after especially on fastdays. The new owner, whom we may call *Jasiello*, was a typical Neapolitan of the religious sort; greatly feared in the neighbourhood for his overbearing mien, and greatly respected for the devotion he affected towards the Madonna, and as an associate of the Camorra.

But there always will be some miserable souls who suspect self-interest as lying hidden 'neath the vest of religious pomp and show; and evil tongues that too easily let slip and say what they suspect. And notwithstanding their fear of the Camorra, and their obsequence toward the owner of the most Blessed Mother, there were those who even dared to hint that the holy picture was now a mere sacrilegious speculation. That the Madonna as she stood out there in the miserable shrine, wonderful, miraculous, delivered from the darkness of the poor shoemaker's little den,

cared for by the well-to-do fishmonger, and openly exposed to public veneration under the auspices of a member of the Camorra, so devout a worshipper of the Madonna, was at least in circumstances of improved social and financial condition any one can see. Now and again we hear of miracles she wrought and of handsome offerings that not only filled the little box that was placed on the shrine, but of gifts and pence placed under and above the altar cloth and on the shrine itself. To still the murmuring of those who thought the owner treated the Madonna ungraciously by leaving her with her one little oil-lamp burning, whilst he administered all the income of offerings in money and in kind, he promised she should have *six* candles lit on ordinary days of the week like Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; but on Wednesdays and Saturdays, days specially consecrated to her worship, she was to have *twelve* candles kept continuously burning at her shrine. This was done. Then the miracles were multiplied.

One of these alleged miracles was the sudden cure, of a youngish woman called *Sie' Rosa*, Red Aunty, from having hair of a reddish tinge, who made her living as a *Friggitrice*, *i. e.* one who stands at the corner of a street, and keeps hot and ready for workmen all sorts of fry, fried fish, fried vegetable in her little sort of stove or fire place. The «*hot taters — steamin hot*» of London streets, means here

« *lesso*, » boiled chestnuts, — for the pieman and roasted apples—we have the «Friggitrice,» and savoury messes does she make: fried *baccalà*, the dried cod; fried *cucuzzelle*, vegetable marrow. *Soffritto* is one of the dainty dishes, a sort of fry of liver and lights and all the rest of those internal arrangments fried. The Naples poor in their starveling life have many a tasty morsel and are thorough *gourmands* all the same despite the pittance of their wages and the hardness of the times. The hunch of bread is flavoured by the slice of onion, and washed down by a glass of claret quite as good for body and for soul as the doctored, manufactured wines of Xeres, Oporto or Burgundy that our English Lords and Ladies drink. Then there is the great wealth of fruit and vegetables, perhaps more wonderful than is found in any other part of the world. Grapes of all size and form and flavour; Peaches, soft aad hard; the great golden heads of the Indian corn, boiled or ready roasted all to hand. The Peperoni, pepper-pods, the little green ones, the large red or yellow ones, and those streaked green, red and yellow all in one; but who would realize this fruit-show on the stalls and on heaped up carts must see it for himself: and what about the luscious pears, and oranges and lemons and all the rest? No wonder that the paganism transformed into a nominal Christianity should have given the place of Ceres to the Madonna, and that we have all the heathen

celebration of the fruit and corn Harvest celebrated in connection with *the Festa of Piedigrotta.*

But to return to our *Friggitrice*, one of the Naples institutions, as distinctive of Neapolitan life as the « *Pizzaiuolo.* » What Englishman can understand the charm of the little Neapolitan cakes the Pizzaiuolo makes, — a special dough, larded flour, real patty-cake, patty-cake, for they are patted, and flattened, and ornamented and flavoured by tiniest little sardines, and little pepper-pods, a sort of cayenne; or else instead they are a kind of cheese-cake — the dough above — the cheese between.

The bonny « *Friggitrice,* » *Sie'* Rosa, Red Aunty, was taken ill and had made most lavish promises to the Madonna if she would only cure her. She had indeed suffered from a cancer. or tumour, or gathering of somekind or other, no one seems to know exactly what, — but the gathering burst, or, at least she got well, just before the operation was to take place. No one could dispute a miracle like that. Her vow to the dear Black Mother had saved her—the picture was a supernatural power — the shrine, the very gate of heaven. Prayer to the Saviour and the saints had not availed her; but Mamma Schiavone had «become her salvation,»

AT THE MADONNA'S SHRINE.

Two young girls knelt before the shrine of the Madonna.

The elder of the two was Nina; she reverently crossed herself; touching the altar with the tips of her fingers she kissed them lovingly, for had she not there touched as it were «the hem of the garment» of the Mother of Mercy. She was looking up into the face, the swarthy face, of the « *Fountain of pity* ». Her black and glossy hair, brushed back from off her forehead was braided up into plaits; and the roll, a wealth of hair, was held together by a longish dagger-pin, called a *spada di Genova*. Her eyes were very red with weeping. Her dress was simple and unlike the general attire of the people where she lived, not garish and many coloured, but dark and even sombre, befitting well the child of sorrow who sought the presence, and the aid, the heart, the breast

of the Mother of Sorrow, the Fountain of Mercy, the pitying One, tender and mighty, mightier even than Christ himself, for as Mother she still commands him.

She and her companion, almost a child, had come from one of those awful hives of human life, so tragically known by their Neapolitan name of *Fondaci*,—from one of those little worlds within the great, outer world of Naples' life in the *Sezione* Porto not far from the Mercato, about which people had been writing in the papers and in books, calling them the home of every malady,—the sink of all iniquity.

Nina and her little friend had come after a long conflict in Nina's mind as to the relative value of the different and more noted Madonnas. She was kneeling there to pray to Màmma Schiavona; she was there, weary and very anxious, with her little friend to make a very solemn vow to this Madonna; and the presence of Rosina, her child-friend, would not only be the presence of a friendly witness to the vow she came to make at the altar of the Black Mother, but was a necessity: what honest girl would thread those streets and alleys from the Porto to the Pignasecca alone, and midst the darkness of the night? Respectable people would have put her down as bad; and every youth would feel at liberty to pester her with by-play, and foul play too. They might not read in the pallor of her features that her heart was sorrowful even unto death? Who could

divine that she was hasting to the shrine with a special mission—a great sorrow throbbing in her soul, a last but sacred hope nestling in her heart? Who, amidst the many passers by that stared at her and bandied evil pleasantries at her, as they did at every little seamstress going home. knew that she had left in her miserable room a sickly, emaciated, dying child-brother, for whom she worked, for whom she lived, and whom she had tended with a mother's care, but whom she had been obliged to leave to a kindly neighbour's care whilst she came off to the Pignasecca, and prayed the prayer of her anguished heart, and made her vow, the offering of her all, her little world, to the Madonna, would she only save her little brother's life! Her brother lay at the very door of death! So said the Doctor of the Municipio as he wrote the prescription that might alleviate pain, though it could not give back life. Nought but a miracle could save him now.

The soul of Nina, the girl mother, had turned in prayer to God. God was a long way off, they told her! you cannot approach Hin. Like earthly sovereigns he only can be approached by intermediates, by ministers and officials — by saints, by the blessed Mother of God.

There was a little crucifix by her bed-side, by it she had knelt, to it she had prayed, but little did it seem to speak to her of the Great Intercessor

and of the Great Intercession; of how the far-off God came near, came down to man, and lived, and loved and suffered and died! Of how the invisible was seen, the Intangible was here — and then went back to heaven! — She had not even thought how strange that Jesus who had lived, and loved everybody, who had died for love's sweet sake, and for all, should now be so far, so very far away. That he who loved to take the little children in his arms should be so changed that he no longer cared to see her weep, nor loved to hear her pray. She had been taught to think of Christ as now so holy, so terrible, the Judge of all, she could find nor hope nor rest in him. The crucifix did not hear her; the Crucified was far away, as far as God and heaven. She had invoked the saints, she had entreated the souls in purgatory; she had knelt before the picture of her own Madonna, she had pleaded for the life, the health of her child-brother, but the child only grew still worse and worse.

God was afar — Christ after all was only man; how could he, though he was so kind, understand and sympathize with a girl's sorrow, with the anguish of a woman's heart?

Once, passing by the hovel home of a poor sickly-looking woman who held in her arms a sicklier-looking child, she had heard that mother apostrophize the Crucifix and say « You never hear me now, you

are getting far too old. » Then turning to the picture of a Saint — That mother prayed : « Oh Saint Antonio hear me, save my chfld ! »

Then it was only the Virgin, the Mother, to whom she could come, to whom she could draw near..... and yet.... her own Madonna had not heard her, had not saved her boy;—she, too was far away, far away in heaven;—whither should she go to find her? Perhaps she was mistaken : she was always hearing companions, friends, neighbours, telling of the wonders performed by the special Madonna that they worshipped. She thought them over one by one. — But as she heard a neighbour tell of miracles and miracles wrought by the Madonna—the Black Mother of the Pignasecca, out there amidst the hurry and the mystery of the people's lowly and suffering life , it came to her so clear, she would go there with her friend , — go to her very shrine, go to her very presence, to Her who knew what trouble, suffering, dying means; and so we see her and Rosina, her little friend, kneeling, praying and making there her solemn vow.

The tremendous question on which hung the issues of life and death had been resolved,—as there are many Madonnas — which, oh which ? and there are many different shrines and pictures of the same Madonna — again which ? oh which ?

One thing had powerfully influenced Nina's mind and her choice of the Madonna..... the medicine

for her brother must be made up from the Doctor's receipt, and taken home with her. Close to the sacred shrine is the pharmacy, kept by our friend the Chemist. Our Nina had been told how devoted to the Màmma Schiavona was the owner of the pharmacy; how for very devotion he wrapt up all his medicines in paper bearing the figure of the Madonna herself.

Her prayer was offered; her vow was made; all hopefully she took the powders and the phial, each bearing the fine printed figure of «Màmma Schiavona»—It was only print and paper Nina knew, but she felt it was as though a seal had been set upon her prayer and vow; the figures, a promissary note of returning health—It was as though she was receiving the cure from the Madonna her very self. If Pepino only should get well again! She would thank the Doctor so. She would be so glad the medicine had done him good. She promised the Holy Mother she would tell every one how she had received the cure from her very hands.

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Was it that Nina had fatally mistaken the Madonna? Was it that she had mistaken the shrine of the «*Addolorata*;»—perhaps the «*Addolorata of S. Brigida*» might have heard her prayer? Or was it that the Madonna wanted the little one to come to the beautiful gardens, and to the beautiful life, of Heaven,

as the people around her said. Her little brother lingered on — then after a passing night and one brief day, as the Vesper Bell rang softly the « Ave Maria » chime, the little one had ceased to live!

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Can we wonder at Nanina's anxiety as to her choice of a Saviour and a shrine? There are so many Madonnas, each with its special, supernatural power and grace. This cannot but be bewildering.

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There is of course the **Immaculate Conception.** Mary stands alone, not even the infant Jesus there to take away thought, faith, hope, prayer, adoring love, from Her whom they regard as the One who bruises the serpent's head,—by whose hands they believe all grace and mercy and life are dispensed.

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There is the « **Addolorata** » our **Lady of Sorrows,** the Madonna of the Pignasecca,—where the dagger-sword is buried to the hilt in her side, piercing to her very heart. The Lady of Sorrows — of Sorrow like His sorrow — for she redeems as He redeems,—she shares his passion — nay Hers throws His into the far-off shade; and priests think, and say, and preach, and print of the Madonna:

« COME, SEE, WAS THERE EVER SORROW LIKE HERS? »

The prophet saw His sorrow — but Naples gazes far the more on Hers.

* * * * * * *

Some love best the bright and beautiful Madonna : — The « **Assunta** » perhaps best known here as the Madonna di Mezzo-Agosto, her *festa* being held on the 15th August. This is the Madonna of the last chapter of the Rosary. — In all the pictures or images of the « Assunta » ,—(note the working of the mind,) — the «Assumption» is put down as indisputable fact— then we are asked: Can one who sees not death be born in sin ? The Immaculate.=The Assumed. The Assumed.=The Immaculate !—Here you have the Madonna triumphant. Could the Immaculate see death?— at least she could not see corruption.! **** She was arrayed in her best robes.—The Apostles by her very special wish were there. Scattered over the whole earth on their great Mission, they gather around her despite storm and tempest, by miracle.—She, the dying Mary, was borne up to heaven. There she is at the right hand of God ! The Madonna Queen, — The Queen-Mother,—the Queen of heaven and earth, the Queen of angels and of men ! Mary thus enthroned, though an attempted parallel, is but a miserable mimickery plagiarizing the Ascension and the Mediatorial glory of the Saviour. She suits the fervid imagination of the Southerner.—Sorrow, that wrings the heart and clouds the brow may find sympathy in the Lady of Sorrows, but the pride and glory of hope finds its ideal in this bright Queen of Heaven ! To this Madonna is

entrusted the conflict with and victory over all evil — especially over heresy and heretics.

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Then there is *Our Lady of Mount Carmel* who has so many special prerogatives of heavenly wonder and unwonted prodigy; whose church is rich in a galaxy of miraculous crucifixes, however silent may be within its historic walls the Word of the Crucified himself. One bowed its head and let a shot pass over it, they say; the hair upon another used to grow, hence a special *festa* for the cutting of its hair. The typical Neapolitan knows that whoever is sincere in her devotion to the **Madonna of Mount-Carmel can never perish.** She knew it from her mother, before she knew it from the priest. She knows it, for every body says so:— indeed she never thought that it was doubted «even by the Turks.» She may have to remember her devotions — Monday, Wednesday, Saturday,—that is prayer and fasting in her honour, and must not forget to pay her weekly or monthly contribution to the «*Congrega*;» but this Spiritual Aid Society, this Death and Funeral Association will ensure to her the last rights of the Church, and so many lights to burn around her corpse as she lies in state when dead; also, the gaudy trappings when the candles are put out, and every drop of grease or wax has been gathered up, — for nothing may be wasted,—all may be resold. She will have the magnificent common coffin — the presence of a

given number of the *Confraternità*, or Guild, to follow in the train instead of dearer friends; a place within the common grave until her bones are ready to be gathered up,—and then a niche for these within the chapel walls, or at least a home for them below in the dark charnel-house. And then beyond.... beyond the sun, beyond the stars!—Alas! alas! how few ever get beyond?—Where is the conscious, living faith and hope in that beyond?—beyond the dreariness of death, the marshalled funeral array, the *camera ardente!* How dare they? All that lies beyond the dark stream of death, for the very best, is only purgatorial fire and flame and woe!—But then there is the hope that there the Madonna of Mount Carmel will console, relieve and save!—the hope that mass and offertory, prayer and alms left to the church and priest, or presented by unforgetting friends, may assuage the fiercest pains and ultimately bring release! Perhaps, after all, the Neapolitan thinks it best, far best, not to think at all, at least of things like this where faith can only fail, and hope must sicken, and love can only wane. Still, the followers of this Madonna have been taught to hope that the Madonna of Mount Carmel, on the first Saturday after death, will deliver from Purgatory the souls of those who die in her favour.

I have been thirty years and more amongst this people and learnt to know and to admire them:—around us, have passed away the great,—the good—

but when, oh when, have I heard from dying-lip the triumphal chant—« *O grave where is thy victory? O death where is thy sting? Thanks be unto God who giveth us the Victory! Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb.* » Should not Madonna worship be tested by experience, — by life and death testimony such as this?

MADONNA WORSHIP.

Image worship, a fetish veneration for statue and picture, is ingrained in the very being of the Southern Italian. To him it is faith — it is hope—it is love! He looks on the Crucifix — « that is *seeing Christ—seeing Christ crucified for him!* He looks on a picture of the Madonna, it may be lovely and tender, it may be black or uncouth, it may be covered with gold and silver, with gems and jewels; it may be crowned with a golden crown, and the baby Jesus in arms uncrowned,—IT is the Madonna, his love, his life, for time and for eternity; his refuge in distress, mercy that heals his heart bruised for sin; hope in the dreariest desolation.—**THE GIFT OF GOD** in Christ, is the Madonna.

No one but those who have lived long and in the very midst of this people can realize how much, how intimately, and how utterly — image, statue,

picture worship enters into the *life of life* of the Neapolitan.

All worship is conducted before the material image, the picture, the statue. The preacher revels in descanting on the mercy of the Virgin — more merciful than Christ himself, for he is Judge; the righteous Judge, and she the Sinner's Refuge. — She is more accessible than Jesus. — Yes, it is the Virgin's voice that is heard saying «Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.» Often in thus proclaiming the mercy of the Virgin all the many charms and arts of dramatic effect are brought to bear in order to enhance the impression made on the sorry heart. The image of the Virgin is drawn upward amidst a complicated machinery of cloud and heaven, — the poor people feel as if they saw the Queen of Heaven herself. — The preacher holds extended the drapery, the mantle, of the Queen of pity, and calls upon the lost to come and find mercy there! The Rose is Mary's flower. May is her month. It is the oil from the silver lamps burning before her shrine which is the Anointing Oil, of which they say the Apostle speaks, and which applied in her Name, saves the sick. Even her printed image is a talisman, a charm. All sorts of counsel, direction and instructions are given to the sick and dying as to how to take as medicine these paper effigies; they are to chew and swallow them as a hopeful means of

cure. Every month, in the «*Rosary of New Pompei*» are published strange accounts of miracle and cure through the whole vast region of the wide, wide world, by taking the rose-leaf, or paper image, that is swallowing them; or by gulping down like a powder the dust gathered from the miraculous picture in the church, and sent in packets to those who ask for it; and this religious quackery, is approved by the sanction of the administrative and ecclesiastical authorities of the Church.

All this, may seem far too highly, too darkly coloured to those who do not know that it is mere common place out here. The Neapolitan perhaps as you ask him what he thinks of such things as these may wink a knowing look and shrug his shoulders and say: these sacred things belong to the priests and sacristy; but that Donna Carmela, his wife, once was very ill of fever, and she tried the whole pharmacy of New Pompei,—rose leaf, oil, powder, image —and she is still alive, and hale and hearty now. * * * * We bow to such a miracle as this. Her well-being seems to us a miracle indeed.

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My friend, whom we have called the « Marquis » and who kindly ferreted out a good deal of the story of Our Lady of the Pignasecca for me, asked other information from our Chemist known as a liege devotee of our Madonna. After having told his romantic story,

he added: «I am a Catholic. I am a believer in the power of God shown in this picture:—mind, I am a Catholic and a believer — I have had two miracles granted me by her.» The Marquis naturally desired his kind informant to tell him what the two miracles might be. «I prayed the Madonna that I might have only *one* child, and that the child might be a boy· the prayer was granted me.» *** «I had an almost hopeless lawsuit of great importance to me.—I took the papers and documents and threw them to the Madonna,» and this was said with a gesture as though he wished to express his giving over everything to her— yet feeling it to be a folly to entrust his cause to her; —as though in distrust and hopelessness. «But,» said he, «I won that trial!» **** After deploring the incapacity of the present owners of the picture to manipulate the affair, he exclaimed. «Oh! what a Madonna!—If we only had some one like Bartolo Longo to take charge of it!» Well, even the Miraculous must have human care and wit to make things go, according to the ideas of our friend the Chemist.

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We are sadly tempted to describe the Bacchanalian scenes such as the Eve of the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin, the 7th of September, — the vast concourse of people, and the booths, and the Neapolitan band — the *scetavaiasse*, the shell-horn which gives one shrill, wild tone, and the *puty-pu*, (pooty-

poo,) which is a red clay pipkin affair covered with a bladder, pierced by a stick, which, drawn up and down produces the double note, the double-horror *pooty-poo*! *Pooty-poo*! And a wooden arrangement, a clapper with three tongues, or hammers.

Trooping along come children, boys and young men, with paper or tin helmets, making as they march confusion worse confounded, seeing that the aim of all is to make the most hideous discord possible.

Then each year has its *new attraction* in adding to the Babel, one year it was a *cri-cri* from Paris, this year the rage has been trumpets — tin trumpets, trumpets from two or three inches long to a yard or a yard and a half; the acme of delight being not only to increase the general tumult carried on through the hours of the night, and on, far on into the morning, but specially to trumpet unexpectedly into the ear of some poor passer-by. We dare not allow ourselves to tell of the public competition — of the winning of the palm for the most popular new Neapolitan song. It is under the shadow of that Madonna the contest takes place. We heard that in the Italian Exhibition in London, one of the greatest attractions was a band of these Neapolitan singers. Here is oft-times real poetry and music — all else is discord and most unmeaning revelry, and often, in both song and fun, the foulness of impurity — a worse than carnival of folly.

IN THE MONASTERY OF LA TRINITÀ.

CAVA DEI TIRRENI.

One of the most interesting and lovely places visited from Naples is *Cava dei Tirreni*; the neighbourhood has been called « the Switzerland of Italy. »

Cava itself is a little town with many associations of the middle ages, with arcades like the city of Padua; and is built on the site of *Marcina* an old Etruscan town. One of the greatest attractions to travellers is the great Benedictine Monastery, the most celebrated in Southern Italy, except only that of Monte Cassino.

A winding ascent leads thither passing *the Church of the Pietra Santa*, in which a curious rock projects through the floor before the altar, where the first crusade was preached. It was here that Pope Urban II coming on a pilgrimage for the consecration of the Convent with Duke Roger and his Norman knights, insisted that the whole party should dismount as

« they were unworthy to travel otherwise than on foot over the ground where so many holy men had trod.»

Beyond is the richly-wooded valley narrowing into a gorge all velveted with softest, variegated green, while the umbrella or stone pine studs rock, and hill and dale. In the gorge, stands the Abbey built up against, and caved into, the very rock.

Tombs of historic interest stay the traveller on entering the portico.—Sibylla of Burgundy, the wife of Roger, lies buried there near two magnificent ancient sarcophagi. The Organ is one of the finest in all Italy. To the left of the high altar is the tomb of the founder, S. Alferius, « enclosed in part of the grotto in which he lived as a hermit, and where he died in his 120th year, being found dead upon his knees on the evening of Holy Thursday, just as the sun lighted the mountains of La Cava with its last rays before disappearing behind the sea.» Two of the oldest Abbots are slumbering there beside him. A sepulchral stone, with mitre reversed, marks the spot where rest the remains of the Anti-pope Gregory VIII. This tradition is disputed by Muratori, and by some it is thought to be the tomb of a less-celebrated Anti-pope, Theodoric, who having vainly opposed Paul II retired to the Convent and died there. The air seems charged with recollections of ecclesiastical strife and of priestly revenge. A third Anti-pope, Innocent, was kept there a by prisoner Alexander.

« The *Archivio* » says Hare, « is the most important monastic collection in Italy, »—comprising 60,000 contracts or donations, 40,000 acts or parchments, and 1600 bulls or diplomas. The great treasure of the *Codex Legum Lombardorum*, the oldest and most remarkable digest of Lombard Law, is there, and a very precious M.S. Bible on vellum, supposed to have been written in the seventh century. There is also a prayer-book with miniatures of the school of Fra Angelico da Fiesole.

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Two monks in the vest of the Benedictine Order were walking together up and down the long corridor of the Monastery which overlooked the valley at its side, from which sloped upward the hills beyond, green of the richest green, and variegated with every tint of verdure to the very top.

The one, Padre Onorio, you distinguish at once as Italian, and as one of the several monks left in charge of the Convent, retained as a National Monument from the time when the Parliament by one mighty swoop, bore off and away for ever the old National, Monastic system. What a mighty change—not one monk, not one nun, *legally recognized as such*, from the Alps to the farthest Italian sea! Padre Onorio is at the head of the large Educational Institute which is now conducted in the Monastery where some three

hundred of the youth of Italy are educated, for, we trust, a happier future for the land. Padre Onorio is full of life, and though by no means meagre in his attainments is learned after the fashion of the past, rather than according to the more modern views of the world's atheneum nowadays. Though he be not a genius, there is a spice of the thinker in him, somewhat more of the reader, and in subjects genial to his mind and of service to him in the special vocation of his monastic life, he faithfully goes the round and round of the drear drudgery of his life's routine. His views of matters touching questions that savour of politics are a shade too liberal to allow us to think of him as a faithful representative of the priesthood fully liege to Rome; and yet the patriotism of his heart, and the office he now occupies, are hampered by the dress he wears, the vows he has made, and the spiritual direction to which he ought to submit. To the deep yearnings of the highest, purest, spiritual nature—its ecstacies of sacred vision, its tragedies of sorrow, its poetic marvels, its deep-hearted mysteries, he is a stranger. He is contented with a fossilized creed; it gives him but little trouble to define what has been hard defined for ages;—this he calls faith: he is well-satisfied with forms and ceremony, with incense and altar, with genuflexions and symbolical representations and Benedictions. This he calls religion. Padre Onorio is

a kind-hearted man who knows of the being born-again of water, — though he knows but little of the being born-again of the Spirit.

A very different man is his companion—of Scotch extraction, a man of learning. Not only an earnest student who had made his mark at Oxford, and gained fair honours there, but a man of deepest religious sentiment.

From College he had passed to ordination as an Anglican Clergyman. Not by mere rote, nor as a mere profession had he taken his ordination vow,—a life's great, solemn mission lay out-opening there before him. For a year or two he had laboured on amidst the exhausting fatigues of his curacy, amongst the rough, coarse populace of a densely crowded neighbourhood. His soul was up-struggling to the light. Little cheered by visible results, and the moral renovation of his people, his heart was weary, and his soul did faint: then sickness came, and he had to confess there must be something beyond the mere performance of even the most splendid ritual, and the mere dutiful fulfilment of the accustomed round of outward duty.—Then came the Tempter,—and the Temptation of the Wilderness-hour, and in that desert loneliness, he fell a captive to the charms of Roman ritual, his soul groped out amidst the darkness toward rest in some spiritual authority, in the authority of historical succession, of antiquity; in what seemed a fair,

but far-off light; in ecclesiastical decision, in supreme and pontifical utterance; in priestly absolution; in material representation, image, picture, statue, incense, aspersion of holy water; half convinced he became as Rome would say a *con*vert, or as his better friends said a *per*vert to the Papal See. He would retire to the quiet, the religious atmosphere of a conventual life. The wish was furthered by his spiritual director, and we find him now in the companionship of the good Father Onorio,—a monk, amidst the other monks still resident in the Convent of La Cava. His knowledge of Italian, acquired in his infancy in Florence, where his family had been resident many years made him feel at home with his companions. Here he could read, and rest, and pray; here he could abandon himself to the study of the Norman period, so full of deepest and romantic interest to him.

And yet his soul was not at rest;—indeed since he had left home in England, and come out here into the very midst of the ideal papal life, where thought, and faith, and all, are what the Papacy has made and moulded them to be,—great, swelling, waves of troubled wonder, if not of doubt, had surged in upon his soul. The papal ideal seemed so different seen near to, to what the Catholic ideal, that had charmed him, seemed to him before. The gross superstitions, dishonouring to God and degrading to man, so prevalent among the people, which once he had regarded

only as excrescences disavowed by church and priest, he often now felt were but the necessary issues of the system for which he had given up the faith of his fathers, and on which he risked his soul.

What galled him most and oftenest, was the feeling that the touch and taint of a half-veiled dishonesty soiled even him; the way in which such subjects were privately and publicly defended, he now began to feel unfair.

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He is now conversing with his friend Padre Onorio. The news that the famous shrine of the Madonna of the Pignasecoa had become a public scandal had reached the cloisters of La Cava, it was known there that the press fearlessly declared it to have fallen into the hands of the Camorra; that it was uncertain what the ecclesiastical authorities could, or would, do; that the civil powers were moving on to put down the shameless traffic in holy things. All this had raised in the mind of Padre Benedetto a deepened feeling, and in regard to a wider subject: — the whole subject of Madonna and Image Worship as authorized and promoted by the priesthood and the church.

« Ah! » said Padre Benedetto, « what shocks me most, is to witness all around in both Northern and Southern Italy such an exaggeration of the ideal and worship of Mary, as to make me feel that Mary has

displaced the blessed Saviour:—that the beautiful cult of the Virgin Mother is now a gross idolatry, as fatally an idolatry as that of the Athor of the Egyptian, or the Athene of the Greek, or the Venus of the Roman. Miserably, » said he, « more and more, day by day, do I feel this accusation of Idolatry which the enemies of Catholicism lay to the charge of the church, practically circles the Madonna, at least amongst the vulgar crowd,—and I am pained by the silence of the Church. »

« But where is this exaggeration ? » asked Father Onorio. « That like an entrancing spell it charms and enchains is true. I was reading this in words well-written the other day. It was in words something like these the author expressed the spiritual enchantment of our worship of Mary. »

« This worship of the Madonna, » I think the good author wrote, « has a mysterious something in it that will ever linger about the heart of the man who once has felt it. It clings about the human heart though there may be coldness to all other religious impressions; though there may be infidelity or even scorn of all our faith; — though there may be the plunging into the wild vortex of every sin, yet in the very worst of people, there will be found still and ever a lingering feeling of devotion to the Virgin. A little thread, it still keeps the soul, and will draw it back. By it the Virgin still holds him, still clings

to his soul. Even in the most wild, wicked and desperate men, — even amongst bandits in their worst state-there is always retained this devotion to Mary. Womanhood, Motherhood, Manhood, the family, the ages, Heaven itself and Hell are subject to the sweet spell of her charms. »

« Yes, Padre Onorio, » said the Convert to his priestly companion, « But have not these charms, lent to her by all the concurrent religious influences of teaching, confessional, and pen, and by all the forces of a mythic evolution, only given to her a false and fictitious beauty and a meretricious blandishment, transforming the woman into a Goddess; the human, the pure, the blessed, into the divine? »

« But surely you must feel how safe you are in the bosom of Holy Mother church when you remember that whilst she defines as dogma the Immaculate Conception, and records that Mary is the Virgin Mother, Blessed among women, and exalts her virtues — « full of grace » — and tells her wondrous intercession, and proclaims her Queen of angels and of men, of heaven, and earth, of purgatory, and of hell, she always regards her as but a creature only? » — said Padre Onorio: — « thoughts like yours never trouble me. — Were she declared to be absolutely divine — it would be blasphemy; and were the ideal pagan and not christian, the whole system would be a tissue of idolatrous mystification, and her worship

a gross, degrading idolatry and a lie: but the church still speaks of her in all her ritual as a « creature », the most glorious *creature*,—can you not rest in that as I do? »

« No, » replied Benedetto, « no, I cannot. No,—it is indeed just this that mars the sacred peace of my mind. I longed to find rest and peace in the simple abandonment of intellect and conscience to the authority of the church. I had hoped in such a magisterial definition as grows out of the exposition of fact such as the presentation of Mary as a creature, to find the rock of truth on which my soul might rest and shelter from the dreadful inner consciousness of idolatry in worship; but the very rock of the righteousness of that authority, the sheet anchor of the soul, gives way as I find myself now face to face with the horrible conviction that the church, the councils, the Infallible himself, whilst presenting Mary as a mere creature, give the lie to their own word, clothing her with divine attributes, giving over to her the Universal Empire of Providence, ascribing to her co-redemption with Christ Jesus, and making her not merely the medium of intercessory grace, but the rightful Empress of a supreme command over Jesus the great and only Saviour, endowing her in heaven with the sway of a Mother's command over her divine Son. »

« What is the real issue of the teachings and

practice of this authority? — It is the contradiction, a creature, yet divine. Oh the awful wretchedness that is mine as the irresistible conviction galls and shocks my soul, that here there is but veiled duplicity, and that the issue is a contradiction and a lie.—Ah the degradation of « believing a lie. »

« A temptation, » replied Onorio, « a drear and dark temptation; dark and terrible as that in which St. Anthony was tried when the devil appeared to him in the form of a pig, and prayer and fasting could not save him, nor his crucifix, nor holy water even,—nothing, save the ringing of a little consecrated bell. But you converts are not always ready to believe these sacred legends of the saints, of pigs, and of Madonnas. And yet, you may see St. Anthony and the holy pig upon the altar, and as you have travelled through Sicily you will have heard the common oath: —«*Santo Diavolo!*»—The devil-tempter came in the form of a pig; the picture of St. Anthony with his devil-pig is shown upon the altars, in the holy place; and so the Sicilians swear by the holy devil! Why even now the people take the suckling pig and rear it at the common expense for St. Anthony's day: and the pig is sold for church and priest. »

Ah! good friend, Don Onorio, this is my trouble, my pain, my doubt, — the church seems to dogmatize one way, and then to practice in another. Why does the church if it disapprove all this super-

stition, remain silent? Its very silence seems complicity. Why not disavow all this idolatry? Why, a thousandfold the more, does it really foster and evolutionize all this myth and error and blasphemy, by pulpit, confessional and print, by paintings and statues and festal processions and wakes?

« Not only are prayers offered to the Almighty in her name, in the prescribed ritual and offices, pleading her merits, engaging her mediation, advocacy, and intercession, but prayers are offered directly to herself, invoking Providential protection from all evils, bodily and spiritual.—Divine praises are ascribed to her for her wisdom, goodness, and mercy, and for her redemption of the world. It is from this I now see, alas so late,» said Padre Benedetto, «comes the folly of superstition and the blasphemy of creature worship which I see around me in its most revolting forms.

«You ask me, Padre Onorio, where is the gross exaggeration of Madonna worship? *** Everywhere,» continued the troubled monk. «I now seem to see it everywhere,—dishonouring the Papal Throne; transforming our Sanctuaries into heathen temples; debasing our glorious priesthood into the mere levites of an idolatry, and degrading the people to a lower level of morality, and to a coarser grade of imbecility than did the magnificent nature and hero worship of the ancient Greeks.»

The mind of our friend Benedetto had been all the more painfully exercised as a tidal wave of superstitious fanaticism had just rolled over the whole South of Italy, the storm-centre had been Naples, and the rush of unreasoning folly had convulsed the dense masses of the people, and the busy flow of city life. The Madonna had appeared, they said, in a window of the Hospital of the Pellegrini to one of the Guardians of a ward. He had seen her in the window pane, glorious in the iradescence so commonly seen in certain lights owing to some imperfection in the glass. Some suggested it was like what they had heard of God, and Christ, and the rainbow round about the throne; others said. it was just like the pictures of the exalted Mary in the glorious mystery of the Rosary where she sits enthroned in heaven.

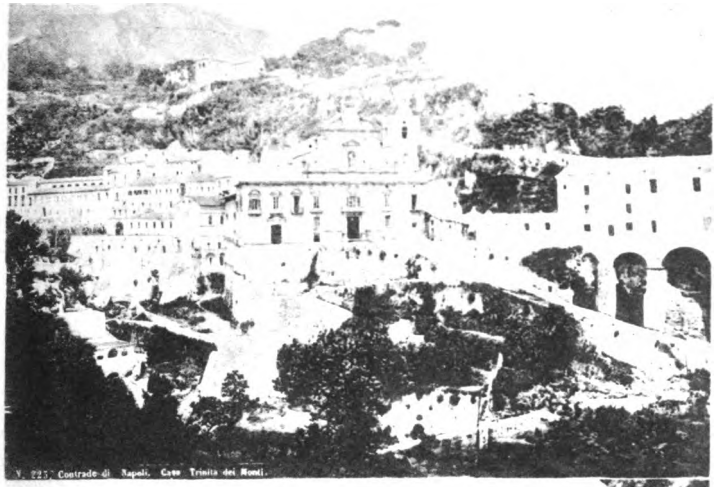
Such was the rush and crush of the multitude of the people to see the Madonna that the authorities were obliged to call out the military; — the police were powerless;—the few *carabinieri* were in danger of being crushed to death or trodden underfoot. The Archbishop approved by being silent; only, when pestered and plagued to take strong measures to stay the madness of the people, he had the glass taken out and sent to Rome to be examined..... I believe the miracle of the window pane is still under examination.

Beyond Salerno, in a little country town; the

priests, taking advantage of the religious furor of the masses tried a common trick. The son of a peasant found, out in the fields, two curious pieces of wood almost a cross, some said two wooden nails, all encrusted with soil; some swore it was a figure of the Madonna:—a Miracle. Processions flocked in; multitudes gathered to the spot; heaps of money and offerings were gathered — The ecclesiastical authorities mumbled a recognition they hardly had the courage to avow, except by receiving all the pence. The police, however, made short work of it; they just laid hands on all,—the would-be Madonna, the contributions, the organizers of the pious fraud, and homed the father and the boy in prison, and the miracle went down amidst the shadows of a public trial, and at least a moral condemnation, in the Tribunal of Salerno. What became of the money I do not know.

There was the religious fervour of the miracle cures in New Pompei, more respectably manipulated.

A few hundred metres away from that church, the rival Sanctuary of the *Madonna dei Bagni* was trying to outrival the Madonna of Pompei. The healing virtue of those waters was first manifested by the wonderful cure of a scorbutic or mangy pig, belonging to peasant girl to whom in her despair, the Madonna appeared, — and the pig came forth from the bath healthy and fresh. The Madonna dei Bagni was, under the auspices of the Municipio of



V. 223. Contrade di Napoli. Cava Trinità dei Monti.

Angrì, and with the concurrence of many of the aristocracy of the Province, was trying to establish its ascendancy even over the Madonna of the Rosary.—

The rivalry between Madonna and Madonna made some people wonder, and made many laugh; but it all served to excite still more the fanaticism of the masses. The effect upon the mind of our friend, Benedetto, was such as to induce the bitterest disappointment.—The folly of the people was not a transgression of the church's will and work. The church approved it; the priests fomented it; even the better educated condoned it; the foreigners who knew it all to be a sham and a dishonour, looked on and smiled, and said: « how pretty! » — « quite artistic, « how imposing! »—and the incense circled up around them, and the glare of candles fell softly upon the altar and the shrine, whilst listening, charmed by the strains of music, the poor souls bowed down before the idol goddess Queen.

No wonder the soul of the converted monk awoke to feel itself entangled fatally in the network of an Idolatry foreseen of God and cursed of Heaven.

IN THE CATHEDRAL OF SALERNO

A SERMON.

It is a lovely walk or drive from the Benedictine Monastery of La Cava, down through the valley which *Valery* has described as « a Swiss valley with the sky and vegetation of Southern Italy, » leaving behind the Ravine and Grotto of Salvator Rosa, who lived and studied there, still descending by the Valley dei Molini, leaving to the right the romantic legendary bridge so-called of Eloise and Abeard and so on to Vietri, from whence you see the picturesque tower on the shore, a subject so dear to artists.

The city of Salerno lies below, nestling in a corner of the arching bay. You catch alternating glimpses of the town and port that change with each winding of the road, as the city lies down there, backed by the gigantic mountains, piled up behind. The hilly ranges expand and curve around the bay in long aërial lines marking the distances by reaches

cut into fantastic peaks, that stretch away beyond the plain of Pæstum, and then, falling back to the southern point of the gulf are lost in mist and sunbeams shimmering on the sea.

Padre Benedetto loved this walk and revelled in the view of the Amalfi road beyond, with its magnificent heights, and peaks and pinnacles. Each tree was to his mind a picture and a delight, — the fig with its fan-like leaf, the heavy foliaged locust trees, beyond the parapet that skirts the precipice through the side of which the road is cut, and the hillside « clothed with myrtle, lentisk, cystus, and pale yellow coronilla, a tangle as sweet with scent as it is gay with bloom.

It was a Festa—a clear, lovely, southern day.—The Festa of the Madonna of the Rosary. Benedetto had walked down from Cava to the Marina of Salerno; and then, up through narrow winding streets to the Cathedral, up the broad flight of steps to the *atrium* or forecourt, passing the fine Norman-Gothic porch and the legendary lions that people tell you spat fire against the Saracens. This courtyard had been to him a study; the columns from Pæstum that decorate it; the fourteen early Christian sarcophagi that surround it; and the Cathedral, consecrated by Gregory VII himself in 1087: — « a pile so antique, and so modern, so repaired and so rhapsodic, that it exhibits patches of every style and is of no style itself. » The

ambones pulpit, the Easter candlestick, and the pavement of the choirs are some of the finest specimens of mosaic work in the world.

But what drew the soul of Benedetto to make these not infrequent visits to this sacred fane, was not the pre-christian relics from Pæstum, nor the early Christian sarcophagi around the courtyard, nor even the altar and relics of St. Mathew in the crypt, nor the miraculous broken column placed there in memory of the three Saints, Fortunato, Caio, and Ante, said to have been beheaded by Diocletian; and of whom another legend said that they were fried to death;—(the listening ear bent to the concave surface of the column, can hear them frying still): it was the tomb, the memory of Gregory VII—« that Cæsar of spiritual conquest, the great and inflexible assertor of the supremacy of the sacerdotal order, » who found refuge in Salerno, and whose stay some think associated with the castle on the hill.—He died in Salerno. He whose dying words seem galled with the bitterness of disappointment: « I have loved justice and hated iniquity, therefore I die in exile. »

Benedetto thoroughly sympathized with the reply of one of the ecclesiastics whose priestly pride was not rebuked even by the presence of mortality :— « In exile thou canst not die! Vicar of Christ and of the Apostles, thou hast received the nations for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession! »

It was this tomb of the grandest of churchmen, the son of a poor carpenter of Soano,—first a monk, then a cardinal, who after being the soul of the papacy during the reign of three popes, then Pope himself, alone against all, undertook that ideal which may be compendiated :—To give back to the clergy the primitive purity; to free the church from all temporal dependance, in short to give to Christian Society, under the Romàn Pontiff, that vast unity which was the ideal of the middle ages. All the prejudices of Benedetto's early education against Hildebrand had fallen before this ideal so vast and so entrancing. To feel that all the inuendos, suggesting evil in his intimacy and affectionate association with the Countess Mathilda was but calumny as vile as undeserved; to admire his complete disinterestedness and undying constancy in defending the cause he had embraced, was to enslave the fervid imagination of the convert monk.

Sometimes he had seen Gregory as in the desert listening to the Tempter, whilst the kingdoms of the world passed in glittering show before him, — and the «All these things will I give thee if thou wilt but fall down and worship me!» sounded clearly on his soul.

But often, too, he saw that Hildebrand had conceived the grand ideal of a church, an absolute, universal spiritual monarchy not only, but a civil

monarchy equally extensive and despotic. What others saw as an indefatigable effort to render the universal church subject to the despotic government and arbitrary power of the Pontiff alone, dissolving the jurisdiction which kings and emperors had hitherto exercised over the various orders of the clergy and over the revenues of the church:—What others saw to be an outrageous and impious attempt to submit to his jurisdiction the emperors, kings and princes of the earth, rendering everywhere their dominions tributary to the See of Rome, — had seemed to glimmer and glitter before the wondering sight of Benedetto, as a glorious ideal of a Universal Church, of the longed-for Unity of faith, and hope, and life: « one faith, one Lord, one baptism! »—it seemed the Gospel incarnate in a real, visible, lordly kingdom. Here in the realization of the ideal of Hildebrand was the coming, the actual coming, of the Kingdom of Heaven.

What a marvel of chastity and moral intrepidity must he be, who had dared to command the celibacy of the Clergy? what holy courage in one who dared to launch the terrible « Anathema! » against « whoever received the investiture of a bishopric or abbacy from the hands of a layman. »

His thoughts would fly away, to *Canusium*, beyond the Alps, — to the fortress-castle where Hildebrand stayed with the youthful Mathilda, the powerful patroness of the church, the most tender and affection-

ate of all the spiritual daughters of Gregory. He seemed to see the suppliant Henry, umindful of his Imperial dignity, there at the entrance of the fortress; — his feet bare, his head uncovered, nude save for the woollen cloth thrown around him to cover his nakedness! — Imperial pride and power bowing down to the representative of the king and kingdom of God. The thunders of the anathemas of Hildebrand had brought the mighty prince to penance.

But the tomb so near him,—the castle perched up on the hill,—reminded him of Gregory, excommunicated, deposed, fallen.

Great was Hildebrand, besieged by his foes in Rome. Great when brought beneath the protection of Guiscard to Monte Cassino. A mighty one—though fallen, even in his exile-life in Salerno.

Our Benedetto has entered the Cathedral and taken his place amidst the throng of worshippers who were listening with intense interest and emotion to a very eloquent preacher, a Dominican monk, who seemed to have rivetted the attention of his audience. His subject is Mary, the Rosary Queen. The orator seems to take his inspiration from the « *Salve Regina,* » so well-known in the Papal church, the repetition of which is imposed on every monk of the Dominican Order, as a penance for their defiant opposition to the Immaculate Conception, a doctrine which now they must unhesitatingly acknowledge and un-

falteringly proclaim, it having been defined as dogma. *Roma locuta est!*—and adieu to all qualms of the Dominican conscience: they must believe against conviction; and preach nought else but what Rome teaches, convinced or unconvinced. *Roma locuta est — Delenda Carthago.*—the Carthage of the Dominican conscience.

How strange are the activities and the restlessness of the mind of Benedetto? The mere sight of the Dominican, and the repetition of the ejaculation: « Salve Regina! » brings up from the grave of forgetfulness in which only too willingly he would leave buried all such ghostly memories, the long and bitter strife between the Franciscan and Dominican Orders, school against school, in regard to the Immaculate Conception:—irresistably there comes before him the solemn contest and the equally solemn protest of historic antiquity. — How much more valid did the comfort and certitude that came to his soul from the authority of antiquity, seem to have been in moments of wonder and questioning, in days gone by, when his mind only spied out for a traditional faith; and he was so content. But now, here in this land everything reminds him, and in a thousand ways, that mere antiquity is but a poor, unmeaning and insufficient proof of controverted matters. Here, he is reminded that the immorality of the Popes of Rome, though of the olden past, gives no countenance to

flagrant impurity of life; nor does the antiquity of the development of heresy and schism, almost coeval with the Christian Church itself, give sanction to either schismatic or heretic. And yet, he had often stifled conscience and stilled the voice of reason, trusting, oh how fully, to the vaunted authority of mere antiquity. Every now and then something came cropping up, and as by the electric search-light flashed o'er the ages of the past, he saw:—only an antiquity of contrast and conflict, a ceaseless war of opinion battling with opinion, of truth wrestling with error, of superstition like a parasite growing up around the pure and simple faith, like tares amidst the wheat.

Gathering in his scattered thoughts he tries to centre them on the preacher who, intensely earnest, tells of human sin, and guilt, and danger.

"All are sinners, — sinners guilty before God and Man,—condemned by reason, by conscience, by the noblest intuitions of the soul.—Condemned by self, man's inner in self, condemned by society,—hunted down to despair, to death and hell by the consciousness of *sin*,—of evil that is its very self the worm that dieth not;—by the consciousness of having dragged down into the hottest flames of purgatory, it may be to the deeper, eternal flames of hell, by transgression, or by neglect, even the souls of those most dear. All helpless, though redeemed by Christ!—all hopeless, all undone—all beneath the ban of heaven!"

No word, no message of Jesus, « the Prince, the

Saviour, « exalted to the right hand of God to give repentance and remission of sin ; » no mention of the Blessed Spirit, whose office it is to « convince the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment! »

All is depicted as darkness, save as the lurid light of penal fire and flame glares here and there within the soul upon a lost life,—a life of thoughtlessness, and evil influence and neglect! All is silent, save as the sound of weeping, and wailing and gnashing of teeth seems heard afar. It seems as though the inscription Dante saw glaring over the portals of a lost eternity were fire-written over each arch and vault of the great Cathedral, and blazoned over each and every human life. Lost — all Lost! **LOST! ALL LOST!** God is an avenging God! Jesus, the Saviour is so far — so very far away. He holds no longer the sceptre of mercy. His throne is the throne of Judgment!.....

And the monk sat down to rest,—to wipe away the perspiration from his face with the proverbial coloured handkerchief the monk always uses.

Then a group of women dressed in black, the black lace veil modestly covering their head and almost coquettishly hiding the tresses of their hair, and the lineaments of their face,—all trained to do the penitential weeping and wailing,—began to moan, and cry, and wipe their tearless eyes, with admirable mechanical order. They have done it all so often they

seem to be in the throes and very bitterness of death. You feel the sermon all so true of the gospel from which is blotted out the gracious words: « He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast him out. » « He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him. » « There is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved. »

The Dominican Father, rose to announce the collection, and to ask the prayers of the faithful for some special object, « *according to the intention of the preacher.* » It may be some seditious, political design you pray for; it may be for some poor lost soul on earth; or for some other amidst the pains of purgatory; or it may be for a double portion of Peter's pence to be contributed; or for His Holiness the Pope himself, that is: for his liberation from so cruel imprisonment in the Vatican dungeon; and from the tyranny of the National government. And the thousands present repeat with a celerity impossible to untrained folk like us: a Paternoster;—and for every prayer to God, ten Avemarias to the Virgin. They pray,—for what? They know not what.

A statue of the Virgin, the Rosary Queen, is borne forward and placed by the side of the pulpit or dais on which the preacher stands; sometimes it hides the Crucifix, for that is hardly needed now there is Mary; all that the crucifix could mean is there in Mary. The Crucified has given over into

the hands of Mary all, she is the Queen,—the Throne of Mercy!

And still the people keep on muttering: Pater noster.....; and again ten times over and over again: *Ave* Maria,..... *Ave* Maria,..... *Ave* Maria.....

Once more the Dominican rises and raises his fine and manly form to its full height. His eye sweeps round and over the densely packed multitude of people. His strong, rich voice fills the whole church, it rolls out clear and full:

"Lost! yes, lost! All lost! Yes, all lost — for ever lost! — NO!"

Then pointing to the Virgin, a statue life-sized and dressed in all the regal magnificence of a Queen, her crown sparkling as with the stars of heaven, he cried:

Behold the Queen of Mercy! The Queen of Heaven!" "Then bowing down to the image: "Since the great Virgin Mary was raised to the dignity of Mother of the King of kings, the Church justly honours her, and commands that she be honoured as a Queen. "* Una est Mariæ et Christi caro." "Then we ought to regard the glory of the royalty which the Mother and the Son enjoy, not only as common to them both, but as divine. Being appointed Queen, she justly possesses the entire kingdom of her Son. Therefore as many creatures as serve God, also serve Mary, and since all creatures, angels, men and**

all things in heaven and earth are subject to the empire of God, they also are subject to the dominion of the Glorious Virgin! Thus she is Queen of Providence.

Hail! Queen of Mercy, to thee power and royalty are due as Spouse and Mother of the King!

Turn every soul to the fair Queen of Mercy! "The Lord hath divided his kingdom:—justice,—mercy: The kingdom of justice he hath reserved to himself, and the kingdom of mercy he has given to Mary; ordaining, that all the mercy that he concedes to man should pass through her hands and be dispensed as she pleases.

Hear, then, ye weeping souls!—hear, ye fearful ones, ye that are hopeless: Behold the Queen of mercy, the fount of pity! — Pray, as did the poor lost soul that came from the fiery realms of purgatory. She appeared to the Augustine sister Catherine, who had known her only as a lost, abandoned woman, driven away by the inhabitants to live in a cave outside the town, where she died, abandoned by all, and without the last sacraments, and was buried like a brute beast in the field: She turned to the Mother of God in her despair, and just as she breathed her very last, she prayed: O Lady, thou art the refuge of the abandoned, thou art my only hope; thou art able to save me; have pity on me. That spectre from the realms of Purgatory said: I died—but I am saved, saved through the clemency of Mary.

This glorious Queen — this Queen of Mercy—is the Mother of us all. She became the Mother of our souls "when she merited to conceive the Son of God in her virginal womb."

A pang of horror thrilled the soul of Padre Benedetto as he listened. He felt that the miraculous Conception of Jesus ought not to be attributed to the merit of Mary; — « a body hast THOU prepared for me! » seemed whispered into his ear. Then came a mysterious voice, an echo speaking: « The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. » The Miracle, as indeed a miracle, must then have been wrought in Mary, not by Mary. So did it disturb the soul of Benedetto that he, allowing his thoughts to wander, missed the connection; but he caught these words:

" Trust in Her who by participation with her Son sees every thing, and can do everything, and willeth all things. „ " She who was the co-worker of eternal salvation, inasmuch as she was able to generate and give to the world, the Saviour who came to redeem the human race and to transfuse into him that blood which was the price of redemption and salvation. „

Benedetto would rather not have listened — it seemed even to him so coarse, so barbarous a way of putting what he felt it would be a sin to doubt, if stated more delicately.

Then he was attracted by a sudden change in the cadence of the preacher's voice.

" We were begotten-again in Mary when with such heartfelt sorrow on Calvary, she offered to the Eternal Father, the life of her beloved Son for our Salvation. It

is true that in dying for the redemption of the human race, Jesus wished to be alone: 'I have trodden the winepress alone.' Isaiah LXIII 3. But, seeing the great desire of Mary to be employed in the salvation of mankind, he ordained that she should co-operate to our salvation by the sacrifice and oblation of his life, and that thus she should become the mother of our souls. „

"Did not Saint Bonaventura say," he continued, " that " Mary loved us so as to give her Only-begotton Son for us? Yes—She gave him,—when she gave him permission to die — She gave him a thousand and a thousand times, at the foot of the cross, during the three hours *she assisted at the death of her Son.* „

Isaiah foretold that God would prepare for the sinful a throne of mercy: "In mercy shall the throne be established.„ Isaiah XVI 5. St. Bonaventura says: " this throne is Mary, in whom all, the just and the sinful, find the consolations of mercy. „

Father Justin writes: " a single sigh from the Blessed Virgin can effect more thau the united suffrages of all the Saints. " This, the devil himself, compelled by St. Dominic, confessed by a man who was possessed. „

St. Antonine says, that God has placed the whole church not only under the patronage, but also under the dominion of Mary. „

" Ah! well may the Church teach her children to say: To thee do we come, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears — Well may humanity turn to Her and cry *Spes nostra, salvé!* That impious Luther used to say he could not bear to hear the Church of Rome call Mary, our

Only Hope—according to the words of Jeremiah XVII. 5. 'Cursed be the man that trusteth in man'. But if she redeems, — if all mercy is dispensed by her hands, — we with St. Bernard, ought to proclaim her, the only ground of our hope *Hæc maxima mea fiducia, hæc tota ratio spes mea.* „

" Then she is Queen of Purgatory. St. Denis, the Carthusian, says that at Easter and Christmas Mary descends into purgatory, accompanied by legions of angels, and delivers many souls from their pains. Who has not heard of the promise made by the Virgin to Pope John XXII, to whom she appeared and said that the pains of those who wore the scapular of the Madonna of Mount Carmel, and died in a state of grace, would be mitigated the first Saturday after death. The same Pope reiterates this in a bull confirmed by Popes Alexander V, Clement VIII, Pius V, Gregory XIII, and Paul V. „

" Mary was assumed to heaven, the Angels rejoiced, and with hymns of praise blessed the Lord! „

" Then she is Queen of Heaven.—Oh! faithful souls! How often do you repeat it in the Rosary! „

Listen to the words of our present Pope in his encyclical addressed to all the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops of the Catholic world. He commands that the month of October be " *dedicated and consecrated to the Heavenly Rosary Queen*: — he recalls her title the " Arbitress of victory in war, she who triumphs—she who has power and authority to destroy all heresies. „

As Queen she reigns—as Queen she triumphs. None of you are ignorant, O Venerable Brethren, what distress

and mourning were brought upon the Church of God toward the end of the twelfth century by those heretics the Albigenses, who were the offspring of the Manichean heresy; how they filled with their pernicious errors the southern parts of France, and the other parts of the Latin world, carrying everywhere the terror of war, desiring to establish, near and afar, their tyranny of evil, by fire and sword. „

"Against these cruel enemies, God raised up that most holy man, the illustrious Father, the Founder of our Dominican Order, who went forth to fight courageously for the Church; and you know how the sword drawn from its scabbard by the Catholics, unsheathed for Mary the Queen of Victories, brought down the pride and the power of the heretics, and drowned as in a sea of blood this horrible revolt against the Church and heaven! It was the Madonna of the Rosary, as she went forth to war, who won that terrible victory. Hail glorious, conquering, Queen! We know not how St. Bernard of Chiaravalle could describe these heretics as Christians in their belief; or Claude, Bishop of Turin, say of them: "in their life they are perfect and unreprovable, blameless amongst men and fully dedicated to the service of God„ — "they were heretics. Rome, they proudly said had taken away from them the Word of God; — they dared to say in their pride and obstinacy that Christ was hidden beneath a multitude of novelties and superstitions; they wanted Christ as he is known in the gospels. They denied the intercession of the Saints and the Madonnas, Purgatory and other holy doctrines. They were the enemies of the Church;

if not, why should the Virgin have brought upon them those fearful massacres? Oh great was the triumph of this Madonna — the heretics were cut to pieces, they were burnt to death, their villages and cities were ravaged and destroyed. And the victory over the Turks at Lepanto, was it not the Victory of the Madonna of the Rosary? And the Massacre of the Huguenots?—and St. Bartholemew, was that not a victory of the Madonna of the Rosary?„

"We cannot wonder that our Lord the Pope, the venerable Leo XIII, should in his Encyclical hold up the Rosary as the salvation of society. He writes: *The Rosary is wonderfully potent to cure the wounds of society now, and take away its most grievous woes:* „—and that he should decree that the Feast of the Virgin of the Rosary henceforth be celebrated with special devotion and splendour throughout the whole world.

We will only tell of the very last "glorious„ mystery of the Rosary, in which we meditate how the Most Holy Virgin Mary was *assumed* to heaven, was crowned by her Son Jesus, and now is worshipped, being glorified midst the saints.

See Mary amidst the glory of the saints: see how all the creatures that obey the Holy Trinity obey her—fire and hail, and snow, and ice, and the spirit of the storm; —what must have been the ecstacy of the Angels as she entered heaven?—how she who sits a Queen in heaven is thy mother:—how she is omnipotent:—how wise she is in heaven:—how as Queen of Angels and of the Saints, all grace on earth comes to us through her. Mary the Queen,

crowned by the Son, worshipped by the saints! Queen of Mercy, Queen of War and Arbitress of Peace.

"Why then have we come here today to worship this powerful Madonna? Why have you celebrated her *Festa* with hundreds and hundreds of candles? Why have you brought these beautiful flowers, and your dutiful offerings? Because she is Queen of Heaven, Queen of Earth, Queen of Hell!

Then the preacher knelt:—there was a confused noise of chairs as the whole congregation rose, then as they knelt, he uttered slowly the following brief prayer, the people repeating word by word as he spoke:

"O Mary, Queen of Earth and Heaven and Hell, most sweet Mother, by the agony thou didst endure in taking part in the death of thy Son, save us by thy mercy, deliver us from the pains of death and hell, defend us in the hour of judgment; to Thee we give our heart and soul."

Then kneeling again before the Crucifix,—he repeated his: Salve Regina!. The service was at an end.

* * * * * *

Alas, poor Benedetto, so anxious to be at peace with Holy Mother Church, so desirous to honour the Blessed Virgin, so intensely conscious of the supreme glory of Jesus, so sensitive to the danger and approach of aught like the dishonour of unfair strategy, so versed in the mythologies of Greece and Rome, an antiquarian of varied experience; — His righteous

soul was stirred. He felt the words uttered by the so-called Christian monk about this Queen of Heaven might have been uttered of Diana Tifatina at Capua by any Roman *Sacerdos*. So felt and wrote an English gentleman and author.

« Ah, » said he, as he thought of Hildebrand, may there not rise up in God's great name, and in the cause of truth, another Hildebrand, some Hercules, who may cleanse out the foul augean stable of modern snperstition and give back truth and righteousness to the Church and to the world? The mightiest reformation needed by the Church is to give back to miserable mourning souls—Christ as the only Saviour —mighty to save, — to save to the uttermost. And surely the time is come, thought he, when even a Jesuit Father stuns the world by writing: «that which the church knows the least of is Jesus and him crucified. »

DOGMA — AUTHORITY — EVOLUTION.

BENEDETTO AND ONORIO.

It was the evening of the day after that in which in the Cathedral of Salerno, Benedetto had listened to the Dominican Monk proclaiming to the people Mary as the Queen Saviour of sinners, and the two friends were sauntering together through the woods.

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In returning from Salerno the day before with his friend Padre Onorio, his mind had been overwhelmed with a tumult of varied and conflicting emotions. He could not help but feel that the whole tenor of the flood of oratory to which he had listened swept like a mighty deluge, carrying away on its murky streams all the fences, and dykes and landmarks, God, and god-given men had planted for the preservation and confession of the Truth in the Christian Church and in the world.

If that ideal were truth, then ought the Messianic Psalms to be altered, and the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene, the Athanasian Creed; then must be modified at least the grand old hymn, common to all Churches, which has pealed and down the ages and ages, through all the lands, in every clime, filling with the divine harmony of praise the vastness of arched temples, the echoing song many a of little gathering. The hymn of a myriad hearts. Yes, the Te Deum must be altered too. Did not this show that something, somewhere, must be radically wrong? And he remembered reading, though he did not recollect where, that this had been really done. The very thought was shocking to his mind so trained to creed and formula: and yet you ought not to give all the praise to God and Christ, if Mary has merited so much.

His companion and friend, had been with him at the service:—it was only a sharp, brisk walk of an hour and a half or so from Salerno to La Cava. Benedetto could not refrain from confiding the tumult of his soul to Onorio, whom he expected to be startled by his saying that he felt the flow of thought, and the streams of logical induction, and the tides of evolutionary, psycological force onflowing from the position of the preacher, and necessarily acting and reacting on mind and life, could only be compared to one of those terrible *fiumane*, those mountain torrents, which from the great Neptunian ranges of Sicily, rush

downward to the sea, spreading destruction around and leaving desolation behind; sparing nor forest tree, nor mountain hut; — dry, with an iron drought, in summer; wide and angry like a mighty river which has overflowed its banks, in winter. « So, » said Benedetto, « seemed to me the preacher's message to those immortal souls: dry as the scortching, fiery dearth of sin, and as widespread in its ruin; a mighty tide, bearing away, as tree and rock, and bridge are swept away by the *fiumana*, the mighty foundation truths of faith and religion and morality; and gurgling with a murky glee as it washes off and away the olden landmarks of the Christian faith, and leaving only in their place bare boulders, or the bits of rock broken from off the mountain steeps of spiritual pride. »

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Benedetto passed a wakeful night; a night of troubled, fevered dreams. At one time, a mighty monster had thrown the tangled meshes of a net over and around him; the strands seemed horrid cords; he felt them harsh, like the pressure of unreasoning authority, cruel folly, a ghastly weight of evil antiquity, of impossible belief,—he was struggling to be free: then he awoke. The dream had been suggested by a famous statue he had seen a few days before in a Church at Naples. The figure, the network, the struggle reproduced, were lingering on the retina of his soul.

Then as he dreamt again, the vision was both fair and fairy-like; a lovely, female form, bright with the beauty of a purer world; — now holding in her arms a lovely child; she, the same, as pure as ever, but the Mother now, rich in all the charms of motherhood; strangely those features seemed for a moment to reflect the love and likeness of his own mother's face. Then did he seem to see the selfsame form beneath a lowering cloud of awful darkness, offering up, as on some heathen altar,—as making it to pass through Moloch fires—her own child, a sacrifice. Then as a Queen he saw her. How bright, how beautiful, all the glory of God surrounded her, all the majesty and power of heaven girded her; all,—the sun, the moon, the stars, worshipped her; and angels bowed before her: at her feet, lay cities ransacked fields ravaged, peoples massacred--and on the ocean fleets dispersed and wrecked; the wave covered as with spar, and mast and sail. These were rebels she had destroyed. He was a rebel too, and there were forked lightnings in her hand,—and now she held not lightnings, but a sceptre, and it gleamed with mercy. This was a waking and a happier thought.

He slumbered off again—he was returning to his home; in sight of the white, chalky cliffs of Albion; the stormy channel foaming, fuming,—winds, mighty winds were shouting: «*Albion is Mary's dower!*»

The raving of the storm awoke him. The mountain winds were sighing and moaning midst the pinetrees on the hill; and the babbling of a mountain stream echoed through the valley. But he heard no more amidst the gusts and rustling: Albion is Mary's dower. He was now awake.

Once more he slept and dreamt. He was looking on a statue of the pure and lovely Virgin; men had made it oh! so fair, so kind. It was just like the statue he had seen some days before in the Convent of St. Liguori at Pagani; and which, they said, used to talk with Alfonso in his cell, and sometimes got the Saint into trouble, for she spoke with a female voice and the other monks were jealous. But as he looked it opened and stretched out its arms as though to draw him to its breast; and there, within the breast, were sharp and cruel knives. The glitter of the steel awoke him:—his waking was like the awaking of one just escaped some awful immolation.

Then morning dawned, and he knew the horrid statue was but a broken memory of a romance he had read when still a boy, and when he loved to harrow up his soul by reading of Inquisition tortures; — cord, and rack, and all the rest: and but the other day a friend had told him how he once had seen on the stall at Piazza Francese a crucifix — it opened, the upper part of the cross was a dagger; the lower part the dagger-sheath. Such horrors only

the evil genius of humanity — only satannic cruelty could devise.

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Later on in the day Benedetto and Onorio were walking together in the woods, and the glow of motion, the fresh, blithe, mountain breeze had blown away the blues; and they are discussing the sermon of the monk, and how it seemed to bear down and away, the landmarks and foundations of the Christian faith.

« That is your way of thinking of it, » said Onorio, « It is only natural too;—it is the miserable result of your early studies, and training, and associations; your mind still is stunted, the activities of your imagination fettered, by your olden faith in mere Bible authority, and prisoned in the dry, sterile ideal of the earliest Christian Church. You must liberate yourself from trammels such as these. The authority of the Bible must be merged, yes, even lost in the authority, wider, and more certain, of the church, as you well know, and as I know you seek to do most fully. You are like one of the catechumen of the past ages of the church; though dressed in the candid robe of sincerity, the lighted taper of the catholic faith you hold in hand burns only dim and pale; you only stand in the vestibule of the Christian Temple; you only walk like a little child held up by leading strings. It is only the church that can discover and judicially proclaim the reality and

sphere and meaning of the authority of the Bible; it alone is the safe and magisterial exponent not merely of revealed truth, but of alleged historical teaching. The Bible and History are both judicially in the hands of the Church, and she alone can give sentence in what refers to the one or the other. The downy pillow on which the mind can slumber peacefully, and dream, and rest, and from which the soul rises strong and refreshed, is this authority of the Church: the sweet, sacred slumber-song that lulls us to this rest is the thought that even if we err in thus trusting to the Church, God will not, cannot, lay it to our charge. « Hear the Church, » was the Saviour's command. The very first principle of the Christian life is to deny one's self, *i.e.* what seems our own consciousness of truth, what seems to *us* both right and duty; all else is moral sedition, is proud rebellion against the church, a daring ecclesiastical piracy on the open seas of religion; and all the struggling against the spiritual powers that be, even of the most gigantic minds, against the Pope, 'the other Christ', the 'Christ on earth', is but a Titan war against the Father of of the gods, the God of gods; a war as hopeless, and as much high-treason against heaven. »

« My mind would fain find rest in the calm haven of this authority, » replied Benedetto, « But the more earnestly I pursue the « Church, » like a phantasm, like an *ignis fatuus* it recedes before me. « I would

seek it still, but where is this Church? I am in its very midst, within its walls, defended by its towers; my home, the convent; my companions, all priests and levites of Holy Mother Church; so graciously near me is our superior, himself a mitred Abbot; around me, a crowd of Priests, Bishops, Archbishops, Cardinals; all kind friends, genial companions, and good helpers too, but not one of all, not all together are they the church; they are so different in their mental constitution:—some literary, some philosophic, some administrative, some courtiers, some rough and rude, some devotional; some, nothing but religious machines; some chaste; others cautious, if not chaste; some, men of the world and fashion; some vain and empty place-seekers, place-getters; and some..... I would not like to say what. But neither each, nor all, give me the church. Personal opinions they can offer, but their opinions are not the authoritative utterance of the Church. I knew all this before I made the great sacrifice of self-renunciation to ecclesiastical authority. Friends had told me of the Councils. — I had studied them, and found how difficult it was to be sure which Councils are be to recognized as general and authoritative.—Council against Council; Council excommunicating Council, and reversing the decrees of former Councils; — this I found. Just as I found Popes excommunicating other Popes, Popes heretical, simoniacal, adulterous Popes. All this I found

whilst yet a priest of Protestantism; yet still. though I could not hope to rest my soul on the authority of either Council or Pope, I thought, I felt, the authority I longed to find could be, must be, only in the Church and Pope, as the *Syllabus* defines. »

« Well then, my answer to your judgment of the sermon, is not difficult, » was Onorio's quick reply, « Every phrase the preacher uttered was but an equivalent to phrases written by Saints canonized by the church, by the Pope; and whose writings have been examined and declared by the church free from every shadow of error. If you admit the infallible authority of the Pope, in matters of faith and morals, then you must admit that the preacher, in quoting the words of St. Bonaventura, and St. Alphonso dei Liguori, Saint and Doctor of the Universal Church, spoke with the authority of the Church. »

«It is folly for you to say, such and such a statement has not been declared *dogma;* the authority of the church not merely gives validity to dogma, but covers with the mantle of its infallibility the teachings of all whom it has canonized as Doctors of the Universal Church. That is why the church is so chary of canonizing Doctors. I cannot tell you how many new Saints have been canonized since the tremendous cataclysm of the so called Reformation, hundreds and hundreds; Japanese Martyrs, French Saints, and Italian great men, and nonentities of every

land, but only three have been canonized Doctors:—St. Philip Neri, St. Alphonso dei Liguori, and another, I forget who. When I hear what you hear, when I am tempted to feel what you feel; I put my thoughts, my convictions, my reason, my imaginings, away: I do not calculate by the metre and centimetre of my own conception; I ask myself only is it sanctioned by the church? If so, enough for me. Why, if we could only preach the exact quantum of truth contained in «*dogma*,» there would be precious little left, practically nothing at all left, to preach;—at least of the worship of the Madonna, of the adoration of the saints and angels: purgatory, though we might say it existed, would have indeed vanished into the world of shades, the Unseen, the Unknown; we should be driven for very lack of subjects to bring out of the treasury the old things, forgotten, laid aside for ages,—the nature, attributes and works of God; the Incarnate Christ, his life, his parables, his miracles; old things, worn out and laid aside as things meagre and unfruitful, the nude cross and passion, and the resurrection of the Lord: so old, so laid aside, so superseded now, that people know but little of them. Why if there were nothing authoritative but mere dogma, where would go our whole system of jubilee and pilgrimage?—our legendary Sanctuaries of world-wide fame, like *Loreto*, or *La Salette*, or *Lourdes*, or *Monte Vergine*; the whole net-work of the

system would be broken. But now that it is defined that what the Pope says *ex-cathedra* is the infallible utterance of the Church, the whole fabric is complete, and we have the divine unity of an authoritative church, the exponent of faith and morals. What then the sainted Doctors of the Church teach, is, by the infallible authority of the Church, declared to be the truth; Saint and Madonna worship has a firm foundation; and another step is taken toward the proclamation of the Individual Infallibility and Temporal Power of the Popes. This inseparable connection of the worship of the Virgin and devotion to the Vicar of Christ was boldly avowed in the Marian Congress held this very year in Florence. »

« And until the Pope was declared infallible when giving sentence in matters of faith and morals, *ex-cathedra*, where was the authority of the Church ? » — asked Benedetto.

« You and I have to do with the present » answered Onorio. « Take to your heart the impression of what you have heard in the Cathedral as the authoritative expression of the church's teaching. You say the ideal of Mary as preached by the Dominican was so exaggerated as that the person of Mary was in conflict with dogmatic teaching in her regard. That the Creature was pratically presented to the congregation of the faithful as an object of worship on a par with the Creator of the world, like the Triune Redeeming

Deity : and yet you acknowledge, that every passage in his discourse has its parallel in the teaching of the Saintly Doctors of the Church. Be assured the paradox cannot, does not, exist ; their teaching is infallible, as the infallibility of Rome. You say the Providential rule of Mary, her Mediatorial reign as Queen of Heaven, and her motherly command over her Son, projected into her glorious, heavenly mediatorial life appears to you to be a negation of the dogmas of the Church, and of the many scriptural passages which shew that even here on earth Jesus himself limited her command to the mother's sphere at home, and to the ordinary human matters in which a mother has a right to control and to direct; you quote the account of the lost youth found with the Doctors in the Temple. «Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business.» * * * * «Woman what have I to do with thee?» — at the marriage feast in Cana. * * * * The «who is my mother? and who are my brethren? and he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said : Behold my mother and my brethren.» * * * * «Blessed in the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. Jesus answered: yea rather, more blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.»—You think all these and other passages distinguish between mere maternal authority, and

any maternal authority and command in the things that pertained to her son's divine and mediatorial ministry. That it was his to say despite his mother's prayer: « Mine hour is not yet come: »

« I can conceive on earth a mother's intercession but only within the sphere of a mother's life, — not where Christ rebuked it: and then it seems projected into the heaven of heavens, and so as to annul or supersede all other authority. Recollect, Onorio, the Assumption of Mary to this Command in heaven is not yet a dogma of the Church. »

« You say the fellowship of suffering implying co-redemption seems a paradox, a contradiction to the church's dogma of Redemption. But here again every word the Dominican uttered has its counterpart in the words used by Liguori. »—Replied Onorio. « The Church, then ex plains its dogma, and authority shews the colouring to be true. »

« If it were not for this consciousness that authority covers apparent folly and contradiction how can you imagine it possible for one of the most celebrated ecclesiastical writers of the present time to give to the light effusions such as this: « One day Father Volpicelli, who had found him, » (St. Alfonso dei Liguori) « overwhelmed with scruples and temptations, all at once saw his body rise several feet from the ground and remain suspended in the air! » Another time Father Tannoia saw him whilst celebrating mass go up

in the air, as light as a feather, again and again, and yet he was in such bad health that he could not move without the help of two persons. Again,--he tells how St. Liguori had been transfigured in the pulpit whilst preaching. How he had been seen in two places at one and the same time.» How could one of the highest dignitaries of the Church, a prince of the Church, a man who aspires to the highest literary as well as ecclesiastical position, publish foolish stories like that and yet expect people to believe in his gravity and honour, if he did not rely entirely on covering all with the mantle of a sacerdotal authority that must not be questioned?» He writes: «In the last three years of his life these ecstacies and upliftings were of almost daily occurrence. A poor fellow, a priest, Father Mongillo, broke his leg, he plastered it with a picture of the Madonna St. Liguori had sent him, saying: «Blessed Mary, heal me for the merits of Monsignor Liguori:» the broken leg was instantly well, perfectly well and strong. A young lady, he says, wrote to Liguori; she was suffering from an incurable wound in her leg; he sent her a picture—the Madonna, the «Full of grace.» The picture was applied. The running sore was healed: —only,—it broke out again,—and so Theresa died. If miracles like these can satisfy the Church and form the *raison d'etre* of the canonization of a Saint surely they are good enough for the Pulpit and the Press.»

Don't laugh, don't think it folly, if I tell you that it is this that sanctions speaking of things and telling stories with a calm and serious face which otherwise would seem like the ravings of a madman. What the church has authorized can neither be a paradox, nor a contradiction, nor a folly. The Dominican told that story of the Spirit who appeared to Sister Catherine from the fire flames of Purgatory, St. Liguori tells it, as he tells of the bird on which the hawk came swooping down, to pounce upon it and kill it, when it spoke out and said: *Ave Maria*, and the hawk fell dead to earth: or as he tells of the head severed from the body that prayed to be allowed to confess; or any, or all, the whole library of marvels of the saints, and of the weeping Madonnas, or bleeding Crucifixes, or the like:—Stories one would hardly like to tell in private conversation, for the people would think the speaker must be either a madman or a fool! But the authority of the Church covers all; and from the pulpit one can tell ghost stories, and recount mongrel miracles, without a qualm, without a blush, — the church's authority covers all. »

« Padre Onorio, » said Benedetto, « did you never reflect if intellect, reason, common sense see that ecclesiastical authority gives forth such enormities as the transformation of the human into the divine, the Creature into the Goddess, the true into what is openly false, wisdom and purity into unwisdom and

unholiness, though it may be possible the human mind may give the semblance of an outward acquiescence, may vest itself in the garb of a false, hypocritical assent, — that the inward soul, invincible by any force of a mere outward authority, will rebel, and resist, and do battle to the very death, fighting against the tyranny of an authority which has lost its intellectual prestige and its moral power. All the bloody records of the Inquisition, all the chronicles of saintly massacres, all the tragedies of the so-called religious wars, but show up this; you cannot force, you cannot crush, you cannot slay the mind; no, no more than you can wash out from memory's page the hour, the deed of guilt, of shame —There is a « *cannot* » which is the heritage of the mind as well the « *I will* » — or « *I will not.* » You read English—do you know these lines, they charmed me when a boy?

Free is the eagle's wing
  As it cleaves the sun's warm ray;
And free is the mountain spring
  As it leaps to the light of day;
But the mind let none dare chain,
  Priceless its liberty!
No hand must dare to bind —
  God made it to be free.

You may fetter the eagle's wing
  No more through the clouds to soar,
You may seal the mountain spring
  That it leap to the light no more;

But the mind let none dare chain,
  Better it cease to be; —
Born not to serve but reign, —
  God made it to be free.

Free is the summer breeze
  Floating from airy height;
Free is the rolling sea
  And free is heaven's golden light:
But freer than light, or air,
  Or the ever-rolling sea,
Is the mind beyond compare —
  God made it to be free!

Guard well this gift divine
  Than jewels or gems more rare!
Keep watch o'er the sacred shrine,
  No foe must enter there.
Oh! let not error bind,
  Or passion rule o'er thee,
Keep the freedom of the mind! —
  God made it to be free!

The mind cannot sincerely bow down to an authority which hast lost the sanctions of truth and righteousness.—*It cannot.* There is a higher, more absolute law than that of mere unreasoning acquiescence,—of mere blind, unquestioning obedience; it is grounded in the very nature of things; it is the law of truth and righteousness; indeed authority is but a means, a discipline. — If the church means authority and obedience; the truth means God and love. The authority that unclothes itself of truth and love gives up God,

loses its every sanction, renounces its very hold upon the human soul; — it loses God. It is the negation of its very self. It is authority that is not authority.

Either then the Church's authority must carry with it the sanctions of truth, righteousness and love, or it will surely be the death of intellect, of conscience, of every generous, noble sentiment, of all moral life, and this Valley of Tears will become more and more terribly the Valley of the Dead; the Valley of dry bones:—or there will be rupture and schism;—let the witnesses be the still-continuing separation between the Greek and Latin Churches, and the ever-widening division between the Protestant and Catholic communities.»

«But,» said Father Onorio, «May not this seeming contrast between the simplicity of the primitive faith and the present belief and worship of tbe Catholic Church and world, be the result of the *development of truth*—may we not see as a conflict between truth and error what the Church sanctions only as an *evolution of doctrine?* Indeed the scientific world finds evolution in everything; in nature; in the historic revolutions of Providential government; even in the Redemption of the world. There are the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, the Christian economies, each an evolution. Even in the history of Christian doctrine is there not such a development of truth as to mark evolution? — take the Saviour's Sermon on the Mount

and the Parable of the Prodigal Son; and then think of the letters of St. Paul, of the doctrine of justification. « When he, the Spirit of Truth is come he shall lead you into all truth. » Is this evolution not in harmony with the words of Jesus: « He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father. ? »

« I know the Church asserts that it is entrusted with this evolution of truth, » replied Benedetto, « and that it thus explains the contrast between the past and present. »

« But the evolution of truth must come forth in harmony with the laws of the God of truth — truth can only beget truth. — Prophecy is sealed. There can be no adding to, or taking from, the truth; the brand of heaven marks this: *accursed*; « though it be an Apostle, or an Angel from heaven, that preaches another gospel, another truth—*Let him be accursed*, » Yes—there is the evolution of the seed into the blade, the ear, the full, ripe, golden corn. The evolution of life into life; — life after its own kind! But you cannot evolve deity out of the mere creature, nor communion of passion out of the absolute and divine lone Oneness of Atonement; nor a pleiades of intercessors out of the One Mediator; nor a duality of empire out of the One Resurrection and Sovreign Throne of Jesus. How can the change of the simple

Virgin Mother into a Rosary Queen mean evolution — seems it not the growth of a myth, with every indication of mythic accretion? The tremendous question then remains—« is the Mary, Queen of Heaven, co-redemptress, the Mary of the Rosary, the evolution of a historical original, or is she the mythic creation of ages of superstition and blind devotion?» Benedetto continued:

« The church says the former. Do not history and tradition show the mysterious, constant growth of a Myth? Can we not trace the process of this mythic development? Can I not be a true Catholic, holding the dogma of the Church in regard to Mary, and yet retaining my conviction of the ideal of the Blessed Virgin, according to the Gospel history and sane tradition? »

« Theoretically you can, practically you cannot, » said Onorio. «Did you not hear the preacher cite the command of our Holy Father to celebrate the Rosary with special solemnity during this month, commending it as the panacea for all social evils? By the Syllabus He is infallible when He speaks of faith and morals to the world. He speaks infallibly by this encyclical. It is ours to listen and obey. »

Well, our walk is at an end. Here are we at our convent home. *A rivederci* later on — and each passed to his own cell.

ALONE IN HIS CELL.

The day is nearly over. The evening come. Benedetto is seated at a table in his cell.—Alone with his troubled self.—Alone with God. On the table at which he is seated, beneath the pale and flickering light, that half illuminates the little room, there lie open two books, one of which he has been reading. It is a volume of Church History by a German author, valued in the world of letters. He does not forget that the church must be its interpreter to him.

His eye had fallen on a page where he had read the record of an ancient perversity, disowned, condemned even by the Church. His mind had been led out into the mazes of apocryphal tradition.

All he had read only deepened the impression of the contrast and conflict between the testimony of early history and the practice of the present day.

He had been reading how the early as well as

the more modern Fathers and Saints of the Church protested solemnly and mightily against the invasion of saint and image worship.

Some of the Christian Fathers, for example Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen, he read, carried their opposition so far as to teach that Scripture forbids the practice of both statuary and painting.

He had noticed a remarkable letter from Epiphanius to John of Jerusalem, in which the former says: « Having entered into a church in a village of Palestine named Anablarha, I found there a veil which was suspended at the door, and painted with a representation of Jesus Christ, or of some saint, for I do not recollect whose image it was; but seeing that, in opposition to the authority of scripture, there was a human image in the church of Jesus Christ, I tore it in pieces, and gave orders to those who had the care of the church, to bury the corpse with the veil. » At the end, then, of the fourth century it was regarded as unscriptural and unlawful to permit images in the churches.

He saw that Epiphanius, writing against the Heretics, says: « Let Mary be had in honour, but let the Father, Son and Holy Ghost be worshipped. Let no man worship Mary. »

Then, the early Christian Church did not know, —most certainly did not approve,—the adoration of Mary. As the issue of the prevailing ascetic spirit

extravagant opinions afterwards began to be entertained of the merit of virginity; and Mary was venerated as the ideal of chastity and the celibate life. Not till the end of the fourth century was the Virgin-Mother regarded as and called the Mother of God.

Benedetto read of one of the first appearances of the idolatrous worship of the Virgin, amongst a small sect of women who came from Thrace and settled in Arabia. They, from an absurd veneration of the Virgin Mary, met once a year to celebrate a solemn feast, rendering to her divine honours on a set day consecrated to her as a Festival; they carried about in chariots, similar to those which the pagans used in their processions, cakes or wafers dedicated to Mary, which they first presented to her as to a heathen goddess,—and then they ate the cakes.

They asserted that the Virgin ought to be worshipped and appeased with libations, sacrifices and offerings of these little cakes or wafers. They looked upon themselves, indeed, as Priestesses of Mary.

Some had conjectured that this practice was a transfer of the oblations of the Lord's Supper to the worship of the Virgin; the whole taking the shape of a pagan ceremony: probably it was a corruption introduced from the worship of Ceres, and that the customary bread offerings of the heathen Harvest Festival in honour of Ceres, the *Thesmophoria*, had been simply changed into offerings in honour of Mary.

Others again suppose the Collyridians to have been heathen converts, who while pagans had been accustomed to bake and present certain little cakes called collyrides, and who, though they had become Christians, thought that this honour might be rightly shown to Mary. That all this was but a confusion of paganism with Christianity anyone acquainted with the heathen worship of Assyria and Egypt, even as recorded in the Sacred Scriptures cannot but feel.

Of course this adoration of the Virgin, which was but the paganizing of Christianity, and before which the simplicity and spirituality of the Church declined, Bcnedetto knew had been met by the strenuous opposition of true hearts and generous souls. It was a mighty struggle from the ideal standpoint, as well as on the field of actual, practical life. In this long struggle the excessive veneration of Mary prevailed.

He had seen that not until the fourth century were images of the Virgin holding the infant Jesus in her arms admitted to the churches;—but once introduced, this image worship of Mary spread like wild fire, and the Virgin became the most conspicuous object of worship in the Christianity both of the East and of the West.

Toward the close of the tenth century, the custom became prevalent amongst the Latins of celebrating masses, and of abstaining from flesh, on the Saturdays in honour of Mary.

Then came into use the «*Office of St. Mary*,» then «*the Rosary*,» fifteen Paternosters and one hundred and fifty salutations of Mary; the «*Crown of Mary*,» six or seven repetitions of the Lord's Prayer and sixty or seventy salutations of the Virgin. By the Oriental Church Mary is worshipped as the *Panagia*, the *All-Holy*. *The Breviary*, of which he, as a priest, must read a portion every day under pain of mortal sin, is a sort of Gospel of the Virgin: he who is on the verge of eternal ruin, the abyss of despair, must turn to Mary, must think of Mary, must invoke Mary as the Saviour! Whatever subtle and deceptive distinction may be used by Romish Theologians to cover the grossness of the idolatry of Saint, and Madonna—(*Latria—Hyperdulia—Dulia*, and the like,)—and to parry the sharper than rapier-thrust of the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God,—he felt he could not deny that Roman Catholic literature, the Rituals of the Church, books of devotions, and even perversions of the Sacred Scriptures, as well as the official teaching of Saints and Doctors of the church, uplift Mary as divine,—as the all-pure ideal of the perfectness, the tenderness the loveliness of human nature; more tender, more compassionate, more perfect than Christ Jesus himself: for until there is found wanting in Christ something, somewhat,—why look for it in the Madonna?

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The other book that lay near to Benedetto was a copy of the Bible, the Vulgate, which bore the imprint of *Nicolaum Pezzana*, and had been printed in Venice, in 1720. He loved this copy not so much because it was old, as because it was illustrated with quaint old pictures, he never tired of looking at. His spiritual director had not absolutely forbidden him its use, but had warned him it would be better for his peace of mind if he would only let it be. It was precious to him. It was the word of God. The worst of all was, that his spiritual directors if they did not dare to show the red-light,—« Danger, » as they generally do, and forbid the use of the Bible altogether, (that might have broken the last sheet-anchor by which they held him and it would not do to lose the scion of a noble and ancient family such as his,) still they were always turning on the green-light — « Caution » — until he felt there must be something perilous, very dangerous, in it, and whenever he read it there came the consciousness that now he must search out and believe only the church's interpretation of its meaning. He must not accept any interpretation save with the common consent of the Fathers; but as he knew that this consentaneous opinion cannot be found in regard to any one given chapter, he painfully felt it to be like an absolute prohibition to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the teaching and revelation of God.

He felt like the Irish labourer, to whom his friends had given what they called, « a *ride* in a sedan-chair,» but having playfully taken out the seat and walked him all about the town until he was fagged to death, he stopped them, and got out. « How did you like the ride ? » — asked his jocular companions. « Och ! » said Paddy, with the splendid power of Irish repartee : « if it were not for the name of the thing I'd just as soon walk. »

The tendency was to make him regard the Word of God, as the detective looks on the '*suspect*', to read was a weariness to the flesh ; he was doing the fag-work of the church ; indeed he sometimes was tempted to say : — all this weary fagging is in vain, — the Church has all the truth : the Bible has done its work in giving to the world the Church :— the Bible is useless now ; nay, worse than useless, dangerous ; for it seems apparently to contradict and invalidate the Church. This was the design and drift of all the discipline of the Church. It was producing its effect. The Bible was not forbidden. They could tell England so. Yet its authority was annulled.

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Before Benedetto's mind floated the scenic representation of Mary, enthroned and worshipped as the Queen of Heaven, putting to rout all his attempts to syllogize a logical explanation in defence ; the gaudy, life-sized image of the Virgin bedecked with

golden ornaments, with the brilliant circlet of glittering stars, the clouds of incense that floated up in wreaths around her seemed to haunt him ever. He felt that the form, the figure, the silken robes, the earthly trousseau of the heavenly Bride, held captive every imaginative and spiritual faculty. — The ideal of the Madonna lay beyond, away — It was not her purity and humility and devotion that he saw; it was *an image, a sightless*, a *lifeless* statue, the silken folds of her Queenly robes, gold, silver and bright gems that he saw. He opened his copy of the Vulgate: —

He read in the forty-fourth chapter of Jeremiah the terrible, deadly, fatal sin of Judah, — its shameless Idolatry and guilt,—and the most terrible consequences there threatened. He read of the manifestations of that sin: burning incense to the *Queen of Heaven*, the divine Astarte. He heard the voice of the multitude of Judah who reject the warning of the prophet and who reply to him: »

As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee, but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings our princes in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. » *Jer. XLIV. 16. 17.*

« *We burned incense to the Queen of Heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, we did make her cakes to worship her.* » *Jeremiah XLIV. 19.*

As Judah, then, had followed the Idolatry of Egypt, burnt incense, made sacrifice, the women offering cakes in adoration of the Queen of Heaven, so had the Collyridian Priestesses of the Virgin been led away by the prevailing heathenism; and so now, he saw churches, homes, whole cities, all the country, shadowed by a cloud of incense,—all, all prostrate before the beauteous, but fatal idol, the New Queen of Heaven, worshipped as divine, adored as the Mother of God. How terrible sounded the awful maledictions falling on the idolatrous hearts and homes and land: «Behold I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord:» «*Behold I will watch over them for evil and not for good.*» Jeremiah XLIV 26. 27.—Sword,—famine,—the end of all.

Burning incense to the Queen of Heaven of old was idolatry. In every Cathedral and Church, incense is burnt to the New Queen of Heaven. Was it really idolatry? He remembered how he had been tutored when a neophyte: A learned priest had reasoned with him thus: the Protestants accuse us Catholics of Idolatry, and of sanctioning profane rites, because heathen temples were converted into Christian Churches and dedicated to Christian Saints and Martyrs; because heathen solemnities have given place to Christian festivals; heathen Bacchanals to Christian ceremonies; whilst sacrifices to the infernal gods, and the immodest rites and polluted heathen Mysteries

have been supplanted by the veneration of the Holy Virgin and the celebration of the Festas of Saints and Martyrs and Angels.

Benedetto's conscience now found voice and said: No! No!—this is not the *gravamen* of the charge made by the hundred and fifty or two hundred millions of the Protestant world. The displacement of heathen Idolatry he owned to be the unanswerable testimony of the world's great debt of gratitude to the Christian Church. Wherever the Christian Church has passed in her triumphal march all sacrifice has ceased.

The accusation is—that the professing Church as introduced into her worship a real, dire idolatry, that subverts the whole ideal of Christian Redemption.

Most futile and flimsy seemed the subterfuge: idolatry only meant then an image like that of Moloch opening its arms by machinery, and the casting of the beauteous first-born of the land into the huge form and into the furnaces of fire within: or Baal standing on some pinnacle or sacred high place; or Astarte, throned in leafy moonlit grove all surrounded by orgies of indescribable obscenity. Something within him would keep saying: The worship of Mary is the worship of the *creature*; the worship of her images or pictures is idolatry; it brings the curse of God and the demoralization of the heart, the home, the land.

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God spoke to the soul of that seeker after truth and rest, as he sat there in his cell : there came love's revelation spoken to his mind and heart. Gradually, like a light diffusing itself through all his soul he felt a resistless consciousness that to yield to the authority of the Church might not be to understand the mind and heart of God ; but to run counter to his will and to transgress his ways. That in abandoning the old, simple, reliance of the soul on the teaching and guidance of the Most Blessed Spirit and Word of God, he had sought to walk by sight, trusting in ecclesiastical direction, and that this had led him out into the cruel cold and trembling of a thousand uncertainties unknown to him before.

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He seemed to hear a wild yet plaintive voice, like the word of some weird prophet of the days of yore; was it indeed a voice, or was it the throbbing of his own heart he heard ? That voice whence came it ? Did it come from the image of the Crucified that stood there so near, as a remembrancer of the divine passion of Eternal Love ! It was all still— or only, ever, seemed to say : « I suffered this for thee. » Could it ,—no it could not,—have come forth from that little Book lying beside his Breviary at the foot of the Crucifix ,—that was the « Office » of the Blessed Virgin Mary ; from that one only voice

seemed ever chanting to the Queen of Heaven :

Ave, Regina cœlorum,
Ave, Domina Angelorum.

No ! it was a voice, the real voice of God. Benedetto recognized it as the echo of that pathetic expostulation he had just read in the Vulgate : « Oh ! do not this abominable thing, that I hate ! » That voice he heard again appealing to him by the love of his own soul :

« Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls — that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth ? » — « Ye have not feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers. »

Benedetto knelt and prayed. — What was his prayer ? God only knows. Was it before the Crucifix or before the Image of the Virgin that he prayed ?

As he rose from his knees there came to his excited mind a vision, the lingering recollection of a photograph he had seen of the altar to Benedict at Monte Cassino, which he hoped some day to see for himself.—There at either side of the « *Patriarcha Monachorum,* » stood out sharp and clear the words :

PAX PAX

and beneath, flanking the altar on the one side :

ORA ✠ LABORA

on the other.

Was the wonder in his sight or hearing? or in both? He was confused. Something, softly stirred within him. It seemed to say:

PAX — PAX

Then it was a chant without him; — a sweeter thought, more heavenly strains than vestal's song as she watched the sacred fire: richer, than vesper hymn, or mystic chanting of cloistered nun: — the words came clear, distinct, like pearls of purity, like radiant gleams of hope.

Could it be only the memory of a hymm he used to sing in days gone by in church and by the homeside fire: — only a memory come back again? — No! it was the

PAX VOBISCUM

of the really Christian Church; and he repeated word by word the psalm:

PEACE, perfect Peace, in this dark world of sin?
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

PEACE, perfect Peace, by thronging duties pressed?
To do the will of Jesus,—this is rest.

PEACE, perfect Peace, with sorrow surging round?
On Jesu's bosom nought but calm is found.

PEACE, perfect Peace, with loved ones far away?
In Jesu's keeping we are safe and they.

PEACE, perfect Peace, our future all unknown?
Jesus we know,—and he is on the throne.

PEACE, perfect Peace, death shadowing us and ours?
Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers.

It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call us to *heaven's perfect peace.*

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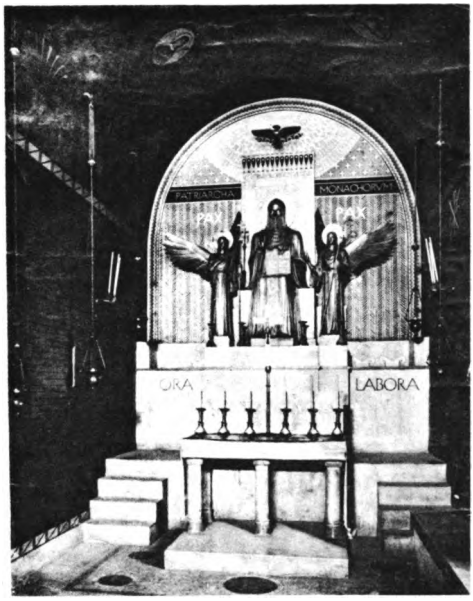
It sounded like the Salutation: *Peace be to this house,* uttered by the twelve whom Jesus sent forth; the Saviour's salutation spoken by the Church! It was like the plaintive voice of Jesus as he weeps over the cities of today, saying from out his sorrow: *Oh! if thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace.*—Like Jesus saying to the waves and winds: *Peace, be still!* It brought back to Benedetto's mind the Saviour's last legacy of love: *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. These things have I spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace,* It was the voice of the risen Saviour, who to his trembling disciples, as he stood in their midst on that first Christian Sabbath day, said unto them: *Peace be unto you!*

PAX VOBISCUM.



THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP'S BOOK.

THE BIBLE AND MARY.

Padre Benedetto had made the acquaintance of a very polished and somewhat learned ecclesiastic, a member of the Congregation of the Oratorio, Naples, a devout admirer, and the Biographer of the famous Saint and Doctor of Holy Mother Church, Alfonso dei Liguori. Benedetto knew the Cardinal Archbishop not only as a writer approved by the reigning Pope, and as the most popular champion of Madonna worship, but as a courtier and statesman too; indeed so highly was he regarded by the aristocracy and Roman Catholic Society that his name had been mooted as one who would be brought forward as a candidate for the Papal Throne.

Padre Benedetto, one day looking over the pamphlets and books lying on a book-stall at which he had stayed in walking through a narrow street near the Cathedral of Salerno, had caught sight of

a little book, written by the Archbishop before he had been made Archbishop, or received the Red-hat of the Cardinal. The little book was entitled « *The Mother of God,* » and was an intended reply to a small tract issued by the Protestant press and called : « *The true Portrait of Mary in Heaven.* » He bought it.

The Author supposes that a copy of this « *Portrait* of the Virgin » had fallen into the hands of *Clarice* the Sister of a country parish Priest. Her faith in the old ideal of Mary was shaken, and utterly bewildered she was in danger of making shipwreck of her fanatical devotion to Mary. The now-Archbishop replies to the tract; and the most distinctive lines of argument he uses are those which only he could use when such a subject is discussed between the Christian believer and the defender of the Papal faith. He appeals to the Bible. He relies on the authority of Antiquity, as recognized by the Church.

Surely thought our Benedetto if I could only meet this admirable man, he may be able to still the tumult of my unsatisfied, my troubled soul, as to the contradiction which seem so flagrant between dogmatic teaching and the recognized activities of the church,

Turning over the leaves of the tractate, his soul took in such propositions as these: « *Mary does not enter as Mediatrix where Christ is Mediator.* » « *To be perfect we only need to look on Christ and do his will.* » Oh what a calm would this have diffused o'er

his ruffled soul had he but been able to forget that the Church has declared free from every shadow of error such works as the « Glories of Mary » where the Mediation of Mary is officially represented as Co-redemption. Was the Cardinal then in conflict with all the practical teaching of the Church? Or was his way of putting it an artful, strategic position assumed merely to mask the battery? Benedetto loathed the thought of attributing dishonest strategy to so eminent a thinker and so elegant a writer: and yet, did not a miserable conviction of unfairness, and craft, force itself in and down to the deepest depths of his soul, and lie there lurking like a hideous, slimy reptile sheltering from the light. How could the Archbishop write these words when he must have known full well, how in her teaching and all her practice, the Church makes the Redemption and Mediation of Mary enter everywhere where the Redemption of Jesus and His Mediation are found; only that in everything and everywhere she is nearer to the sinful than Jesus; and that the sway of her motherly command overarches all the will and work of the Saviour Christ — so that it is the Virgin who «*gave to us the hope of a better life*» «*We receive from the hands of the Virgin the blessing of our salvation and of our redemption.*» These were the author's words.

He himself ascribes to her as *guerdon* of her motherhood, the obtainment of «*Peace for earth*,

glory for Heaven, salvation for the lost, life for the dead, the union of God with our flesh. » How then dared the Cardinal say that Mary is not Mediatrix where Christ is Mediator?

Reading the words which followed on, and in which the priest, whom he calls *Evarist*, is supposed to be instructing his sister Clarice in the Catholic faith as to the authority on which rests the Papal conception of Mary, whom she proclaims the Mother of God, Benedetto seemed to breathe again once more the free, blithe air of Bible truth· He read, and seemed once more at home, as with his open English Bible in his hand, faith, hope and love, stretching their wings, upbore him from the seen and material, to God and heaven, by the One Way, the One Truth, the One Life,—Jesus the only name given under heaven whereby we can be saved. How thankful did he feel to the good Cardinal as he read again and again words such as priests seldom bring out into the foreground:

« *Look Clarice on this book, that I have in my hands and that I would hold ever there; it is the treasury of heavenly wisdom; it is the Bible, God speaks to every man in his own language in this book, and surely in the sublimest and most noble way in the Holy Gospels.* * * * *I want thee, Clarice, to read them frequently; I want thee to teach thy children to read them.* » Here, then, Benedetto had found a Priest, an Archbishop, a Cardinal, who may be even Pope,

that avows the authority and sublimity of the grand old Bible that has made England great and free; and who wishes his relations to read it, and hold it ever in their hands, and to teach it to their children, Benedetto seems to himself to have found a prelate quite unique.

How differently does the now-Cardinal speak of the Bible to the way in Church speaks of it! — « *The Bible is the pest,* » said Pope Gregory XVI.

How delightful was it for this soul which now began to feel its loneliness amidst the profane idolatry of this stranger land, to be brought into contact with familiar thought like this: « *The Bible is in a supreme way poetical, and holds in itself every class and kind of poetry. The Proverbs, especially the earliest chapters, are a model of didactic poetry: the country and village imagery of the Song of Solomon gives forth the sweetness of pastoral life: David is the most sublime lyric poet: Job is more tender, vehement and imaginative than any other poet: — Elegy in Jeremiah and in some of the Psalms is perfection: Isaiah is sometimes lyric, sometimes epic, sometimes dramatic. A hymn to God, equal to that of the Virgin, I cannot find.* » Thus to have recalled the poetic charms of the Sacred Scriptures, the divine fount of poetry, was like finding a fresh and green oasis in a drear and thirsty desert land.

Surely, then, he has found a mind at last that

can make harmonious in some way the discord between the simple and beautiful Gospel of Mary, and the distorted and ungainly ideal of the Virgin as commonly known in Papal countries.

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Alas for the monk's new-found momentary calm, there came second thoughts. He cannot help but ask himself—how is it, if the Archbishop be sincere in thus appealing to the Bible as the great authority and urging the teaching of the gospel to the family, that he throws himself into dire conflict with the Holy Father the Pope, who but lately had re-affirmed the condemnation of the general reading of the Sacred Scriptures, putting all the Bible Editions into the Index, and denouncing the Bible Societies, and all who seek the general diffusion of even the Gospels; authorizing or allowing the priests to preach against the Bible as a dangerous book.

It did not bring to Benedetto the happiest feeling of genuine confidence in the Bible-basis laid down as the firm foundation of all the devotion to Mary, as it now finds expression here, that in all the work he found no condemnation of the delirium of fanaticism which surrounds the person and worship of the Virgin. It advises the reading of the Bible—and yet it says: « They, » (the Gospels,) « say very little about her. » — (Mary). As an example; speaking of the « Immaculate Conception of Mary, » it says

whilst seeking to sustain it by the Scriptures: « *The Bible does not speak expressly of the Immaculate Conception.* »

What grieved most the mind and heart of Benedetto was the impression made by what he had himself witnessed in the diocese of the Archbishop and in the associations of the Archbishop's life. To carry out the recommendation Evarist gave to his Sister Clarice, and to actuate the printed counsel of the Diocesan, you would have expected to have found the institution of classes or groups for bible reading. He began to think: where was there in the whole diocese one only Bible reader? There were the *Children of Mary,* » (*Figlie di Maria,*) the *Rosary Guilds*, the Societies like the *Azione Cattolica*, but amongst them all the Bible was utterly unknown, even Martini's, the Roman Catholic translation. Every attempt of the Protestants to sell the Gospels had been hounded down to death; and every individual known as a reader of the Bible, was suspected of sedition to the Church and harassed in every way.

It seemed then the reference to the Bible was not, could not be sincere.

Still when I see him, thought Benedetto, and confide to him my trouble, he will be able to show me the missing link,—to throw into the bitter waters the holy branch which will bring back my confidence and make the bitter sweet.

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It revived his old love of art to read the attack made on the Protestant Church by the Archbishop as he read: «Protestants,--remember well, O my Sister, amongst their many errors dry up all the streams of religious sentiment in their churches, inasmuch as *they have destroyed Christian Art.* How can these, icy, proud observers of everything, warm their hearts with the inspirations of Christian ideals? * * * Pleasant memories came over him as he thought of the Cartoons of Raphael, the Madonnas of Fra Angelico, and the Pictures of Perugino, of Correggio, of Leonardo da Vinci, and Spagnoletti, and others and others, many and many.

The Archbishop did not seem to distinguish between spiritual and esthetical development, any more than Tosti, who writing to his Neapolitan fellow-citizens had said: « That *sanculottian* nudity that makes the protestant temples to be freezing, we dont want. We like colours, we want odours, we want melody, we want our senses to be inebriated with the voluptuous delights of the house of God. The Catholic soul *concupiscit et deficit in atria domini.* We are artists because we are Roman Catholics. »

Still, he could hardly think that his countrymen deserved to be stigmatized as icy cold and loveless toward Art. Indeed he knew that the English speaking people were those most devoted to the charm of

ancient and modern art. That they lavished the largest sums on the obtainment of the master-pieces that enchant the world. If they do banish paintings from their churches lest the enchantment of art lead on to the dread sin of idolatry, it is to give them an honoured home in Crystal Palaces and magnificent Exhibitions, Academies, Museums and Galleries of which the world may well be proud; and to make them the pride and delight of their dwellings. The Archbishop ought not to have forgotten how Protestants thus love to make their homes and public resorts beautiful with statue and with picture.

He remembered the Blenheim Raphael, purchased by the National Gallery for 70,000 sterling. He thought of Millet's picture—«The Angelus» bought for 30,000 pounds. He thought of Holman Hunt, and Dorè: and then he asked himself: Can we conceive a scoffing Michael Angelo, or a flippant, unbelieving Raphael? Did not the saintly genius of Fra Angelico bow down his soul in prayer? — Did not tears dim his vision, as he sought to pourtray the sufferings of the Redeemer? Well, well thought he, perhaps it is better not to follow out too closely the processes of Art—the models artists have worked from, the originals they reproduce? The Fornarinas and the .... No!

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He asked himself: As, during the great epochs of Italian art, the painter's chief vocation was fulfilled

in the service of the Church, has Art been faithful to Christian truth? Is she the mistress and teacher of the truth? Or has she been led by the wizardry of legend and the interests of mythic and doctrinal evolutions to become apostate from the Christian faith? In pagan times she was prostituted to the adulation of the human. Were not the mightiest statues of the world only deified, tyrant kings? Have not ofttimes exquisite paintings shown that Art, lavishing her favours, became only an incitement to lust, and her voice only sang the Siren song that lures to error and ruin? Has Art been the Handmaid of truth?

He did not find exposed by Papal Art in the Churches, the Cartoons of Raphael, picture books for the people, storying to them the Life and Miracles and Love of Jesus; these are reserved for the halls of the Vatican Museum; such pictures, Benedetto heard a priest say, do not suit the churches of today: this, to explain why an altar piece — Jesus in the Temple —had been removed to give place to a picture of St. Vincenzo Ferreri. All the pictures of modern art received and exposed in the Churches with very few exceptions only foster the worship of the Madonnas and the gross idolatry of Saintly intercession. Time was when in the Cathedrals the all-commanding figure dominating all the ideal of worship, was the One Colossal Person of Christ, supreme in His own House of Prayer, — the Holy Gospel open and the passage

inscribed: He that cometh after me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the Light of Life: The Madonna beneath, with the Apostles. Benedetto had noted this in the Cathedral-churches of Palermo, of Monreale, and Cefalù. Now—all is the Madonna and the Saints. How has Art fulfilled her Mission? Faithful to Rome, she has been unfaithful to Christ.

Until a few years ago over the doorway of the Church of St. Rocco-the-less, in Naples, there was a somewhat curious picture which was interesting and famous. The Madonna was represented as distributing the different posts of honour in Paradise;—to her right she called St. Rocco; and on her left she placed John the Baptist. Beneath her throne the souls of the departed were blazing away amidst the fires of of purgatory. Beneath all,—some unknown hand had sculptured the following words:

Rocco, tocco Dei,
Sede a dextris mei;
Et tu, Johannes Baptista,
Sede a sinistra;
Ego Madonna in medio
Et subtibus de profundis.

The meaning of this worse than dog-latin seems to have been

O Rocco, stroke of God,
  Sit thou on my right hand:
And thou, O John the Baptist
  Sit thou at my left.
I, the Madonna, in the midst—
  Below, those in the deep profound.

To one who had been trained in a Protestant Ministry, it was most natural that this picture of Mary enthroned and distributing the posts of honour in Paradise should recall the Bible scene when the Mother of Zebedee's children came to Jesus and prayed him: « Grant that these my two sons may sit the one on thy right hand the other on thy left, in thy kingdom: » and Jesus answered: « Ye shall drink indeed of my cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism, that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand, and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. » « Was the Virgin more than Christ? Or had the Father really given over to Mary the disposal of thrones and celestial honours?

Art, then, had become not merely the violation of truth, and the handmaid of error, but was an offence to every propriety of language and taste. There are daubs and artistic horrors in religious art, as well as the hideous splashes that depict *Pulcinella*, with his hooked nose, and black mask, painted on the walls of low, country wine-shops.—So thought Benedetto.

Benedetto asked himself why it was that anachronisms were permitted in Church painting, which vitiated history and served only to propagate heresy? Anachronisms in the groupings of persons,—anachron-

isms in the dress and appointments which could not be imagined in heathen or modern art. He could not imagine a Greek Sybil attired just like an Egyptian Athor; nor a Roman temple built like an Egyptian Pyramid. Something of his fond delight in many objects of art, had been rubbed down by the tautology of art—the constant repetition of the same subject. He was dreadfully tired of the innumerable pictures of St. Sebastian. Sebastians of every form and in every position; — and those darts, those arrows he was weary of them. He hoped never to see another San Sebastian. But why in the name of the Prophets of Art, why is St. Stephen, dressed as a Deacon of the present time? Why is the Madonna attired as a nun? True art must preach the truth; or its mission will work in favour of error and evil.

One thought pressed forcibly upon his soul and it was this. He saw in the halls of Art many and many, sycophants and parasites, all bowing before her the Goddess, in adulation; none caring, or none daring to warn her of the very dangers of her enchanting charms. Who could help but love and praise her spell, her charms, her mystic power? As the handmaid of truth, of purity, of heaven, she is the Angel of Light; but false to truth, — a fallen Angel; a spirit of evil;—a Lorelei, combing her magnificent tresses with a golden comb, but luring to rock and to death.

How grieved had he been to see both statue and picture meanly serving to glorify foolish stories and saintly mysticism and fabled impudicity. The kneeling monk, he had seen in statuary, drinking in the milk from the Virgin's breast; — and other shameless visions and miracles that only lowered his ideal of all the most sacred things of God and of Heaven. He had seen things pourtrayed of the pure Madonna that made all sense of shame revolt, and from which he turned away as from sanctified incitement to unholy passion.

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Now and then, he seemed to trace in the book a desire to honour Protestants and Protestantism in some of the side lights thrown on the picture of the worship of the Madonna: for instance, Benedetto read: «I myself have seen amidst the mists that cloud the British soil, entire families of Protestants devoutly wending their way on Sunday to pray in their temples, undoubtedly to bear witness to their faith in this way: I have seen them silently, with their New Testament in their hands, moving on solemnly, with measured step, to their churches. They all take part in the service; and we Catholics hardly ever, and then carelessly, take part in the celebration of our tremendous mysteries.»

These words of the Cardinal not only impressed Benedetto, as indicating honesty of purpose, for here

was a priest praising the protestants; but they raised in his mind a new feeling, or rather deepened the growing conviction forced on him by what he himself had seen in Italy; namely, that one of the motives which had led him to join the Roman church was gradually becoming weaker and weaker.

He had been allured to associate himself with the Roman Catholics drawn by what he regarded as the moral and religious effects of esthetic worship. Keenly sensitive to the beautiful and grand, gifted with an imagination that revelled in all the mysteries of Art, and all the delights of music, he had fallen an easy prey to the solicitations of those who mistook the outward and sensuous for the inner and spiritual life of the soul. He now began to realize as he had never done before;—that form, figure, and colouring, the charms of sense,—of sight and sound and scent, tôo often, instead of upbearing the soul to things invisible and spiritual and eternal, the rather prison it within the surroundings of the present. Yes, he reflected, the beautiful,—the rapture of melody,—the most perfect symbol, may become a veil, a golden mist that clouds the vision, that fetters the imagination, that chains the soul to mere mortality. So, said he to himself, men knew the Creator of the sun and moon and stars.—Then they looked up to and worshipped them as the brightness and might of God himself; —then they saw them Gods, and worshipped the whole

host of heaven. It was the majesty of the heavens, the music of the spheres, the floral loveliness of earth that had peopled the Pantheon with the gentile gods.

Aurora came forth in her chariot from the fair golden gates of morning; *Ceres* was the genius of Goodness seen in the flowers and fruit of Summer and Autumn; the descent to Pluto and the Shades was Sundown and the dark of Night. The lightning flash, the thunder roll, were the voice of *Jupiter*, — the glittering of his darts.

He almost trembled as he saw at how great a price, the price of a fatal danger, the church had bought her influence by pomp and show over the peoples.

He felt also bound to acknowledge that all that was really esthetic in the solemn mysteries of the church seemed naturally and necessarily, to degenerate into what violated all his tastes and conceptions of spiritual and moral loveliness. — the more popular the *Festa*, the more coarse, gross and childish was the parade—the funeral, a hollow show, an absurd masquerade—the awful miracle of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius in the Cathedral at Naples was enacted like a sham, the prayer for its performance a tumult of heathen passion and abuse of the demigod. These were only little things; like the petty annoyance he once felt when, amidst all the indescribable magnificence of one of the great show

Cathedrals of Italy, he discovered that the fret-work of the roof was only a sort of temporary work out of harmony with all the rest. But what, if this degeneration of the spectacular and theatrical were the result of natural and necessary psychical effects.

After all,—all this might only be a violation of his own personal tastes and of his ideal of peerless beauty. The tawdry frippery of the gaudy churches, the gim-crack ornamentation, the frilled, petticoated images made the churches and altars just like huge doll-houses; as though the people were all and ever little children, and must have only sacred playthings still.

Just fancy, thought he, how the most solemn festivities are celebrated. An English fair, bands, illuminations, fireworks, crackers, squibs, Roman candles, little mortars, paper bombs, processions of roughs, and longer processions of the riff-raff of unsaintly women and poor, abandoned girls. These for the Saints and the Madonnas. Wakes for the dead.

And now, when his devotion to the spectacular is on the wane, he meets a Cardinal Archbishop who bemoans the want of spirituality and the deplorable contrast between Roman Catholic and Protestant devotion. What, then, has Rome's scenic ecclesiatical millinery, and genuflexion, and melodramatic show done in promoting spiritual life and devotional worship, if the Cardinal has to rebuke the faithful by presenting the ideal and practice of a protestant

people,—commending the gravity of their deportment, and their having the New Testament? This they can only use in a service conducted with an open Bible, and that in the mother tongue. But he had heard other Priests say much the same; especially commending England for its observance of the Lord's Day. Either the Cardinal Archbishop when he wrote was only half-sincere; or he had written a voluntary condemnation of the practical utility of all theatrical parade in the celebration of those « awful mysterics. »—« Beautiful flowers and crosses cover the dead! » thought Benedetto.

IN THE ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE.

THE AUTHORITY OF ANTIQUITY.

There was to be that very evening a grand reception in the splendid suite of rooms in the Archbishop's palace. The Cardinal was as well-known for the elegancy and brilliancy of these frequent gatherings of the aristocracy and of the more influential families of his own and the neighbouring dioceses, as for his literary productions. In these assemblies it was possible for the Cardinal to gauge the temperature of public thought, and personally and by his coadjutors' influence, inspire and guide the tendencies of the different classes of society around him.

Padre Benedetto was amongst the number of the visitors, but he had been fortunate enough to obtain an earlier audience of the celebrated defender of the Marian faith.

They, the Archbishop and Father Benedetto, are alone iu close conversation in the private study of the Archbishop.

The latter has been confiding in most familiar terms his conflict of thought and feeling to his host, who has listened to his account most intently and with the evident desire of reading the deepest and most hidden movements of the speaker's soul; who affirming his respect for the magisterial teaching of the Church, and his heart's homage to the beautiful ideal of the Virgin, confessed the trouble of his soul in witnessing the wild fanaticism of the people, and in also noting the follies of superstition, unchecked by the Spiritual Authorities. He thanked the illustrious writer for his special advocacy of the Bible, and, of the diffusion of Bible reading, only expressing his wonder that such happy teaching had not found a general and spontaneous response in the city and surrounding.

The Archbishop looked up suddenly; — he was listening to something new, and strange and dangerous. Still, with the exquisite refinement of the polished Italian, he of course thanked him, and replied: it is something uncommon thus to meet a mind like yours, trained in the atmosphere of Bible influence; so sensitive to the inflexible claims of truth; so nervously afraid of adding to or subtracting from fact and reality. How different is the Northern to the Southern mind. The former battles for the letter, the logic of truth measured by line and plummet. We, Southerners, look for the poetry of truth; we are the children of the imagination; we are children of the Sun.

You form your conception hampered, and held in by Bible letter; we look for the poesy that grows out of the mere fact. — The Bible gives us the outline, the sketch,—*tradition* does the rest; it fills up the outline, it makes the sketch a picture. »

« But if in the historical evolution of the Virgin-Mother of our Lord — the essential characteristics of Mary's nature and mission are changed, what then ?» asked Benedetto.

« But the Church asserts it is not so. Only the poetic development has been brought out; only the artistic drapery that vests the Virgin's form is altered: » said the Archbishop: — « you may not remember that this is my argument in my little work you so kindly made mention of just now. »

« Do you not remember, » he added. « I show how the worship of Mary, exquisitely and intensely, permeates the church-life of all the ages of the Christian era. »

« Yes, but you confess the devotion to Mary of the very earliest Christian authorities, such as Ignatius, Irenæus, and Policarp, is sober, concise, biblical, such as were the early ages of Christianity in contradistinction to the characteristics of succeeding times. That seems to me to be a very grave admission; it saves me now any survey of succeeding writers; or any questionings as to alterations or omissions which modern criticism affirms in the accounts of the

Fathers and historians, and which it is averred modify the colouring and value of their testimony.

That Mary has been honoured, all through the times of persecution we haste to admit, — but the church was ever careful to instruct the faithful not to divinize the human. — « I saw with my own eyes the Mother of Jesus, our Lord..... *if I had not been instructed by our holy doctrine in the true faith, I would have mistaken her for a goddess.* » — If therefore these letters of Ignatius be authentic, as you say, there was danger of the degeneration of faith and admiration into idolatry. » « It seems to me, » said the anxious, persistent monk, « when I compare the ideal of Mary as we have it in the Bible, and her worship as seen in our own Catholic Churches in England, with what we see on the Continent, that we must allow her devotees worship her as a Goddess. The danger has become a terrible reality. The church no longer teaches to distinguish between the human and the divine. It is silent. Or rather it sanctions, it teaches the fatal error.

« I read the other day three fragments. Let me read them to you now: « Mary prays as a daughter, requests as a sister, commands as a mother. » « She approaches, » says Peter Damiano « the golden tribunal of the Divine Majesty, not asking, but commanding; not as a handmaid, but as a mistress. »

« Only the Virgin, as has been revealed to many

Saints, has the authority and power to work miracles *by herself* and mediately by an Invocation, an Image, a Scapular, as Padre Filippo della Visitazione, sings

Est Deus Omnipotens, est Omnipotensque Maria,
Imperat ille potens, impetrat illa potens.
Gnatus vola nequit Matris contemnere: Christus
Omnipotens per se, sicque Maria prece. »

« The Blessed Virgin is Mother of God, and God is her Son, and every son is naturally inferior to his mother, and subject unto her, and the mother hath pre-eminence and is superior to her son: it therefore followeth, that the Blessed Virgin is superior to God, and God himself is subject unto her, in respect of the humanity he assumed from her. Although subject to God as a creature, inasmuch as she is a creature, yet is she said to be superior to and preferred before him, inasmuch as she is His mother. »

« Ah, » said the Archbishop, « in the fourth century and in succeeding and more prosperous times, the church, brought out more and more fully the ideal of Mary. In after ages, times of conflict, tyranny, and invasion, and when philosophers assailed the Church, — devotion to Mary only deepened. After came the great Pontiff, and such orators as Idelfonso who poetically clothe Mary with all the names and ideal of Deity itself. This devotion has outlived the passions of the Iconoclasts, and the struggles between Emperors and Popes· let me remind you of the words in my poor treatise, where I show that this ever-

increasing devotion has not merely outlived, but seems to have been fostered by these times of the most awful corruption of the church. Here is a copy of my book—I will read over to you the few words in which I compendiate the condition of the church, during the times in which we find the devotion to Mary becoming more and more intense.

« The laity was most ignorant of all knowledge, « or human or divine; even the priesthood was ignor- « ant. Only faintly shone the light of knowledge « amongst the monks. And there was still worse. « The divine offices of the Christian priesthood, (even « those of the venerable angels) were bartered for « money. The infamous traffic reached even to the « office of the Bishops, and even to the high power « of the Keys. There arose to govern the Christian « World Popes who were partisans; not fathers, but « tyrants of the peoples. It was one great mourning « in the church of God. The most foul lascivious- « ness contaminated the Sanctuary. The priests « who ought to be as Avenging Angels toward vice, « unmanned themselves in unholy loves. Oh how « bitter were the tears of the few who were good. »

« In the midst of all this, never did the hymn of praise which the church raises in honour of Mary cease. It was then she was called: « The *Inventor* of Grace, the Mediatrix of Salvation, the Restorer of the Ages. All became paganized in the times of Leo;—but the worship of Mary never declined. »

« What does this historic review teach to a soul like mine ?» said the poor troubled enquirer? « That the follies and superstitions clustering round the character and mission of Mary are but a dung-hill growth, a false birth, born in the Middle Ages, born of the horrid struggles between the Emperors and the Popes; the offspring of an unhealthy curiosity; the very froth of passionate contest, in times when heresy was rife; a fungus growth sown by the ambitious hands of a murderess, and made triumphant by the imperial will of a licentious but regal harlot. »

« My dear Archbishop, » continued Benedetto: « You are so kind as to have referred me to your book. I have studied the position you have taken in teaching the constant devotion of the Church to Mary, arguing that as she is far more like the angels than a human being, the Catholic Church could not but offer to her « *an infinite reverence.* » If you mean really to teach this, you teach that divine honours are due to the Virgin: if this be only a hyperbolic way of expressing your impression of the high regard in which the Church has held Mary, it seems to me historically incorrect, and most dangerous in its issues. You own the Bible is absolutely silent: how can you then assert that primitive Christianity rendered to the Virgin Mary a devotion as intense, as simple. You assert that several of the earliest Fathers of the Church, show that the devotion to Mary was constant.

That Mary was always, by all Christians, regarded with devout respect; and that it was natural the early Christians should desire to see her personally, every one must see and feel. But your way of insisting on the devotion of the early Church to Mary, seeks to show and prove the prevalence in that early Church of that which Protestants call the Mariolatry of our present Roman Church. I find no traces of such a devotion.»

«I left the Protestant faith lured on by friends who evidently beguiled me whither I knew not. An Advocate of the Catholic faith publicly asserted that so far from the Church approving any tendency to, or act of, divine worship being presented to the Madonna, it shrank back in horror from so great a crime; so much so, that though he sustained it to be a devout and pious practice this offering prayer to the Virgin, he asserted that one might be a good Catholic and yet not offer one single prayer to her. My experiences out here have caused the scales to fall from my eyes. I often tremble as I feel myself to be like the Monk of Wittemberg,—I hardly like to pronounce that name so hated by the Church. He came—he saw the *Scala Santa*, and the poor penitents climbing their weary way upward upon their knees—the statue of Judas seemed to voice the inscription, legible below: — «Now is the hour and power of darkness.» How dread and drear has been the revolution in my thought and feeling, all and only produced by what I have seen and heard!

The Church proclaims Mary to be a *Creature:* and yet, even you ascribe to her *infinite reverence*; and the Church is silent: whilst the voice of God, by the lips of the Apostle Paul, peals forth to the Church at Rome the tremendous sentence on those who « when they know God, not glorifying him as God, change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man: — worshipping and serving the Creature more than the Creator. How terrible the consequence: « For this cause God gave them over unto vile affections. »—You remember this is in Paul's letter to the Romans, in the very first chapter.—He writes to the Fathers of the Italian Christian Church.

Have patience with one who has been led away from old moorings, but who cannot give up Christ for Mary, who never realized that in accepting the intervention of Mary, the Communion of Saints, he could or would be required to accept her as Mediatrix where Christ is Mediator:—or to regard her as endowed with command over God and Christ and Heaven:—or to ascribe to her a veneration not consonant with the dogmatic truth that she remains a creature ever.

Have patience with me. I know how kind you have been to the erring. I know the time, the money, the exquisite Christian solicitude you expended in recalling Fra Egidio, who had gone over to the Methodists, and who for many years had seemed so

devoted and popular in spreading the heresy, that, whatever we may think, even the Pope bewails as taking root in all the great cities of this Catholic land, the heresy you yourself represent as having endangered the faith of Clarice, and to counteract which you felt it to be your duty to write and print your book: the « *Mother of God.* »

I cannot but feel that the exaggerations of devotion to Mary and what seems to me the culpable silence of the Church fosters in many minds the impression that the protestants are right.

Listen for one moment. I take it that I must regard as authoritative teaching the doctrine taught in regard to the Maternity of Mary by a celebrated Divine of the Naples' Diocese, and which is the common statement of the position:

« The glory of Mary's Maternity is so sublime that the Doctors of the Church esteem the divine Fatherhood of the Eternal Father to be less wonderful than the Motherhood of Mary. »

« If Mary added to the Eternal Father the new prerogative of being God of the Son, and thus having all the manifestations of majesty and dominion over him * * * * * conferred increased greatness on the Father *** did She not then confer increased greatness also on His Son, by thus conceiving Him in her womb. Mary became not only greater than all other women, but in a certain way vied with the

Eternal Father in the generation of His Eternal Son, and in this way acquired by this privilege, although a creature, the title of authority over a God, and of maternal benevolence; in a word, became the *carissima*, the dearest, to the Trinity. A God obeyed, humbling himself at the voice of a maiden. »

« This is quoted dear Cardinal, from one of the Sermons of Father Gioacchino Taglialatela, one of your own Order, a Professor of Archeology and Ecclesiastical History in the Archiepiscopal Lyceum of Naples. Can the respect of the early Church for the Virgin be cited in support of such a delirium as this? To her is ascribed an eternal pre-existence; that she was God's companion in the creation of the World; and that she was also Co-worker with the August Trinity, and First Executrix of the great Mystery of Salvation; to the which she was set apart to proffer aforetimes the fruit. So that the Father had communicated to Her the power to generate the Eternal Son, a power incommunicable to the divine persons. » « Tell me, illustrious friend, am I, in order to remain a Catholic obliged to believe all this? »

« I can only reply », said the Cardinal, « that Saints and Doctors teach this, St. Bernardino of Siena speaks of the Maternity of Mary as : the Fount of human redemption, more wonderful than the Paternity of the divine Father. »

The exquisite tact of the Cardinal led him the

rather to evade than answer: «I would gladly help you,—I can only say; follow out my argument and you will find the church in every age has been loyally, and lovingly devoted to Mary».

That, Your Reverence, is not the question — the question is: was Mary so revered as to be accounted Mediatrix having command over her Son in heaven; was she worshipped then, as now, in picture and image, as the Queen Saviour to whom is due, as you yourself say, an infinite reverence?» Benedetto continued:

I have made some notes, glancing over the earliest records — asking myself: who was *then* the object of the soul's love and devotion—Christ or Mary? Will you do me this one great favour—trouble to read them. Then, if thou think me wrong, as you love my soul, tell me where my error lies. You have noble thinkers, you have profound students of these earliest times; show me if you can that I am wrong when I say that the Watch-word of the earliest Christians, of the Martyr Church, was Christ—not Mary!

The Cardinal graciously received the document promising not only to look over it himself but to pass it for examination to some of those whose specific studies rendered them even still more able to judge of its argumentative value.

A DOCUMENT

Shewing the impression produced on the Monk's mind by a hasty survey of some of the principal Writers of the earliest Christian Times.

Illustrious Cardinal;

An evening or two ago I took up a volume containing the Letters, Works, or Fragments of the writings of the earliest Christian ages, which have come to us from the far off past. I wished to bring out before my mind, sharp and clear, the harmony or dissonance between the present and the past. My query was: Was Christ or was Mary the Saving Presence in the Apostolic Church and in the first ages of Christianity. If the faith and worship of Mary was then as now the faith of the Church, of the Martyr Church, it could not but be self-evident, — so I thought, and I could not but acknowledge this the more and more I looked over these records of the wise and good of martyr-days when Christianity first became incarnate in the outward life of redeemed humanity. I turned over some five hundred pages of these « APOSTOLIC FATHERS » *and wading in and through irrelevant questions of date and individual authorship, and version, and the like, I felt they had one great message to tell all minds, all ages; they did so with a distinctness and a happy unanimity I never felt in the past:* **The earliest Christianity was truly Christian, not Marian.**

I reproduce some of the Notes I made, permit me to submit to you what evidently is **the Testimony of the Apostolic Fathers and of the Martyr Church.**

I would not hazard laying this before you had

the conviction produced by them been only the result of my own individual researches: No one knows better than you the value of the Authority of learned and sincere Scholarship, and I have availed myself of the most approved results of life-long study and research. It only remains to be seen whether the Authority of Christian Literature is in harmony or contrast with the Authority of the present Teachers and Teaching of the Church. — Whether the Church of the earliest centuries approve or condemn the Church of the present.

NOTES

THE EPISTLES OF CLEMENT.

Who this Clement was, cannot with absolute certainty be determined. The general opinion is that he is the person spoken of by St. Paul in Philippians IV 3. The first, and by far the longer, of the two Epistles simply purports to have been written by the Church at Rome to the Church at Corinth, where dissension had broken out, and we may conclude that at least this first Epistle is a composition of Clement the associate of the great Apostle.

It was composed after some great persecution; either that of Nero, which would fix its date abont 68 A.D.; or after the persecution of Domitian, which would suggest the close of the first century, or the commencement of the second, probably the latter.

Now a long letter such as this, written by Clement the companion of Paul, a letter from the Church at Rome to the church at Corinth, written with the intention of attaining a more perfect unity of feeling and action, must give valid information as to the faith and practice both of Clement, of Rome, and of Corinth. So highly was this Epistle prized that it appears to have been read in

numerous churches, and regarded as almost on a level with the canonical writings, and its author is supposed to have been one of the earliest Popes.

The Salutation is from God the Father Almighty through Jesus Christ. It acknowledges the Holy Spirit. It speaks of Martyrs and Confessors; of the Daniads and Dircæ being persecuted; of Saints of the olden time; of Jesus Christ All and in All—of his Life, Atonement, Resurrection, and of his Coming again.—He is our Saviour, even Jesus Christ, the High Priest of all our offerings, our Leader and Preserver. The author tells of the sin of Israel who made to themselves molten images; he gives the names of his messengers, Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Bito; but in all the fifty-nine chapters of this letter there is no allusion to, or mention of, the Virgin Mary.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF CLEMENT.

This now is generally regarded as one of the epistles falsely ascribed to Clement, although in the Alexandrian M.S. it is distinctively attributed to him. It is certainly not of later date than the fifth century, and therefore may give us a glimpse of Christian life of an authoritative character during the still earlier ages of the Christian Church.

We ought to think highly of Christ—He suffered for our sakes.—Before, these Christians were deficient in understanding, worshipping stones and wood, and gold and silver and brass, the work of men:—our whole life was nothing but death—we have received sight, and through His will have laid aside that cloud by which we were encircled. Religion consists in confessing Christ. "If we do the will of Christ, we shall find rest." Christ the Lord became flesh.

In the whole of the twelve chapters not one word

about the Virgin; not one allusion to her even in connection with the Incarnation.

THE EPISTLE OF POLYCARP TO THE PHILIPPIANS

The authenticity of this Epistle can on no fair grounds be questioned. Irenæus and Eusebius, and the general consent of scholars authorize us to receive this letter as an authentic production of the renowned Bishop of Smyrna. If not of Polycarp, still it shows what was the Christian faith then.

Of Polycarp little is known, but that little is highly interesting. Irenæus his disciple tells us that "*Polycarp was instructed by the Apostles, and was brought into contact with many who had seen Christ.*—"

The date of the Epistle cannot be absolutely determined. We shall probably not be far wrong if we fix it about the middle of the second century.

This letter of Polycarp and the Presbyters with him, shows what was the tone and colouring of the spiritual life of this Christian Martyr and his companions, and of the early Christians at Philippi. It is full of Christ; of Christ the Lord; believing in him, rejoicing in him, and with joy unspeakable and full of glory. All mercy comes from the hands of Christ, not of Mary. We are servants of God and Christ; we ought to show respect unto the Ministry; no allusion to any service to Mary. He speaks of the "Blessed Ignatius, of Zosimus, of Paul and the other Apostles"—No mention of Mary. They loved not the present world, but "Him who died for us, and for our sakes was raised again by God from the dead." The one, sacred, divine, saving presence and inspiration that animated the souls of the Martyrs and overshadowed the souls of the Philippians was the presence of the Lord. No intervention of human intercession. No division of expiatory suffering. No devotion to other than Jesus.—

No Mary Intercessor—No Mary Co-redeemer—No Mary Queen of Heaven.

"I am deeply grieved for Valens,"—Poor Valens once a presbyter—then covetous,—then idolator. Valens, and his wife" to whom may God grant true repentance. Do not count such as enemies, but call them back as suffering, straying members."—With what grief would this martyr have looked upon the Idolatry of Mary — How he would have prayed God to give to the "suffering, wandering" church of the present day true repentance.

"We are safe," says he, "in the Lord Jesus Christ,"—Quite different to the Archbishop of Naples:—who says:

"Safe in the arms of Mary."

"We live day and night in her arms."

THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP.

The Encyclical Epistle of the Church at Smyrna.

There is a letter purporting to be written by the church at Smyrna to the church at Philomelium, and through that church to the whole Christian world, giving the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp. It is interesting to us not merely as being the earliest of all the Martyria, but because if the cult of Mary existed then, if She was accounted Mediatrix and Saviour, we surely must find traces of it in the story of the martyr's death, just as you cannot take up any Roman Catholic document now without finding Mary everywhere.

If we have to allow transcription errors, and interpolation, all this would only make it more possible for new superstition to come out unwittingly, and make itself seen and felt.

The account tells of the wonderful constancy of the Martyrs who patiently endured while even those that stood by pitied and bewailed them. — All, all, looking

to the grace of Christ.—Now, — if the Archbishop's theory were correct, we should be told they looked to the Madonna. No, not to the Madonna, the church says they looked to Christ—For this reason "the fire of their savage executioners appeared cool to them." Those, who were condemned to the wild beasts endured dreadful tortures, being stretched out on beds of spikes, and subjected to various other kinds of torments, in order that, if it were possible, the tyrant might by their lingering tortures, lead them to a denial of Christ: — it does not say to a denial of the Madonna.

The whole multitude cried out: "away with the atheists: let Polycarp be sought out" "Quintus, a Phrygian, when he saw the wild beasts became afraid, and the Proconsul persuaded him to swear and offer sacrifice."

Polycarp was betrayed by a servant, and his pursuers who had come on horse and on foot, found him lying down in the upper room of a little house — "The will of God be done." He was brought into the city to the presence of Herod the father of Nicetes — What harm can there be in saying "Lord Cæsar,"—and in sacrificing—*Reproach Christ!*" No intimation of the Madonna being the sign and symbol of faith: Then came the grand answer: "Eighty and six years have I served Him and He never did me any harm,—how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour? *** Hear me declare with boldness I am a Christian:"—The Martyr-test was Christ, not Mary. *He*, not *She*, it was who "gave him strength to endure the fire" It was Christ,—not Mary. The Martyr's prayer as he looked up to heaven was: "O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ;" — no prayer to Mary. The Cup he drank of, was the "Cup of Christ;"—his last Psalm in life. "I praise Thee for all things, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, along with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ,

thy beloved Son, with whom, to Thee and the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and to all coming ages. Amen." *The doxology of the Martyr-Christian is the doxology of the Triune God,—of Christ;—not Mary!* Polycarp, not injured by the fire, was pierced by the dagger of the Executioner. The Christians asked that the martyr's body should be given them. It was refused lest: "*Forsaking him that was crucified they begin to worship this one.*" The church at Smyrna replied it is impossible for us ever to forsake Christ, who suffered for the Salvation of such as shall be saved throughout the whole world,—(the blameless *One* for sinners).—No Immaculate Conception, Christ is the blameles ONE—*Nor to worship any other.* No Mary! All Christ! The Christian Church cannot worship any other, or it becomes apostate. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Shepherd of the Catholic Church throughout the world! Not Mary.

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS.

Though Clement of Alexandria call this "a Catholic Epistle," and ancient writers attribute it to Barnabas, the Levite, of Cyprus, who held an honourable place in the infant church, still we do not regard it as having any very great literary value: But it is a very ancient document, for its date cannot be later than the middle of the second century, and if it was written by a Gentile Christian of the Alexandrian School, with a view of winning back, or guarding, from a Judaic form of Christianity,—indeed in any case, it must by its tone and style, even by its silence, tell us how far the Church was Christian or Marian.

The very title shows there were no "daughters of Mary" then, all sons and daughters bore the one "*name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"—Religion was then—"the Spirit poured forth from the rich Lord of Love."—We

dont hear of all grace, or of any, coming from the hands of Mary. "Incense is an abomination unto me," — was the motto of Christ's Church. Antichrist is at hand. The Church is warned against Idolatry, and the incipient fear of Monasticism is denounced: "Do not, by retiring apart lead a solitary life.—All the Covenant is in the sufferings of Christ. Trust in Him, manifested in the flesh — that is Jesus. It is Christ in Sacrifice,—Christ in Prophecy,—Only Christ--This is the Way of Light. All else is the Way of Darkness."

There is no allusion to Mary.

THE EPISTLES OF IGNATIUS.

For our purpose we do not need to enter into and sidle our way through the crowd of questionings as to the longer and shorter forms. Nor of the versions,—the Greek, the Syriac and the like. — We need now simply discover whether, whenever they were written, it was Christ or Mary, or Christ only, or Christ and Mary that was the dominant thought and momentum of the Christian faith.

There is a legend that Ignatius was the little child whom Jesus set in the midst of his disciples (Matt. XVIII. 2) as a pattern of humility. It has been suggested that from this was given to him the name he bore "Theophorus," one who carried God. He was the disciple of John the Apostle, he governed the Church at Antioch with great care having escaped the storms of persecution under Domitian.

What was the martyr's boast when condemned by Trajan "I have Christ the King." "Who is Theophorus?" Trajan asked. "He who has *Christ* within his breast." The voice of the great army of martyrs is: *Christ, the King of Heaven. Not Mary Queen of Heaven.*

"Dost thou then carry within thee Him that was

crucified?" Ignatius replied "Truly so, for it is written, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them!'" Then is given Trajan's sentence: "We command that Ignatius, who affirms that he carries about within him Him that was crucified, be bound by soldiers and carried to the great Rome there to be devoured by the *beasts* for the gratification of the people." The martyr in his last prayer for the church, commended it to the Lord, — not to Mary. It was not her name that made Ignatius clasp his chains in delight.

What was his message to the Church on the way to Rome? He testifies of his love to Christ. He entreated the Son of God,—he did not pray to Mary. He is represented as at Puteoli, desiring to tread in the footsteps of Paul. He was "the noble martyr of Christ, out of love to Christ."

THE EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS.

It was ascribed to Justin Martyr, some still regard it as the work of Justin. The writer designates himself a disciple of Christianity — something still new in the world. This beautiful composition is the genuine production of some apostolic man who lived not later than the beginning of the second century. The Names of Clement of Rome and of Apollos have been suggested as the probable author. It is not known who was this Diognetus. Some intelligent Christian enquirer at the close of the apostolic age.

The Vanity of idols—Christians are not accustomed to serve such gods: I deem it idle to say anything further. (Had he lived later on he would have seen things differently)—Christ is our all and in all.—Our Nourisher, Father, Teacher, Counsellor, Healer, Our Wisdom, Light, Honour, Glory, Power and Life. This all through the twelve chapters.

THE PASTOR OF HERMAS.

We need not enter into the discussion of the authorship of *this so-called Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress*,—be it the work of Hermas mentioned in the epistle to the Romans or Hermas, brother of Pius, Bishop of Rome.

In the *Book of Visions* — (Five in number — 25 chapters) in the Book *of the twelve Commandments*—or in the Book of the ten *Similitudes*, (61 chapters) — Christ and the Holy Spirit we find; Mary is not so much as alluded to. And yet some have regarded this book as divine: and it was understood so faithfully to reflect the faith and practice of Christians, that it was read publicly in the churches.

THE FRAGMENTS OF PAPIAS

all show the same colossal fact; that, in the earliest times all faith and hope and love and worship centred, in a living present Saviour; in Christ not Mary.

Papias was the Bishop of Hierapolis, a city of Phrygia, in the first half of the second century. He was a hearer of the Apostle John and on intimate terms of acquaintance with many who had known the Lord and His Apostles. From these he gathered the floating traditions in regard to the sayings of our Lord. A man of learning and well acquainted with the Scriptures but of small capacity. We have only to do with Mary, the Mother of the Lord, and only find her mentioned with the other Maries.—No special homage—no worship is given to her.

THE SPURIOUS EPISTLES OF IGNATIUS

we need only refer to hastily. Eight out of fifteen are generally admitted to be spurious—that to the *Tarsians*—whoever writes, or whenever written — the ideal is: the soul prepared to encounter wild beasts, fire, sword, the cross, that only: "I may see Christ my Saviour and God

who died for me! For there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man, Christ Jesus." How could such a One be a mere man receiving His existence from Mary, and not rather God the Word, and the only-begotten Son!

The Epistle of Ignatius to the Antiochians.

It is to the church in Syria. Neither must there be introduced a multiplicity of gods:—nor Christ be denied under pretence of the unity of God. Its theme, the Deity of Christ —The One Mediator. It has salutations for subdeacons, readers, singers, doorkeepers, labourers, exorcists — no mention of the Virgin.

The letter of Ignatius to Hero,

who was a deacon of the Church at Antioch. "Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord" — No glorying in Mary here.

The letter of Ignatius to the Philippians.

In the sixth Chapter: "Why dost thou abuse the nature of the Virgin, and style her members disgraceful, since thou didst of old display such in public processions and didst order them to be exhibited naked, males in the sight of females, and females to stir up the unbridled lust of males?" Evangelical Christians would say the same; they do not dishonour the Virgin, it is the Romanist who, by nude and unseemly painting and statue dishonours Mary and displeases God "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve." "If any one fasts on the Lord's day or on the Sabbath, he is a murderer of Christ." No fasting in devotion to the Madonna, on Saturdays, then.

The Letter of Maria, the Proselyte, to Ignatius. The Epistle of Ignatius to Mary at Neapolis, near Zarbus.

There are many salutations in Mary's letter, but no allusion to the Virgin. Ignatius answering: rejoices in her

quoting scripture so aptly. Avoid those that deny the passion of Christ. Salute all that are like minded with thyself and who hold fast to their salvation in Christ— "May I see thee in Christ receiving thy crown." Again all Christ — not Mary.

The Epistle of Ignatius to St. John, the Apostle.

"There are many of our women here who desire to see Mary of Jesus and wish day by day to run off from us to you, that they may meet with her and touch those breasts of hers that nourished the Lord Jesus, and may inquire of her respecting some rather secret matters." — Ignatius is however represented as not believing all these wonderful things in every particular. Bishops and people nowadays swallow all the wonderful things told of their Madonnas.

The Epistle of Ignatius to the Virgin Mary.

Ignatius, the neophyte, the disciple of John, is made to write to the Virgin desiring with his whole heart to know of Him, from her who was acquainted with all His secrets; and thus be conforted in her, and by her.

LETTER OF THE VIRGIN TO IGNATIUS.

Could we believe that it was not a deceit it might be comforting to know that this, the Virgin's reply, was the most rational of her many spurious letters, quite Evangelical, not Marian.

The things which thou hast heard and learned from John are true. (Ignatius must have known that.) Believe them, cling to them, and hold fast the profession of Christianity which thou hast embraced, and conform thy habits and life to thy profession. Now I will come in company with John to visit thee, and those that are with thee. Stand fast in the faith, and show thyself a man; nor let the fierceness of persecution move thee, but

let thy spirit be strong and rejoice in God thy Saviour. Amen.

THE LONGER AND SHORTER EPISTLES OF IGNATIUS.

If you read his Epistle to the *Ephesians*: It is all Christ — I am bound for the name of Christ — Jesus Christ our inseparable life — who also became man of Mary. No mention of Mary more than this; and that Mary's virginity was hidden from the Prince of this world. No Mary our Hope, our Love, our Life.

So in the Epistle to the *Magnesians:* "Born of the Virgin without any intercourse of man."

So in the Epistle to the *Trallians.* "*Faith*, that is the flesh of the Lord; and *love* that is the blood of Jesus Christ" "Who was truly begotten of God and of the the Virgin but not after the same manner; for indeed God and man are not the same. — He was truly born of the Virgin having clothed himself with a body of like passions with our own."

So again in his Epistle to the *Romans*: — He longs for martyrdom "Let the very torments of the devil come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ. I am eager to die for the sake of Christ."

So once more in the Epistle to the *Philadelphians:* he speaks of the ministry of marriage and of married men, of the One Mediator, he exhorts to unity, he approves the Old and New Testaments; he attributes to Jesus all the titles, the Way--the Rock—the Shepherd—the Sacrifice; but he has not one word of Mary.

The Epistle to the *Smyrnæans* tells of Christ's true passion, — of heretics and heresy—Jesus Christ our true life. This is life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. No word of Mary. Salvation is through the Immaculate Spirit and Word of God.

The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp shows that the

faith of both was Christ the Son of God, invisible by nature but visible in the flesh; — This was the faith of the adjacent churches too.

JUSTIN MARTYR

takes us back to about the middle of the second century: he speaks of the Virgin thus: "She was filled with faith and joy." A good experience for every Christian mother.

Speaking of the progress of Christianity. "There is not a nation, Greek or Barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wander in tribes, and live in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgiving are not offered to God the Father and Creator of the Universe, *in the name of the crucified Jesus.*" No Prayer in the name of Mary then. The early Christian worship was the *gathering of the faithful to sing hymns of praise to Christ as God.* No hymn to the Virgin saluted the dawn of morning; no Vesper hymn was sung to Her!

Even in the SPURIOUS, APOCHRYPHAL GOSPELS, we do not find in the midst of the dense mass of superstitious legend of which they were composed, that which could supply any really valid sanction of the marked, idolatrous homage now paid to Mary. The rather they seem to show that the Religion of Mary must be a miserable transformation of after ages.

But why tarry thinking of these: the Papal Church has never given them her official sanction; on the contrary she proclaims them to be Apocryphal. This too looks very like duplicity: — she calls them apocryphal, but presses them into her service — disowns, yet uses them.

In one of THE OLD LITURGIES, in use when the the commemoration of, or prayer for the dead had already filtered into the services of the Church, they prayed FOR the Virgin and the Apostles. Now we confess and pray TO them. This was the last note made by Benedetto.

THE CELEBRATED JESUIT FATHER.

PADRE CARLO MARIA CURCI.

The celebrity of the Collection of ancient documents, those treasures of history, made the Convent of La Trinità, at Corpo di Cava, as the site of the the older city is called, a trysting place for the lovers of historical antiquity; whilst the bracing mountain air of the woods and hills that make up the lovely panorama framed by mountains like St. Salvatore, and only closed in by bright glimpses of the azure sea, attracted those who needed or loved the retirement of the monastic cell and the invigorating stimulus of the mountain breeze, or the stirring walk through the pine wood, or rest under the thick-leaved, spreading boughs of the chestnut trees.

The exquisite hospitality of the Fathers, and of the Mitred-Abbot at their head, is quite proverbial. Many were the opportunities they had of shewing their attention not only to travellers who are doing the

Continent, and who hail from all the lands of Earth, but to the many prelates who are no means loath to stay with them as guests. How many are the ecclesiastics who visit the Monastery for study or rest or pleasure, may be imagined when we think of the crowd of bishops and archbishops and all sorts of canons, major, minor, hebdomadary, and so forth, who swarm everywhere around. We have a Cardinal Archbishop with all his countless retinue, here in Naples; there is the Archbishop of Castellammare Stabia, some ten miles off; ten miles beyond, the Bishop of Sorrento; down in the Valley leading to Salerno is the Bishopric of Cava; whilst the Monastery of La Trinità and its ecclesiastical dependencies are under the care of the Abbot who holds jurisdiction as a Bishop and wears the Mitre. Scarcely four miles away from thence is Salerno, with its Archbishop, who, by the way, has the honour of two extra steps to his throne, thus made a Pontiff's throne; other Archbishops having only five.

Amongst the visitors who found their way to *La Trinità* was one of the most conspicuous persons of the present times. One of the literati on a par with the historian of Literature, the great historical writer, and poet, Father Tosti of Monte Cassino,—the liberal thinker, the passionately Italian priest. Different as he was from Father Tosti, there were still points of contact and of sympathy between them.—

Father Carlo Maria Curci was the guest of the of the monks of La Trinità, and Padre Benedetto was delighted and thankful to make this visit the opportunity of seeking his sage, spiritual counsel, and the benefit of his profound learning. The magnificently liberal and Christian tendencies he had shown in the publication of a series of works, a translation of the New Testament; a work—on Vaticanism, *Il Vaticano Regio*, in which he ascribes all the evils of the present condition of the Church to the pride of pomp and power, the very life-breath of the Roman Papal Curia and Court. If his love of the truth had led him to publish the former, and the love of righteousness to give to the world the « Vatican »; large humanitarian sympathies had lead him to publish his « Christian Socialism. »

To him then Padre Benedetto turned with reverent hope, that one who thus loved the Bible, and who had made it his life's study, and given a splendid translation of it to the Church and to the world; who had so bravely dared to face censure and persecution by striking a mighty blow against priestly pride and ecclesiastical power, might help him; and the more was he hopeful as this famed Father Curci was a Jesuit — one of the Order that is the very incarnation of Catholic thought and life, — and indeed had been the public champion of the Jesuits.

Padre Curci acceded to the invitation of the

Englishman so gladly and so graciously, as to make Benedetto feel at once at home with him. The Jesuit Father and the Benedictine monk were seated in the somewhat large, though modestly furnished, cell, and soon were intensely absorbed in conversation.

« I sought this interview, » said Padre Benedetto, « and am very grateful to think that one like you should care to sympathize with me in the spiritual conflict that shakes my faith, and makes me very miserable. Your desire to give the gospel not to the priesthood only, but to the people, makes me bold. You see I have heard that you published and distributed in Rome some thousands of copies of your translation of the New Testament. This takes me back in thought to olden times, when my whole life was lived in the very atmosphere of Bible truth, where church and society, even those who make but little profession of spiritual religion, breathe in with every breath a spiritual, intellectual and moral vitality which only can be known where the thought of thought, the monitions of conscience, and the stirrings of the affections are, if not directly and consciously, indirectly and involuntarily, saturated with and influenced by a Christianity, the ambient air of which is the scriptural truth of God. Dear Father Curci, I feel I can confess to you I feel most terribly that I am a spiritual starveling, in a hungry and a thirsty land. I left my olden faith and almost puritan worship; taught

as I was to regard the simplicity of the gospel as an arid soil,—a fruitless, flowerless, barren, desert land; well, here, amidst all the profusion of foliage and bud and even bloom, instead of the holy fruits of the Blessed Spirit—peace and love, meekness and joy; instead of the fruits of righteousness and the flower of the blameless life; all seems on nearer sight but as the growth of the seed the enemy has sown; tares, tares, tangles of wild flowers, and every here and there noxious plants and poisonous herbs; the evil has choked the good seed of the Word. Where is the national Christian conscience, that should be the very soul and life of peoples like this glorious Italian people, who live under the very shadow of the Papacy where our holy faith has reigned supreme? The garden of the Lord, the Church, seems overrun with tares, rank tares, that seem to choke the wheat. »

« Ah! Fra Benedetto, » responded Father Curci, « I cannot contradict myself; I cannot deny what I have written and printed. You ask me: where is the Christian conscience? I cannot answer but in words that you may know I have graven on the Introduction to my translation of the New Testament to which you have referred: « Very little of that we call Christian Conscience remains. * * * The fact is that although some respond most worthily to their vocation as Christians and to their character as holy ministers, in general, and in by far the greatest number,

the Christian Conscience is obscured and weakened and in others it is extinguished or nearly so. There are but few Moralists who would not countersign the passport to the Kingdom of heaven for any Christian who celebrates Easter, attends the Mass, and observes the Festas, fasting as a not unpleasing gastronomical change; not doing any grave harm to any one; but absorbing all his life in laying up riches. The sweet odour has been overcome by the filthy stench; the salt becomes more and more insipid; the light vanishes in darkness. And this, in the land of the *Crusades, of Cathedrals, of Libraries, of Codices, of the Somma of S. Tommaso, of the Divina Commedia, of St. Francis of Assisi, of Fra Angelico.* »

« But what is the cause of this terrible declension and degradation of the Christian conscience? » asked Benedetto.

« The principal causes have been evidently the Reformation in the XVI century. The so-called Philosophy of the XVIIIth, and the French Revolution » replied Father Curci.

« That the cataclysm of the Reformation shook Europe and sent a trembling thrill to the furthest shores of earth few will deny; whether they be Catholics who regard that crisis as if Typho had turned and stirred and roused himself until the mightiest mountains of authority and spiritual power were shaken to their very base; or whether it be the Pro-

testant who regards the Reformation as the revival, the uprising of mind, of conscience, and of truth betrayed; — humanity in short, that feeling her bonds, hampered and fettered, takes her chains and breaks them, flinging her broken fetters in the very teeth of her oppressors: — in any case it is allowed the Reformation marks a most solemn crisis in the history of humanity; but then, the question is: for good or evil?»

«For evil! — surely yes, *for evil.* The Monk that shook the world challenged, defied, the Church! He roused the myriads of languishing humanity only, always, but too ready for sedition and open rebellion against *authority* and *spiritual rule:* — the altar and the throne were levelled to the dust. Then from below the altar, and from beneath the throne, came out the hydra-headed monster of a false Philosophy, a bloody Revolution, and all the false and hellish brood of Unbelief and Indifference, and all the accumulating horrors of corruption, lurking in the home and family, in the church and world.»

«A painful sense of wonder is engendered in my soul as I hear you deliver the sentence you pronounce, — «*for evil*» — Father Curci, — I do not exactly find words to express it; it is something like this: how is it that the Reformation marks a time of decadence and of ruin for the Latin races, where the Reformation was smothered and died out; whilst it marks the period of a new life for the nations that

shook off what they thought and called their shackles and were free. The commercial and intellectual prosperity of England dates from the Reformation. That mightiest of all Religious movements baptized as 'Methodism' arose and grappled with the prevailing infidelity and shameless immorality and lifeless indifference, and all the dark brood born of the Reformation, and of incredulity and bloody Revolution; and now historians write what it has done for England — the wave of spiritual life washes the furthest shores of earth, and all that is best in the religious life, and spirit and movements of the present day may be traced more or less immediately to it. It was, despite any evil consequence, the outgrowth or the abuse of the principles of the Reformation; despite the chilling perversions of the Philosophy of unbelief and doubt; despite the aftersweep of Papal influence still lingering after the sundown of her day, that there came the great Revival. Take two men of the same period. Wesley and St. Liguori,—Methodism, and the Order of the Redemptionists—the spiritual and social good wrought by men and movements of the same period. They both attempted the spiritual renovation of the masses. What an immense difference in the spiritual and even social results. The one represents a wave of spiritual life uplifting the people, enlivening the churches, over flowing denominational bounds, touching the widest sympathies and interests of the

world. The other but gives a Sainted Doctor who dies beneath the ban of the Church, a traitor to the Pope, a Theology, the wildest infatuation of a superstitious mind; a casuistry for Confessors unfit to be read by penitents. A Saint only discovered by Infalllbility to be a Saint long after death—and the Marian Order of the Redemptionists.

« Spiritual life developed in England where the Reformation triumphed. Christian Conscience dies out where the Reformation has been suffocated. »

« My only answer » said Father Curci, « is the greatly differing characteristics of the Latin, and the Teutonic peoples. What is the life of one, may be the destruction of the other. »

« I was astounded and very deeply moved by reading in your Introduction what you said in regard to public conscience ignoring Christ »—said Benedetto, adding: « Christ is the life of conscience, the light of every man that cometh into the world. If Christ be unknown, is it any wonder that conscience declines and dies out? In England, in the churches where Christ is honoured as the life-light of every human soul; as the redeeming love confessed by the church as the only Salvation; where the Holy Spirit is trusted as the only renovating moral power, the Christian Conscience has become more a living conscience; never was there a period in which Conscience, the universal Christian Conscience, was more astir to the spiritual,

moral and social needs of all classes of society at home, and more earnest in seeking to meet them, than the present; nor was there ever a time when Christians in general were more alive to the grand ideal of the Salvation of perishing humanity the wide world over, or more determined to win the Kingdoms of the World for Christ. Where Christ is the grand Ideal, the grand Exemplar, and stands out alone the great Redeemer 'mighty to save',—He shows himself to be the 'Resurrection and the Life.' But do remind me of what you wrote of Christ, and of the Christ-conscience, — Father Curci. The Jesuit Father replied:

« Our Lord Jesus Christ being, according to the sublime word of Paul, Apostle and Pontiff of our Profession, the Head of His mystic body, the Church, it follows that His divine person, His works, His teaching, and his example ought to be, if not the only object, certainly the principal and capital object of the knowledge and consideration of the faithful. Where is the Christian, or ecclesiastic, who can deny this? It was thus the Church formed in the peoples Christian Conscience; of late. however, it is most lamentable, but only too certain, that just the opposite has been done. »

« So that without fear of exaggeration we may aver that the divine person of Jesus Christ, his doctrine, his example, are, amongst sacred things, those least known and least thought of by Christians. »

« First of all and before all Our Lord Jesus Christ has been put on one side, his example, his teaching, his immortal hopes, which are the only light that can safely guide us in this mortal life. Bible and Theological studies are so deplorably neglected that the clergy cannot furnish the people with the knowledge of the faith; they have not that knowledge themselves. »

« Jesus if he were to come to the Vatican, as a wanderer returning to his home, would be ill at ease in those gilded halls, amidst all the purple and the gems. »

« Certainly the divine Codex of the Gospel and the rest of the New Testament could only be regarded as a condemnation and a reproof: and men do not love either reproof or condemnation. »

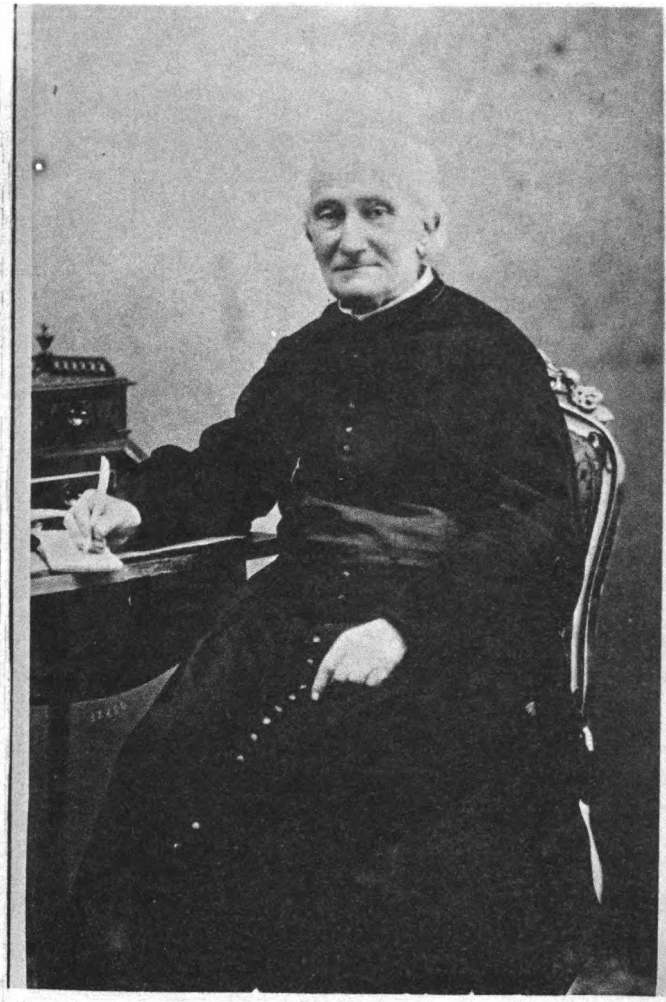
« Here then in this New Christianity, having little or nothing of Christianity in it, that which is least of all thought of, or spoken about, or in which people occupy themselves, is Jesus Christ. It is now as it was in the times of the Western Schism, when the Antipopes to gain the allegiance of a State, a Province, a Commune, or an Abbacy conceded everything: there was nothing they would not concede, even to the negation of the Triune God, or Christ in the Holy Sacrament. »

« You will remember having heard preaching about the Saints and all the Madonnas past, present and

future, and about all sorts of miracles possible and impossible; against the revolutionary spirit of the times; against the Protestants who certainly are free and respected in Italy; the only subject you will not have heard preached is Jesus Christ, his works, his miracles, his teaching. This abandonment of Christ and his Gospel is certainly allowed, if not favoured. The Vatican has every reason to desire that Christ and His Gospel be forgotten. »

« Alas, alas » said Benedetto, « that such a terrible conviction should be forced in upon the mind of a priest of your powers of observation;—that such a confession should be wrung from the soul of a Jesuit Father. »

« But surely, still if our Holy Priesthood be only faithful to the 'Christ and Him Crucified' of the early Church it seems to me impossible that Jesus and the Saviour can vanish from the minds of the faithful or remain deposed from his glorious throne as Lord of universal conscience, and of human life. The church at least celebrates the grand Solemnities of the Saviour's *Nativity, Epiphany, the Presentation in the Temple, the Purification, the Transfiguration, the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and Pentecost,* and although the Festas of the different Madonnas are very much more numerous that those of the Saviour, there are in those I mention an abundance of speculative truth and important fact, sufficient to



form in the minds of the devout a fitting conception of what Jesus is, and what Jesus has done for them; and of what they ought to do for Him. The great French orators, have preached sermons in a profoundly Christian spirit, in a style as brilliant as powerful, and so broad as to give sometimes the semblance of a dissertation or tractate; Bossuet, Bourdalue, Massillon and others. »

« Yes, our preachers have the opportunity,» said Father Curci, « but the present state of religion, the necessary consequence of the bent given to thought and conscience by the authorities of the Church, as well as the private interest of special churches, and the natural desire to obtain the popularity which can only be won by the choice of a popular subject, and by treating it in a popular way, makes the preacher in order to obtain the larger concourse of the people, seek the rather to spend his talents and his time on the exercises and preaching of new cults, which like fashions are more highly valued as being fresh and new. Strange that Rome should approve that at Epiphany the people only hear of the wonders of St. Antonio; and that the Sermon at *Pasqua*, along with other services should celebrate the most recent miracle of some new Saint or some newer Madonna. »

« As if to distract still more the attention of the the faithful from the adorable person of Jesus Christ, from his teaching and his example, new forms of

worship and practices come up unceasingly from every side, that have earnest promoters to inculcate their use, and never without a crowd of followers famishing for novelties, especially when they come from the country where ladies' adornments are so plentiful as to dictate the fashion. »

« Certainly in our churches our Curés on Sundays give an explanation of the Gospel from the Gospel for the day, as is prescribed by the Council of Trent; indeed, as you know, there are some Dioceses in which the neglect of this three times running means *suspensione a divinis*; so, though rarely, from the pulpit you may hear a little something of the gospel facts and documents. But for long years I have been the witness of what miserable things these preachments have been, and of how, as only a rare exception, has been given that which ought to be the daily bread of the faithful. »

Father Curci continued: « And then, here, amongst us, it is very, very rare that the priests are able to give, as it ought to be given, the Gospel story. In the Episcopal Theological Institutions, (*Seminarii*) it is rare that the necessary study of the sacred mysteries is attended to either catechetically or by preaching, and when the young clergy leave, no one is accustomed to think any more about them; indeed it seems as though a real study were made to distract the attention of the people from them, and to hinder the

masses from thinking ever so little about them. It has become very common in these great solemnities, to introduce the worship of new Saints and new Madonnas: » and yet *the return to Christ and to the Holy Gospel is that which alone can save the present generation.* »

« You Father Curci, who are a member of the Society of Jesus, then can and do sympathize with me in deploring the exaggeration of the worship of the Madonna, and realize, as I do, how the multiplicity of Madonnas hides, dishonours and displaces Jesus ? »

« What can or does our reverence of the Virgin Mary become, » replied Father Curci, « if Christ be unknown? All the immeasurable greatness of that poor Jewish maiden, perhaps an orphan, only some fifteen years of age, depends on her mysterious Maternity; she became, by the Holy Spirit, the Mother of God. Only those who know the Deity of the Son can know the wonder of the Mother, and know how noble and holy and fruitful is the Worship of Mary. »

« How strange it seems to me, to hear those words from you, Father Curci,—the Mother of God. » She was the Mother of Jesus, who was our Lord,—God manifest in the flesh. But can the Eternal commence to be ? Can God have a Mother ? . . . . But no,—forgive me, sliding thus into discussion; the rather let me ask you, if what you yourself have said

and written does not irrefutably show that it is the terrible system of Saint and Madonna worship avowed and approved by the Church itself, which has displaced Jesus and hidden beneath the dust-heaps of superstition, and the grit and scoria of the ever-growing myth, the one divine vision of the only Saviour, of whom the Sacred Scriptures say: Look unto ME and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth ? »

« I tell of facts,—I must cease to answer, when that reply might be in contrast with the dogma of our holy faith. My programme is: in *worship*,—more of spirit and less of multiplicity and materiality of form; fewer Madonnas, fewer Saints and more of Jesus Christ, by whom the Madonna, and the Saints are what they are. In *discipline*,—more liberty for love, than obligation by command and penality; in preaching, more of the Scriptures and knowledge, than of modern revelations that are more or less trustworthy and of modern miracles that have less authority than those of the Bible. »

« It makes me wonder to hear you speak thus. A Jesuit, one of the Order so rightly regarded as most of all devoted to this cult of Mary: one who has been the famed Champion of the Jesuits, and who has dared to enter the lists tilting against so great a mind as Gioberti: » said Benedetto. In all their devotional writings they are always put forward as most passionately devoted to the Worship of the

Virgin. I read the other day in the '*Glories of Mary*'— of St. Alfonso, the following instance of their most servile devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

Father Jerome de Trexo, of the Society of Jesus, exulted with joy and jubilation in calling himself the Slave of Mary, and in token of his servitude, he frequently visited a church dedicated in her honour,—and what did he do in that church? On entering it he bathed it with his tears, he then swept it with his tongue and cheeks, kissing the floor a thousand times as he remembered that church was the abode of his beloved Queen.

« Are you in revolt against the sympathies and working of your own Order? »—asked Benedetto.

« I am a *Jesu-ite* still, and ever, and to the death! »

Such has been the exaggeration of adoration of Mary, and the exaltation of the Virgin to the honour of Deity that it has called forth even in modern times the most solemn protest, even from Roman Catholic Writers. *Theophilus Reynaud*, a Jesuit of Lyons, wrote and published a work entitled, '*Diptycha Mariana*' in which he strongly censured some of the sentiments avowed by preceding writers particularly those which ascribed to Mary attributes and acts which only belong to God the Father or to Christ the Divine Son.

To such an extent, indeed, had the desire been carried to supplant Jesus and substitute Mary in His stead, that in the sixteenth century Romish writers attempted to make the Christian era begin not from the

« Birth of Christ, » but from the « Birth of the Virgin Mother of God. »

* * * * * * * *

« And what has been your way of working and your success? Nothing could interest me more than to trace these movements within the pale of Holy Mother Church, and see how far they are likely to effect the restoration of the Christian faith?» asked Benedetto.

« I need not but repeat what I have printed. My life has been absorbed in my translation of the New Testament into Italian from the original; of my success the church and world of letters now must judge: »—responded Father Curci.

« The virtue of the Holy Scriptures, and most of all, of the Gospels, as a power to generate and reawaken faith in the soul, is: that we have in them the very words of Jesus not as of an author who is dead, but as of one who lives and reigns in us. He is one with us as He and the Father are one. It is like conversing with Jesus. What the incarnate Word did once visibly, conversing with men, he now does invisibly, working in the Church, and speaking in the Gospels, with an inward, arcane speech. »

« I am happy to think that the reading of the Gospel by sincere and simple minds, who knowing little and suspecting less of the distinctions between Catholics, Heretics and Schismatics, seek there trustfully the truth, may by the aid of divine grace, in-

generate in their souls that true faith in Jesus Christ by which they may be if not united to the one Body, yet certainly drawn into the spirit of the Church, and thus be in a better position to gain eternal life than many who are Catholics only by baptism, and who never seek to understand, not even out of historical curiosity, who is this Jesus Christ, in whom they say, and perhaps even think that they believe. »

« Your hope then is in the circulation of the Gospels; like the Bible Societies,—only you give the New Testament with note and comment, which they do not do? » was Benedetto's comment.

« I published in Florence, in 1873 in the vulgar tongue an edition of the four Gospels. Some 30,000 copies were either sold for a very small sum or given away, principally in Tuscany, and I have reason to believe that good resulted from my poor effort. »

« I took courage, and wrote and printed and published, in Florence itself, from 1874 to 76, 110 Lessons, a Concordance, and an extended Comment on the Four Gospels, with moral reflections such as were befitting the temple rather than the school, and the attendance in Church of an educated audience almost entirely composed of men, confirmed me in the opinion that to 'Explain the Gospels' was the best way of working for the Salvation of souls: » continued Curci.

« And what has been your ultimate success? It seems so strange to me, a Convert to Rome from

Bible Protestantism, to find a Jesuit Father working as the Protestant Churches work. »—Said the astonished Benedetto.

« Ah! here was my disappointment, here my disillusion, » continued the Jesuit. « No one, not a living soul, approved the way in which I worked; this indeed was a poor result, and no one knew it better than myself: but worse, no one even approved my general design or even dreamed of doing so. My five volumes passed almost unobserved; as to the rest, I was simply to be allowed to do what I did; of course there were not wanting open signs and tokens of manifest disrespect; and as I did not sing in chorus with the rest, and worked the newfangled idea of reading the gospels in the Church, and explaining them from the pulpit, people even recognized in me the Protestant. »

As an illustration of what he called dire « *Terrorism* » Padre Curci said that for long and long he was unable to find an Ecclesiastic who dared to help him in the revision of his books, not even under the most solenm promise of absolute secrecy. Above all, they seemed to be held back by an unlimited veneration of the divine power of the Pontiff. It is this, the consciousness that no Catholic without being guilty of *lesa maestà*, can touch the Infallible Papal Omnipotence, that makes the Vatican a Labyrinth of intrigue, and so the figment of the Vatican is sending

to the bad the true Institution of Christ; and all Catholics, lay and cleric, of all orders, though they see and deplore it, and in secret are horrified at it, are powerless,—for no one, dares do any thing that can save it. »

« The way to commence, is, if even it be not possible to say it out explicitly, to insinuate constantly the one great desire 'to replace Jesus Christ in that princely place which is rightly His, in the knowledge, in the love, and in the hopes of this Christian people.' »

What an awful revelation of the spiritual condition of the church and people. A learned Jesuit of European fame for purity and rectitude, who risks all, the thunderbolts of the Vatican, and all that the dark Reign of Terror can threaten, and all that the moral and spiritual degradation of the people can devise and make possible, that he may proclaim the awful fact, that **the Lord Jesus Christ is dethroned by the Christian Church; and that the Christian people, Christward, are loveless and hopeless.**

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« What then is the hope of liberal thinkers and generous workers being able to modify and revolutionize things, working within the Church?—is my last question: » said Benedetto.

« God can do all things, and our hope is in Him, » was the reply. Who can say but He may raise up some mighty spiritual Champion of the truth,

some Hero, of whom the world is not worthy? Who knows, 'His ways are not as our ways,' but that some terrible dispensations of Providence, national, social and ecclesiastical, may not be the divine means of bringing about a renovation of all things? Still I am often in a quandary as to how to escape the fearful vision of a Babylon fallen, stricken as with the thunderbolts of heaven.»

« The principle of authority, of obedience so hems in and presses to the centre the mind, the heart, the life-work of the Priesthood, that all generous aspirations for better things are stifled in their very birth.—My own life and work is an example.»

« What did the protest of Sala accomplish? What the « *Cinque piaghe* »—The Five Wounds of the Church, — Rosmini's solemn warning?»

« What the solemn, suppliant prayer of the 12,000 of the priesthood,—not all simple priests, many illustrious dignitaries, who implored Pio IX to decline the Temporal Power? — The '*Società Emancipatrice*' and their attempt to found a National Church, makes us but little hopeful of a movement from within.»

« What of my own sincere attempt to awaken the conscience of our Christian people to see, to feel, the spiritual degradation of Church, and the loss of moral sentiment? My address to Pio IX, and some words I wrote in private brought on me the obligation to acknowlege as Catholic doctrine the fantasies given

out as such by the « *Zelanti.* » Ah! poor, poor me.

An influential Prelate showed me I might require them to commit the order to writing: but when Cardinal Simeoni informed me that the General was authorized to expel me from the Order, and Monsignor Claski, whom I consulted, answered me: « Father, be persuaded, there is too great a distance between you and yours! They do not want you any longer, and they will turn you out: » I understood all was over for me, and wrote to the General, that if, in order to remain, I was required to make the declaration I could not make in good conscience, they must do what they had determined to do. My position was not worse than that of many who in the same way have left the Order, remaining honourably in the Church as hard working priests; some are worthy Prelates, and today there are two who wear the Purple.

As I published one by one my different works I was obliged to submit to Rome, and show myself a servile zealot to the present authority that tacitly sanctions and promotes the present state of things against which I have written and preached, and against which it is my life-work to protest. This saved my New Testament from the Index. But take the Index and you will find condemned there: '*L'Italia nuova, ed i vecchi zelanti:*'—'*Il Vaticano Regio tarlo superstite della Chiesa Cattolica.*' My repeated

submission to the Papal authority, forced from me, again and again, could not save these; nor my quiet retirement to Naples and Sorrento. I can only confirm what I have written and printed:

"The hinderance to any religious reformation in the Church is resultant from the system of Terrorism by which the Vatican still sustains its position. Terrorism —not the rack, the stake, the hangman's noose, modern civilization has done away with these; but such a terrorism as drives the Italian clergy to such an abasement of the moral sense, as is perhaps without example in history, taking into account the difference of the times. This system of terrorism remains immovable because based on interest, official duty, friendships and relationships, an unlimited veneration of the divine power of the Pontiff.***** As a Catholic cannot, without doing wrong, touch the infallible papal omnipotence, there follows this strange consequence, that while that figment, the Vatican, is sending to the bad the true institution of Christ, Catholics both lay and cleric, of all the orders, see it, bewail it, yes! and in their secret heart are alarmed at it, but no one dares do ought sufficient to save it. I read in a history of old Spain that as it had been forbidden there, under pain of death to touch under any circumstances the king, it happened that in a public and evening festa, the king's royal mantle took fire, and you may imagine the universal fright, not so much for the fire, as on account of the impossibility of helping the king encircled by the flames. All stood still in a circle round him, looking on in silence and afraid, and as his Majesty could not, or would not, give permission to touch him even in that extreme case, he ended by being burned alive, but bearing away with him inviolate all his royal prerogative."

« To touch the Vatican, the Pope, is to touch God. Ah !—here is the power of the Papacy,—its spiritual, infalllible, intangible Authority. »

« I saw the causes of all this spiritual ruin where San Pier Damiano and Bernardo had marked them out long before, — in that immense, immeasurable mass of wordly interests, constituted and consolidated around the Popes, forming one immovable system based ever and entirely on their infallible omnipotence: the system which in so much as it embraces both *Curia* and *Corte*, I call the Vatican. »

« This agglomeration of human interest around the Pope has caused the loss even of the spiritual ideal of the ministry, so that in it no one can be found now who serves Christ, or the Church, except for present mundane utility. »

« It was the tremendous influence exercised over the Pontiff by these mundane interests which caused the schism of the *Reformation* by which one-third of the Christian world was separated from Rome. The same alienation is taking place now to the grievous detriment of both civil and religious society. Society is estranged cruelly and gratuitously from all, even indirect Christian influences. The Vatican has driven the Italian clergy to a degradation of the moral sense without example, if we take into account the different conditions of the times, and all this is the effect of a *Reign of terror*, which oppresses the flower of the

ecclesiastical Order of our land. I repeat it, there are no longer, thanks to modern civilization,—torture, the stake, the hangman's noose; but times could not be worse than they are. »

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Painful in the extreme was the practical meaning of this life-experience of Father Curci, as it cut in and jagged to the very quick the soul of poor Benedetto. He had left the sure, safe moorings of Bible faith, and of the life-power of the Holy Spirit of God in the individual and collective Christian Life: He had hoped a safer, surer Tower of Refuge in Ecclesiastical Authority. Instead of finding in it the certainty of belief, and a valid means of Reform and Restoration for the Church, this Jesuit, by his life-martyrdom demonstrated Papal Authority to be only an arbitrary will; a will manipulated behind the scenes by astute, wily, ill-meaning men:—a network, Labyrinth of low, earthly interests and intrigue, a **REIGN OF TERROR** that suffocates the sublimest aspirations of both clergy and people; banishing Christ and the Gospel; and degrading to the utmost vileness the very ideal of the Christian ministry; you can no more touch, much less question, that authority, than you can touch or question God.

MONTE CASSINO.

THE MARQUIS DELLA TORRE—PADRE LUIGI TOSTI.

Benedetto had made the acquaintance of the Marquis della Torre, well-known at one time in liberal Society at Rome, for his Italian sentiment and devotion to the cause of Italy; indeed his home had been the meeting-place of many of the Italian Patriots, and in times when it was necessary to have some trusty family that could offer their salon for Receptions, and gatherings of the friends of Italy; and where modes of action and ways and means could be arranged without exciting the attention of the police.

He had been a Monk of the Benedictine Order, Cassinese, resident in their magnificent Monastery in Perugia, known as San Pietro Vincioli; the ecclesiastical career having been thrust on him as the result of family interests and mundane arrangements. Conscious that the priestly life, and above all monastic

seclusion, was not for him a divine vocation, he threw off the cowl, cord, and vest of his Benedictine profession and marrying a lady of princely family from the North of Italy, he sought to fulfil the duties of a true-hearted Italian citizen. A large portion of his resources were utilized for the promotion of the Revolution, the fickle goddess Fortune did not smile on some of his generous projects for the development of Italian commerce and the agricultural prosperity of the land; perhaps his early ecclesiastical training had unfitted him for the weary and pitiless struggle of commercial life and the unthankful competition with the Shylocks of the workaday world; certainly he was not what money getters would call a great success. Still, he stood fearlessly by his colours, and whether in Paris, where in exile he found for a time a hospitable refuge and modest employment, or at home in the thankless land of his birth and love, he was still and ever the patriot-christian and the Christian father in his home, in this Naples, the city, of his election. All the many gracious impressions of Benedict the founder of the Order to which he had belonged and many happy recollections of his life in the Convent at Perugia, despite the error he had abandoned of his own free will, were still a sacred bond which led him to think and speak of those with whom he had lived in common in a deeply affectionate manner.

It was no wonder then that in meeting our Benedetto at the house of a common friend in Naples, that the religious condition of the times, and the literary and social state of Italy, should be a happy subject of conversation equally pleasing to them both. Benedetto spoke to him of the interview he had with the grand old Jesuit, Father Curci. The Marquis told him that in this crisis there were others who, in the Italian world of letters and sociology, were doing a good work; adding that many intelligent watchers, sentinels amidst the dreary darkness of the long, long night, peering and searching for the first dawn of coming day, fancied they saw in these efforts of Curci, and even in the suggestion of 'Conciliation'—between the Vatican and Italy as mooted and sustained by Father Tosti, a fellow monk, not doubtful signs and tokens that the Holy Father, Leo XIII, was at last turning hopefully to the great work of the spiritual regeneration of the Church; that these and other like efforts of noble writers and workers were but *baloons d'essai*, but feelers, testing how the public mind was prepared for, and demanded, a more simply Christian faith and an honest national policy.

He spoke with the warmest enthusiasm of this Neapolitan, Father Tosti; of this lucid and fecund genius, who in the long course of his austere life had never severed his religious faith from devotion to Italy. He described him as faithful to the motto

of the Founder of the Order: 'ORA ET LABORA;' having consecrated his whole existence to the more difficult researches of ancient historical documents, and as having been successful in correcting many historical mistakes, and as having shed new light on many obscure points in Italian history. He mentioned as some of his more important works:—the *History of Monte Cassino; of Boniface VIII; of the Lega Lombarda, of Abelard and his times, of the Council of Constance, of the Countess Mathilda,* his translation of *Sallust, the Psalter of the Pilgrim, the Psalter of Mary* and the *Book for the Poor;* he spoke of the special interest excited by a little book he had just published and that had made a very profound impression in Roman Catholic and Liberal circles; this was on the 2nd June 1887, six or seven days after the Pope in his Allocution had implied the intention of coming to some peaceful arrangement with the Kingdom of Italy. The Pope said: '*We desire that the minds of all Italians may enjoy a calm tranquillity and that there be taken away once for all the deadly discordance with the Roman Pontiff,*'—offering to aid in bringing about the safety and prosperity of the Italian State. Only a few days before Humbert I, the King of Italy, had stood on the threshold of the Cathedral at Florence, together with the Archbishop of Florence, the occasion being the unveiling of the new facade. This was a wonder to all. It is said to have suggested to Father Tosti,

the new hope of 'Conciliation'—of which he wrote in his pamphlet. Indeed it was generally understood that the booklet of Father Tosti was but the little feather thrown up on the air to test which way the wind was blowing.

Then came the *triumph* of the counsels of the « *Intransigenti* » the Zelanti, as Father Curci calls them. — The first to turn and fly was the Pope himself, who made public his change of policy in the famous letter to Cardinal Rampolla. Even French influences were brought to bear on the Vatican, hostile to any thing that might tend to the aggrandisement and consolidation of Italy.

The friend of the Pope must be betrayed, must be brought to a public retractation.

The Abbot of Montecasino, Morcaldi, was entrusted with the mission of obtaining a public retractation from Father Tosti: « Assure him, also, » added Leo, « that the retractation shall never be published. We regard it as a favour that Father Tosti accords to Us personally, and we desire to have it as a weapon of defence against the accusations that may be made against Us, but we will never publish it. * * * Tell Father Tosti, that we give our formal promise, the secret will be maintained under the Pontifical Seal,... understand..... the Pontifical Seal of secresy. »

The letter of retractation was written though in somewhat evasive terms; « two days later, » said the

Marquis della Torre, « that letter was published in the papers of the Roman Curia. Poor Padre Tosti could only fume and fret in the Monastery of St. Callista at Rome, and say in his haste: 'all men are liars:' Writing a long letter to the Abbot, who had obtained the retractation from him he says: '*If in 'this world we cannot believe in the word of a Pope, 'what can we then believe in?*' Tosti immediately left Rome and never since has he set foot within the Vatican.

The Marquis della Torre told how from the earliest period of Tosti's career this unquenchable love of country came out in all his ways and deeds. He remembered Tosti's maiden sermon. The Pope then reigning was Gregory XVI, the predecessor of Pio IX. The scene was the church of S. Pietro Vincioli, Perugia. The subject was a Panegyric on St. Benedict: not only did he re-tell the glories of their great Founder, but he told of the country's woes and of hope for Italy, till all who listened were wrapt in astonishment and wept or vowed a patriot's life. Many thronged around the preacher who had touched a new chord, had swept a lyre that had long, so long been hanging unstrung on the willows. 'Would he give them but a copy of the oration?' He did so—the Marquis sat up through the long hours of night; the morning gave one copy to his admirers, — and in a day or two the copies multiplied and the rumour

reached the ears of Gregory XVI of how that worse than heresy, a patriotic oration, had charmed the listening multitude.

It cost the Abbot who had allowed young Tosti to preach the loss of the Cardinal's hat: such want of foresight, or such unfealty to Rome, made even the Abbot unworthy to sit amongst the Princes of the Church.

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Here was a new experience for Benedetto: — a glimpse within the Vaticanism deplored by the Jesuit Curci. A revelation of Curialism; of even Papal falseness. A pratical illustration of how impossible it is for new light and love to stir itself into life, and recreate corruption into beauty and order and health-giving power? A Pope, and such a Pope, as Leo XIII,—who of his own free will, or as the tool of others, belies his most sacred promise and betrays his friend and coadjutor.—Who extorts the semblance of a retractation which he knows cannot be fully sincere, — then breaks the Pontifical Seal of secrecy! Whilst Benedctto felt deeply and piteously for Tosti, knowing, but alas too well from late esperience, what sacrifice of reason, conviction, even honesty, the law of Papal obedience requires and exacts, he sees the leader of the Patriot priesthood, prostrate before the Infallible who extorts from him, as by the Judas-kiss of deceptive friendship, a confession which he knows to be but

insincere; hoping thus to bewilder, and deceive—the Church,—the World.

Could Benedetto but see the wording of that retractation it might sustain his waning confidence in the great Writer and great Thinker. The Marquis is at his side, « Yes he can show him a copy of Tosti's retractation. » He reads, thankfully he feels, there is no withdrawal of the '*Conciliation*' promulgated in his book. Indeed there is the reaffirmation of 'Conciliation' as having been the promise of the Pope himself. Then Tosti has happily saved his honour by evading much, and by throwing all the burden of the rest on the shoulders of Pope Leo and his Allocution.

The evening *Conversazione* between the Marquis and Benedetto is wound up with such delightful recollections of the Founder of the Order, of the general spirit and temper of the Monks during his stay in Perugia that the hours swiftly pass away. None but the lay monks, said the Marquis to Benedetto, in bidding him goodnight, 'ever repeated the Rosary.' The whole spirit of the Convent was adverse to the superstitious worship of the Saints and the Madonnas. You may think of my fellow monks as almost Jansenists. Certainly the Rule of Benedict did not accentuate either the one or the other evil I have mentioned, it gave a noble place to work in contradistinction to mere mystic meditation and prayer.

The conversation had done its work. Benedetto

would visit Monte Cassino, he must go there; and he might see Father Tosti there.

Amidst the ghastly hopelessness of any spiritual regeneration of Italy as seen from a mere human standpoint, one other possibility of better things gleamed like a dawn-light on many minds. To hope for Reform from mere Ecclesiastical Authority, in and by the Church, of and by itself, was but mere folly. That authority meant the suppression of the faintest, as of the mightiest longing for those better things.

In the good providence of God another Authority had risen into existence. The marvellous Revolution had given birth to a National life—side by side with the Papacy, there was now Italy. For once at least that *Labyrinth of self-interest and intrigue*, the Vatican, had been defeated. — Rome was now the Capital of Italy, and the Quirinal had been wrested from the Vatican: the Italy of Rome, the Rome of Italy, meant the existence the another Authority—deposing or holding in check the Authority of the Pope, at least in things temporal and national. Might not then the interests and Authority of national, of Italian life, confronting and counterbalancing the usurpation of Spiritual Authority give such freedom to the Apostles of truth and righteousness as might initiate the regeneration of the Church and people? Many prophets foretold this; many noble believers anticipated it. Many

devout and faithful hearts prayed for « *La Conciliazione,* »—the Reconciliation of the Church and State. Perhaps the most energetic of all the Prophets of « Conciliazione » was this worthy monk, Padre Luigi Tosti, of Monte Cassino.

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MONTE CASSINO.

« *The Lord be merciful unto you, my Sister:* » said the Abbot, the great Benedict: « *What have you done?* » *You have rejected my prayers* » answered Scolastica, « *but God has been more merciful:* »—thus the brother and sister remained together till the morning, engaged in prayer and praise.

It was our friend the monk of La Trinità who was repeating to himself the story of the great Benedict and his loved twin-sister Scolastica; and of the last meeting of the brother, the founder of the Benedictine Order with his sister Scolastica, as told by Pope Gregory the Great.

This last interview had been recalled to the mind of Benedetto by the vast remains of the Seminary of Monte Cassino, occupying the site of the more ancient Convent of Plumbariola. When her brother came to his mountain Monastery, according to the legend, he was guided through the windings in the Apennines to a spot where stood a temple dedicated to Apollo and a grove to Venus, by two angels, or

by two birds. This was after thirty-six years spent at Subiaco. She, Scholastica followed him, and established for herself a religious house in the valley below, it is supposed at Plumbariola: although it is not known that she took any vows, she had privately dedicated herself to God from childhood. There she devoted herself to a life of prayer with a number of pious women, her companions. At her last interview with her brother, after they had passed the day together in religious exercises, Scolastica implored Benedict to remain with her till the morning, that they might praise God through the night, but the Saint refused, saying that it was impossible for him to be absent from his convent. Then Scolastica bent over her clasped hands and prayed, and though the weather was beautiful and there was not a cloud in the sky, the rain began to fall in such torrents, accompanied by such terrific thunder and lightening that neither Benedict, nor the brethren could leave.

This was the memory awakened in the mind of our monk Benedetto as he made his way up the winding, zig-zag road leading from the town of St. Germano, where he had spent the night, and which now lay beneath him in the valley. There was the old Roman Amphitheatre, all perfect without; all ruins within. Time had been more merciful than man. Through the valley above which he was rising flowed the river, the Garigliano, by the wayside were the small

oratories offering shelter from the sun and storm, and commemorating the Benedictine story; the views were indescribably lovely, and the mind of the traveller wandered out, near and afar, revelling in the historical associations studding all around both hill and dale.—Hannibal intending to occupy Casinum to hinder the advance of the Consul Fabius on the Campania, but by a mistake of the guide was conducted to Casilinum. The Villa of Varro, described by Cicero, where Mark Anthony indulged in those orgies against which the Latin orator poured forth his classic eloquence. He thought over that battle scene won by Gonsalvo da Cordova and in which perished Pietro de' Medici, drowned in the Garigliano by the overcrowding and sinking of a boat after the defeat.

«How changed are all things,» said Benedetto, as glancing at the little guide-book in his hand he read: since the times when the Abbot of Monte Cassino was the first Baron of the Kingdom of Naples, the Lordly Administrator of a Diocese composed of 37 parishes; whilst amongst the dependencies of the Abbey were 4 Bishoprics, 2 Principalities, 20 Countships, 250 Castles, 440 Towns and Villages, 336 Manors, 23 Seaports 33 Islands, 200 Mills, 300 tracts of land, and 1662 Churches; but now although like the Monasteries at La Cava, and that other great Benedictine Monastery at Catania, it has escaped conversion into private property, like other religious houses, it stands a solitary, lone re-

membrancer of past greatness; a sacred place in which literature hoards and treasures up precious heirlooms of the past. As Benedetto saw the great building spreading out on the summit of the hill it seemed to remind him of the other, olden Ark, that rested on the slopes of Ararat when the waters of the deluge had subsided. Many were the thoughts both grave and pleasant that glimpsed in on his mind as he went up and up the steeps of the mountain way, passing the Cross in the middle of the road which marks the spot where Benedict had knelt to implore heaven's blessing before laying the foundation stone of the Convent,—there remained they say in the hard, hard rock the impression of his knee. There, on entering the Abbey by a gate guarded by two lions, Benedetto ascended by a low vaulted staircase, the only portions of the great building which can be ascribed to the time of the St. Benedict. On the right a lamp burns before an old statue, in honour of him as Founder. At the top Benedict and Scolastica kneel before the Virgin and child; here the English monk stayed, and knelt also as in the very presence of him who had founded the Order which he had chosen as the Refuge of his soul from the many afflictions and disillusions of life. Here, where the poor peasants come to receive the dole the Convent supplies; here, where everything is a reminder of the sacred legend of Benedetto and Scolastica; of the romance and princely splendour

of baronial times; here in the Holiest of Holies of the literature and the religion of the past; the image of Benedict and Scolastica in view—kneeling before the fair image of the Virgin-Mother and the Child;—surely God would meet him here.

He had been drawn into the meshes of the Papacy rather by the pains and pangs of disappointment than by clear conviction; led on by the charms of the esthetic rather than by the guiding hand of sane intelligent reason; by hasty impulse rather than far-seeing intuition; more by the flashlight syllogisms of an imagination restless, idomitable under the curb of nude fact; nay he had been drawn into his confession of so-called Catholicism, by plot, and artifice, and deception, and the manipulation of all the loves of earth and the more sacred hopes of heaven. The weak side of his character, the tenderest affections of his soul, the strength and the pride of his nature, and the most delicate associations of his family had been studied and worked on, if not as romantically warped and betrayed and wronged, as was Disraeli's 'Lothair.' He was a Papist, according to the diluted Catholicism, administered in our Bible land to those weak souls who coming from the midst of a Christian life full of Christ and of the Gospel, cannot bear the strong meat of Papacy; like Babes in the Papal nursery they are given 'milk' only milk, but not the Milk of the Word,—no, poisoned milk that only

can sate a stunted, dwarfed, rachitic spiritual life.

He has seen only the 'Kindly-light'—he thought it was the 'Kindly-light,' but no, it was only the mirage of the desert that danced before him and receded at his coming,—It had left him plunged in the quagmire of doubt and of a terrible uncertainty, a very contradiction to his new perverted self.

Here, then, before the Virgin and the Child—he kneels, and waits in prayer. There seemed to come, there came, to his inner being a response: 'Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen.' » — It seemed as though God's voice was speaking in him like it was wont to speak to him when he was still a little child; the form of the great Saint, seemed to vanish; the image of the Virgin and Child were there no more: he was uplooking into a Father's face, whilst, softly breathed, he heard, no—he felt, the words: « Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father IN MY NAME he shall do it unto you. »

He rose from his knees and entered the Convent, most graciously received and attended not as a visitor only, but as a brother of the Order. His nationality, his letters of introduction, his associations with the monks of La Cava, all gave special interest to his visit. — But a bitter disappointment met him as he learned that Father Tosti was not there, that he would not return for sometime. Still each of the

fraternity vied with the other in doing honour to their brother-guest.

They showed him the square tower above the gate, and the two chambers with the inscription indicating that the lower part of the tower was that used by the Holy Patriarch Benedict. He then was really looking on the cell in which Benedict passed twenty-three years of his life, and which as the source of monastic law, a Pope has called the 'Sinai of Monasticism.' They showed the upper part of the tower as that where Benedict saw the Vision of the death of Bishop of San. Germano: and where two days after the miraculously prolonged interview with Scolastica, he saw her soul ascending in the form of a dove to heaven.

Her body was laid to rest in the tomb he had prepared for himself, there in the Oratory of St. John the Baptist. Indeed he only survived her forty days which he spent in the most austere observance of his own monastic rule.

He foretold, they said, the very hour of his death: and when the time was come, he stood, leaning on the side of the tomb in which Scolastica was laid: at the foot of the altar he received the Viaticum, and then, stretching out his arms to heaven, died in the arms of his companions. Benedict was laid by the side of Scholastica;—so lovingly united in life, in death they were not divided.

This was enough for Benedetto — but he had seen the vast great Courtyard, and the magnificent fountain in the centre; and the raven hopping here and there, commemorating the ravens that miraculously guided, and miraculously fed him; and the colossal statues of Benedict and Scolastica that guard the ascent to the quadrangle, and the statue of the great Benefactors, Princely, Royal, and Papal, and the great colonnade all round; and the Church, a Latin cross, of so exceeding magnificence that it vies with St. Peter's, and rivals the Certosa at Pavia in the richness and variety of marbles. Of course he visited the Library and its large and valuable collection of documents and miniatures and bulls and pictures. He could not take in more. His mind was wearied and he longed for rest and to revel in the thought of thoughts that he had seen, he had prayed at the grave of the great Benedict.

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Around that grave of Benedict thronged the Memories attributed to him and his Order by the illustrious Italian writer, he glanced over the lines that compendiated the life and work of the great Saint taken from.

He who visits the different parts of all Europe, will find but one man, between the sixth century and the Renaissance, who became all things to all men —a Missionary of the faith that converts the heathen

that so ennobles us, who transcribes the monuments of Grecian and Roman wisdom, who by means of the simple Chronicle provides the continuity of history; who dries up the swampy districts; who tames forests and with the Latin plough broke up fallow ground, and then into the furrows casts the seeds of a future political economy; raises seats of learning in his Abbeys, the cradles of modern Universities; who enlarges the Monastery and transmutes it into a city. The Athlete of faith and of Righteousness entering the Courts as a Prophet, purges their manners, tempers their power, and leading penitent kings into the cloisters made monks of them. In the terrible conflict between human interests and the divine, between the Priesthood and the Empire, at the cry of 'Save, we perish!' he calls forth from the sides of Peter's mystic bark, legions of Pontiffs, his children; who seizing the helm guide it safely into port. His mind Roman, his heart Christian, he was the Comforter of the human soul in the battle for the truth. He opened the arms of Peter, the Venerable, in the Abbacy of Cluny, to receive the sinful Abelard, and of his own sackcloth he made a mantle to cover the sinful, human reasoning of youth. He led Anselm to the knowledge of the Divine existence by the paths of ontological research, forerunner of the great Espousals of reason and faith. Coming forth from the Middle Ages, in the times of the Renaissance, he

met on the threshold of Avellana the exiled poet of the *Divina Commedia*, and gave to him the kiss of peace, and blessed the bread of exile. He sent his monks as first missionaries to the New World, companions of Christopher Columbus in his second expedition to America, to guard him not so much from the fury of the waves as from the blind envy of courtiers. He sent to Tasso his monk Angelo Grillo, who alone of all the powerful opened the the gates of St. Anna to the imprisoned Bard of *Gerusalemme Liberata*; and with the balsam of love he healed in that mysterious soul the double wound of fantasy and love. He sent to the monk Galilei his former disciple Benedetto Castelli, to strengthen him in the consciousness of the truth and the obedience of faith. »

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The one, the great disappointment of his visit to Monte Cassino was the absence of Father Tosti; though to make up for this he had obtained a copy of «the Psalter of Mary.» In this, the work of the greatest of Italian historical *Artistes*, — the ardent patriot, and the daring promoter of '*Conciliation*' between the Church and the Age,—the Vatican and Italy, he trusted he would find Mary honoured, not dishonoured, fair and beautiful, but in her own simple and real charms. He opened the little book and read. The

witchery of the poetry fascinated him: The unmasked blasphemy horrified him.

He read it on his homeward way. Mary is adored as «Queen of Heaven.»—Mary, the Mother of Jesus, according to the Theology of Tosti, if there were to succeed the Reconciliation between Italy and the Vatican would be the Goddess, the Divinity of Italy. Mary—not Christ.

THE PSALTER OF MARY.

There were Psalms, the Psalms of David, altered, the 'Lord' and 'God' expunged, and Mary throned in the place of God himself. He read: "Mary is with me, I will not fear what man can do unto me." "Thou, O Mary, didst take me to thine arms, — thou wert my glory and hast lifted up my head."

In the Second Psalm—the «**Conception.**» The curtain veiling the invisible is drawn back. — God in the midst of eternity looks out upon the terrible sorrow, so very great, the great tempest of wrath, — He stood and struck his brow, as the potter who holds the broken vessel in his hands; he stood as one who meditates his word; then in the solitude of His own lone power God conceived the Woman of his Word. He called forth from their Tabernacles the sun, the moon, the stars; they came as servants to the feet of the Woman of the Lord, and that Woman trod underfoot their splendour, as a Queen who ascends to the throne of her kingdom. God sent her to tread down the Serpent's head, and that mighty Woman trod down the head of the Dragon, and her foot was not wounded by the Dragon's teeth.

He read of **the Birth of Mary.** The prophecy of Isaiah, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given,"

was rhapsodically changed into "Unto us a daughter is given." He read on of **the Presentation.** Within, the temple was dark, or there was only the twilight of the evening, the shining of the Temple lights grow paler, and the flames of sacrificial fires were dying out and the altar of propitiation seemed widowed—then the Virgin stood on the threshold of the temple near to the Priest—a vision of Paradise, the tresses of her hair like gold of Ophir, beautiful as the beauty of innocence; the iridescence of peace trembled around and girded her as though with pardon's soft embrace. The glory of the Lord appeared, and the veil of the Temple was opened, and the Ark of the Covenant appeared!

He read.—The poetry of the Psalm charmed him, the blasphemy of the idolatrous ideal of Mary cut his soul to the very quick,—and yet he knew, he felt, it was only Rome's ideal brought out in vivid colouring. He read of the reverent Adoration of the Archangel Gabriel, in the **Psalm of the Annunciation,** which Rome has substituted for the simple Angelic Salutation.

The **Psalm of the Visitation,** he read: Mary saw how from her faith, as the river from its springs, flowed forth the Redemption of Israel.

The Christmas Psalm did not impress him as so unwonted as the others.

The Psalm,—'**Epiphany**'—was more darkly shadowed by legend: for instance when the Magi offered their gold, the Infant Christ is said to have blessed the offerers and touched their brow and their intellect was filled with light. When they offered incense he touched their breast, and their hearts were filled with love. When they presented the myrrh he took away their splendid mantles and they saw the frailty of their flesh. Ah! Benedetto thought within himself: how could the illustrious Tosti dare to add legend and tradition, which the church has ever

condemned as at least apocryphal, to the holy Word, and merely for the sake of dramatic and popular effect.

He turned over the leaves of the Psalms—**the Presentation—the Flight into Egypt,—the Return,**—noting it is not: 'Who is he that cometh?' but "Who is She that cometh?' That of **the Madonna,** of **St. Joseph, of Jesus lost and found in the Temple,** passed almost unnoticed!

The Passion Psalm, the XVth. **Il Consorzio della Passione,** arrested his attention: Having laid in the rock-cave the lifeless body of Joseph, She, Mary, leant the loneliness of her widowhood on her Son. As to Abraham, there came to Her the voice of God, take thy Son and offer him a burnt-offering on the mountain that I will show thee — and she went up Calvary. She grasped in her hands the knife of Love and with it cut out from her bowels the fruit of her womb and of him made a burnt offering for the salvation of Israel. She saw on the altar of burnt-offering the bitter Chalice of 'Anathema'—within were abomination and desolation; there boiled up the wrath of God, and forth came wailing and lamentation and woe: who can bear to drink the bitterness of that great wine cup? She preceded her Son, and before Him lifted to her lips the Chalice of 'Anathema,' and drank of His sorrow, and was inebriated with the wormwood. Her soul was one with her son in the agonies of his martyrdom. She was with him as he drank of the torrent by the way, and drank down with him of its waters. Through the piercing of her soul the way was opened for the spear thrust into the side of her beloved; and His cry of agony was the echo of Her own maternal wail.

Oh all ye that pass by, behold was there ever sorrow like Hers.

And when the Second Adam reached the threshold of Paradise, God asked him: hast thou eaten of the fruit of the tree, the cross? And the second Adam answered:

The Woman thou gavest me to be my Mother, is she who has given me to eat of the fruit of the tree of the cross, and I have eaten of it. Then the Second Adam entered into the Paradise of Delights, and all his progeny: and the Woman who was his Mother became really the Mother of all living souls.

Such was the saddening effect produced by these terrible assumptions of the communion of passion between Mary and Jesus, that Benedetto could hardly fix his mind on the next Psalm—**the Patronage of Mary**. Gravely and earnestly did he hope that **the Psalm of Resurrection** might bring out the unique and divine glory of the Blessed Saviour. He hoped for he saw the Risen One thus portrayed, a thousand diadems encircle his brow for his kingdom stretches from sea to sea... He holds in his hands as the sceptre of his kingdom, lightnings and bolts of thunder!..... But at his very side is Mary, as Queen of his Empire, and to her is hymned: Thou art enthroned — Woman—Queen of the Empire of the whole earth.

And yet, thought Benedetto, Mary continued in humble prayer with the rest of the disciples till the day of Pentecost; what will **the Psalm of Pentecost** make Mary out to be? It states explicitly the Apostles did not know the prayer for the Holy Ghost. They knew of prayer to God the Father, but not the prayer for the Spirit's light and power. They must have forgotten their loved Master's word then, thought Benedetto. Could Tosti have thought they had forgotten: "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."—"when He, the Spirit of truth, shall come He shall lead you into all truth.—Ask and ye shal lreceive.—Already had the Christ breathed on them and said: Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Had not the risen Saviour before his Ascension, taught his disciples the things appertaining to the kingdom of God

and told them to await the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye have heard of me,... ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence... Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you..... Whereas the priestly author says: the Apostles came to Mary and said: Thou art the only one of the children of men on whom has come the Spirit and Power of the Most High, it overshadowed thee. **O Mary, teach us how to pray!** and they fell on their faces to the earth; and Mary lifted up her hands over the heads of the prostrate ones and chanted the

Veni, Creator Spiritus.

And the new great day was come; the great and terrible Day of the Lord; then came the sound as of a mighty rushing wind,—then fell on the disciples as cloven tongues of fire—**The world's Pentecost came in answer to the prayer and power of Mary.!**

Padre Benedetto felt as if he hardly dared to read the Psalm,—**Mary, Queen of the Apostles** — it was she who blessed them and sent them forth, and made them Founders of the Apostolic church. It was she who gave to Peter the promise that his brethren should bow down before him. Thou art the key of the House of my Son; thou dost open and all may enter,—thou dost shut and no man openeth. Thou shalt exalt my name above all that are born of woman; and the crown that thou wilt place on my brow shall send forth its rays as the rising sun. **Then the Church has to thank Mary for the Primacy of Peter, for all the tragedy of Papal tyranny and abomination:** the Protestants will say: thought Benedetto.

These were **her dying words:** She had gathered the Apostles from the ends of the earth, her voice grew faint — she joined her hands — she passed away and the Apostles consigned her body to the earth!

It was for the next Psalm to tell how her grave was found empty and how her body had been uplifted to the bright splendour of God. **God hath exalted Mary** above the choirs of Angels, to his own right hand.

The twenty-second Psalm is the strain of the harps taken from the willows: If I forget thee, O Mary, let my right-hand forget its cunning. If I do not remember thee the chiefest of my joys.

Mary the Refuge of Sinners — What a Psalm is this—the Parable of the Prodigal Son—altered, defaced, a lie. "But the Father, no sooner did he see me from afar than he became all pity, in fact broke down, — for **Mary had told him all about me** — his word was pardon—peace! — his word was pardon — peace! Then did he rise to meet me, and threw his arms around my neck.—It was in thy bosom, o Mary, I hid the memory of my sin, and the flower of my repentance.

The twenty-fifth Psalm represents Mary as terrible,—terrible, as the hosts gathered in serried ranks for battle. Her foes she exterminates. 'The fire of our anger will devour their cities, our hands shall be full of their spoils.

Mary, the Morning Star. Hail, O bright star of the morning! When God gemmed the firmament with stars, thou didst shine in his mind; and in thy light God saw the perfection of his mercy.

As the **Ark of the Covenant,** Mary stood face to face with God in the day of his anger.

Thy caress is the kiss of a mother; where thy hand touches, there is no more death, nor mourning, nor lamentation, nor sorrow.

The "Cantico," Psalm XXXI, commences like .David's Psalm: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,' then it shunts off from God to Mary, 'for in all his works he has magnified Mary,' he crowned Mary in the day of his heart's gladness; of the beauty of the

fields has he woven her bridal dress; and the foundation of thrones and the equity of thy Judges has he placed in the hands of Mary. We bless the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit—their Triune oneness—The strength of Mary.

Ave Maria. The earth broke away from the restraint of thy laws; every flower of goodness withered. At the sunset of the day of the Lord every ray of the daylight passed, because it heard not the salutation: **Ave Maria.** O'er that night of darkness She shone forth clear as the moon, bright as the sun: **Ave Maria.** The last sigh of those who weep is silent: **Ave Maria.**

Ora pro nobis:—In this vale of tears, Ora pro nobis. When the thorn and brambles tear our pilgrim feet: **Ora pro nobis:** When the storm-fiend sweeps o'er head, and the whirlwind storm scatters the dust around us: **Ora pro nobis.** In the abysses of the sepulchre, between the valley and heaven: **Ora pro nobis.**

The charm of the exquisite Italian, the wild flights of imagination; the way in which the riches of the treasures of glory by Christ Jesus common to the Virgin Mother and all true believers are monopolized by and attributed to the Virgin only; the blasphemous way in which the Virgin is made one with the Saviour, in the fellowship of his awful Passion, and in the wonder of Resurrection, and in the splendour of His Mediatorial glory,—the way in which Mary, in all, and through all is made to displace Jesus; and all, all this, by one of the most perfect masters of the Italian language, the eminent historian, the learned and moral priest, the representative of the Theology, and spiritual life of Monte Cassino:—published by the authorized houses for the sale of Roman Catholic literature, shook to the deepest depths the very soul of Padre Benedetto. What was this but a Marian faith? Where was Christ and him Crucified?

He had heard of the Psalms of David having been altered so as to substitute Mary for Jesus; He had heard of the Athenasian Creed having been so altered as to make it apply to the Virgin, and of the Te Deum having been changed to express the apotheosis of the Creature, presenting the Virgin of Nazareth as an Idol, as a Goddess; but all this had been calmed and toned down by his being told all sorts of things, such as that these were but figurative espressions after all; that they were but wild love phrases, to be understood in the light of the fact that Mary is but a creature. Now he sees — It is as if the scales had fallen from his eyes, yes, he sees — **All is Mary. No Jesus.** His heart cried out: Oh that I kuew where I might find him!

TOSTI'S MARIAN TE DEUM

We praise thee, O Mary, we acknowledge thee to be Our Lady; All the earth doth venerate and worship thee the Mother of our Christ. To thee all angels, the heavens, and all the Powers of the universe, Cherubin and Seraphin, with voice unceasing cry: Holy, Holy, Holy, thou mother of our God, the heavens and the earth give forth the splendour of thy glory.

The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee.

The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee: the triumphant army of Martyrs, praise thee; the Holy Church throughout all the world, doth ackowledge thee.

Daughter of the Father of an infinite Majesty; Mother of His Only and True Son; Spouse of the Holy Spirit; thou art the Queen of Glory, O Mary.

Thou to deliver man, didst give dwelling in thy Virgin-womb to the Word of God; by thee, overcome the sharpness of death, was opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Thou art seated at the side of God, the coming Judge.

We therefore pray thee help thy servants whom thy Son has redeemed with his precious blood, make them to be numbered with thy consort saints in glory everlasting.

Save thy people, O Mary: and bless thine heritage; support them and lift them up for ever.

Day by day we all bless thee and we praise thy name, in time and through the eternal ages. Vouchsafe, O Mary, to keep us from sin in this our life's day.

Have mercy upon us, O Mary. Have mercy upon us; let thy mercy be on us as we have placed our trust in thee.

In thee have I hoped, O Mary, and I shall never be confounded.

On that very night, in his lone cell—the night of his return, his copy of the Vulgate lying open before him; Benedetto read, he prayed, he vowed: "I am determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.... I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."

Alas! alas! was this the man, the new Gregory who was to conciliate the Church of the Vatican and beautiful Italy—and give her back a Virgin Spouse to Christ!

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TOSTI DEAD. "Up there he lies dead after ten years of exile, embittered by human iniquity, poor, neglected, almost disowned by the Church, of which he was the last ray of glory and wisdom." So said the Roman Press.

"In his sad and desolate old age, and just as he was about to say 'Addio' to the world, of the pomps and vanities of which he knew so little, how the decadence of the Church must have flashed before the mind of the poor, but grand old monk."

"A punishment from above had fallen on his Christian piety, and on his generous and illuminated soul."

ICONOCLASTS.

THE REMOVAL OF THE PICTURE OF THE MADONNA OF THE PIGNASECCA.

« *Ah! mamma mia!* (mother mine) » *why have you gone into the wall?* — cried the poor old man, whom we may call Antonio,—as ignorant, as his appearance was venerable:—Tall, spare, with long thin white hair a crown of honour on his head, he stood reverently uncovered before a wall, now blank, where but the day before had been the image of his favorite Madonna.—The Madonna to whom he used to come day by day, and before whom he used to bow and pray. « *Why have you gone in and hidden within the wall?* » « *It must be because of our sins—of my sins?* » « *When will you come forth again?* »

During that one night, one of the most dramatic episodes in the religious history of this great city had been enacted. Every religious picture and image and shrine exposed for public veneration, in the whole of this vast city so noted for the number of images

and altars, had been removed by the city and police authorities, and safely homed in the nearest parish churches.

It was then that the shrine of the Madonna of the Pignasecca was removed: some say it was actually taken away and homed like the Ark in the house of some Obed-edom: some say it was covered up.

The city had won for itself an unhappy fame as being wholly given up to an idolatry so gross as to be revolting even to the more intelligent Roman Catholics, whose better sympathies were shocked, and grieved by the gross fetishism of the masses, and the miserable petty jealousies and rivalries between Crucifix and Crucifix, Madonna and Madonna, or even between Saint and Saint, and most of all between Confraternity and Confraternity. Then there were those of the lowest of the low who sometimes vented hate and spite and ribald sneer on the poor sightless image, or the still, wooden statue, or the lifeless picture, as though they were at fault because the prayer for the winning numbers in the Government Lottery was unanswed, or the plea for the life of a dying child had not been heard. Like the Hindoos they would blame the Image or Saint if their desire was not realized. Even now when St. Januarius delays the great miracle of the liquefaction of his blood, the devout and ardent worshippers pass from suppliant prayer to grave invective, from wheedling, coaxing

plaint, to direct insult and injury: «Do it, and be quick, you Old Yellow Face, is but a mild and common expletive often heard. Frequently the church echoes and re-echoes to the shouts and cries as of an angry mob.

There was another and a weighty reason why the Government did well in removing all these sacred images from the public streets. On the Saint's day the riff-raff were accustomed to rig up little shrines or *altarini* just below the image or picture, and by plea, cajolery and prank the passers-by were obliged not only to do homage to the Madonna or the Saint, but to put some offering on the collecting plate (made so beautiful by the image of the Madonna) that girls and boys would thrust under face of any persons passing. All this was the occasion of insult, sometimes of harm, and made the passage through some, most we ought to say, of the side streets a peril and a shame.

Now to do away with all this fetishism and avoid insult and injury to peaceful citizens the Government and City Authorities determined on clearing away the whole affair. Early and due notice was given to all interested in the different shrines to remove them before a given date; and the alternative was made most clearly known: any image, statue or picture still remaining would be removed by the authorities themselves and safely housed in the near-

est parish church. Some had the good sense to take their miraculous paraphernalia away; some trusted that the authorities would not dare to brave the ire of the people; some felt too sure the government would not dare to violate what they were pleased to call the religious sentiment of a whole city, to challenge the faith of a whole people and suppress what they regarded as a vital element of a heaven given rcligion for which they were ready to die the martyr death.

But the city authorities had laid out their plans—and in one night the whole of the pictures and statues were removed and placed in safe-keeping. The Madonna of the Pignasecca like the rest.

This was the story of the removal of the picture told to Benedetto by his friend, the Marquis who had been a personal witness of this great act of Legal and Civic Iconoclasm.

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« But why should your hold the Church responsible ıor the fetish abuse of images and pictures ? asked Benedetto of his friend.

Oh ! said his friend, I find the reply to that question is very evident. The Church is responsible because in every way it sanctions and promotes it, by its ritual, its literature, its priesthood from the Pope downwards to the meanest acolyte, and the most insignificant worker in the church. Worship-

ping God through the medium of visible representations is manifestly prohibited. God's people were forbidden to make any representations—to bow down to them. The images Jeroboam set up were symbols of the One True God. 1 Kings XII 28. The Brazen Serpent though a Remembrancer of what God had done, because the Children of Israel had burned incense to it, was destroyed 2 Kings XVIII 4.

Yes but if as Pope Gregory I says: « Images are the books of the unlearned ?..... »

« The Church presents these images as miraculous in themselves, and as objects of worship: » insisted his friend. « That it is really and truly the image or the picture that is supposed by some, and taught by the Church, to have an intrinsic or specifically instrumental virtue in bringing forth miraculous results—is but too evident.

If not, why should the most celebrated of these pictures and statues have a historical biography such as might be most interesting if it only storied the vicissitudes of the great works, which make so precious the great galleries of Italy. Take for example the *Madonna of the Seggiola* of Raphael, at Florence; *or the Madonna della Scodella*, of Correggio, in the Museum at Parma; or his *Egiziaca* here in Naples.

But the way in which these Madonnas are thought of and written and spoken of is as follows:

« *Una relazione storica* of the miraculous way, in which the sacred and venerated Image of the Vergine Addolorata, is found in this Sanctuary of St. Brigida» * * * In this little Tractate *the glorious portents wrought by this her venerated Image* will be set forth so that the pious souls will be fully convinced of *the efficacious power accorded to this illustrious Queen of Heaven and Earth,* whom we venerate under the sweet title of « *de' Dolori* »

And then all that precedes and follows these words is the account of miracle and prodigy wrought through the instrumentality of the Image itself; and its superior miraculous potency over other images and pictures is distinctly stated or else necessarily implied.

What more expressive demonstration than the Madonna of the Pignasecca, could we present of the distinctive idol worship that prevails in the whole of this city; so universal in the whole of the Southern provinces, that indeed flings its malediction over the Papist countries of Europe, and casts the blight of its death-fraught shadow over all the countries of the so-called Christian world.

It is surrounded by idol-gifts; it is enshrined there with the distinctive intention of evoking the worship, the most utterly servile adoration of the people, the divine honours of the Papal Pantheon; it is celebrated by a Festa in which all the surrounding streets, as well as the piazza itself are illuminated,

with variegated lights, and festooned with arches, arches of light of every artistic device, whilst the balconies are draped, funny as it may seem to say it, with bed-quilts, silk and satin and woollen, of every bright and gaudy hue. To Her, the Madonna, and through her, the solemn prayer is made; to IT, to HER,—to IT the picture, that is to HER the Madonna, the solemn vow is made;—in IT that is in Her, the Black Mother, who not merely intercedes, but who COMMANDS in heaven, in earth, in hell, are reposed the most solemn interests and issues of time and of eternity. To IT, to HER in IT, are made the offerings of taper, money, golden brooch and pearled earring.

The Pope himself certificates the miraculous value of the different images. Here is an example:

« God has made use of THIS Holy Image, vene-
« rated in the Sanctuary of New Pompei for the
« bestowment of those many mercies that have moved
« the world. »

POPE LEO XIII.

If the Pope writes thus can you wonder that the people worship the image.

Her name is the first which infant lip is taught to lisp; and to her is cast the last look of the dying The soldier fights under her banner, and the brigand plunders under her protection. Here in Italy as in Spain robbers wear a picture of Mary round their

neck. Anyone threatened by sudden death kisses her image and dies in peace. Can we suppose all this without the idol ?

May is «Mary's month» being specially dedicated to her. — Altars are consecrated to her worship. — Her image is decked with evergreen and flowers, and adorned with garlands and drapery. It is a foolish and a wicked deception for the priesthood and the Church of Rome to say -- *that these images are not idols;* that they are used only as ornaments in their churches: that they are only likenesses that recall the memory of the good and great; that like picture-books they only serve to story the wonder of the past, and to wake religious thought and sacred feeling. Priest and devotee alike know they are presented to be worshipped,—as having a miraculous potentiality.

« My dear Benedetto, » continued his friend, « the Church surely is responsible for its authoritative decisions. »

« The Council of Trent decreed in its twenty-fifth Session that '*Images are not only to be placed in temples*; *but also to be worshipped as if the persons represented thereby were present.*' » The image is declared to be an idol.

« The Creed of Pope Pius IV declares in its ninth article: « *I most firmly assert that the images of Christ, and of the Mother of God, ever Virgin, and also of*

the Saints, are to be had and retained; and that due honour and veneration are to be given to them.' Well do all know that the subtle distinctions Latria, Hyperdulia, Dulia, are pratically null, utterly inefficient to counteract the irresistible psychical and moral forces which in the Papal system are made to tend to, and concentre in, the actual idolatry of images and pictures. Note the necessary effects.

« *That is my Christ* » said an intelligent lady to me in the Cathedral at Milan. « *That always hears me!* »—« *That other one never hears my prayer.* » The Lady was the wife of a lawyer, and had been many years in England. Two crucifixes, — the one her Christ, the other hears not her prayer.

« Does not the whole history of the rise and tragic scenes of the age-long struggle in favour of, and in protest against Image Worship, demonstrate the responsibility of the Church ? »

« The Priests know how the first Christians were animated by an inconquerable repugnance to even the use of images, ascribing their aversion to their descent from the Jews and to their hatred of the Greeks. »

« Fullwell they know the story of the long continued and tragic struggle within the pale of both the the Eastern and the Western Christian Churches, between the Image Worshippers and the brave Iconoclasts. »

« They know how the mighty struggle grew up from the abuse of the sacred memory of martyred saints,

before whose tombs and relics the people worshipped and from the lingering superstition of many who believed that the saints themselves were present in their images, like the departed shadows of the Egyptians which were supposed to find mortal dwelling-place in the images which were placed in their tombs. This they know to be the reason why the images of the saints were accepted as witnesses to baptism, the children receiving their names. They well know how subtilely idolatry wrought its work until some of the images came to be adored as they were said to have been made by Christ himself, and others became sacred because their origin was utterly unknown. Many heathen idols had come down from heaven, fallen meteors,—the Christians too must bow down and worship before the mysterious unknown. »

« Fullwell the more intelligent of the Romish priesthood know, how, from the simple and beautiful symbolism of the primitive Church of the Catacombs, pictures of Saints and martyrs and bishops, and of the Good Shepherd,—the dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the fish or *Ichthus*, the anagram of Christ's name, grew up the use of pictorial representations, and how the practice of Image Worship, of the incensing the images, and prostration before them, spread with great rapidity, until the scandal gave plausible ground for the accusation on the part of Jews and Mohammedans and heretics, and the better-

minded Christians, that the Christian Church was guilty of Idolatry. — That the opposition to this scandalous idolatry was nobly sustained is clear from the fact that Pope Constantine in 713 A.D. issued an edict anathematizing all who « deny that veneration to the holy images which is appointed by the church. »

« Then came out brave, noble, majestic, the figure of the Greek Emperor Leo, the Isaurian: the edict issued by him in 726 A.D., forbade any worship to be paid to images, but without ordering them to be demolished or removed from the churches. Germanus, the Bishop of Constantinople then leagued himself with Gregory II, the then reigning Pope of Rome. »

« The Council of Senators and Bishops summoned by Leo ordered that all images in the churches should be removed to such a height on the walls that though seen the people might not fall prostrate before them. These half-measures satisfied no one, and he sought the inspiration of Hezekiah, who broke in pieces the Brazen Serpent when it had become an object of idolatrous worship to the Jews. In 730 A.D. an Imperial Edict authorized and enjoined the destruction or removal of the Images. »

« In 754 A.D. the Emperor summoned a Council at Constantinople, under the Pontificate of Stephen II. This, the largest Council ever known till then, consisting of 388 bishops, condemned the use and worship of images declaring « *that to worship them, or any other*

creature, is robbing God of the honour that is due to him alone, and relapsing into idolatry. The Emperor finding himself thus supported by so important a Council proceded to burn the images, and to demolish the walls of the Churches on which were painted figures of Christ, and of the Virgin, and the Saints. »

« It seems to have been the wiles and wicked plottings of an Imperial woman, Irene, the wife of the Greek Emperor Leo IV, and the mother of his successor Constantine VI, that brought about the reversal of the Council's decree. Uniting with Pope Adrian she summoned the Council at Nice, 787 A.D.. Three hundred and fifty bishops assembled, and reinstated Image Worship. They decreed that « *The holy Images of the Cross should be consecrated, and put on the sacred vessels and vestments, and upon walls and boards, in private houses and in public ways. And especially that there should be erected images of the Lord God, of the venerable Angels, and of all the Saints:* » *anathematizing all who rejected or despised them*; adding: *Long live Constantine and Irene, his mother, — damnation to all herectics — damnation on the Council that roared against venerable images—the Holy Trinity hath deposed them.* '»

« Yes, Benedetto, it is not because the Church does not know the solemn protest raised in every age against the worship of Images, that she is silent. It is not in her interest to bring the drama and the actors to the light. »

« Image worshippers have certainly no reason to be jubilant over this Council. The Greek Church disowns it. History brands it as the issue of the cruel strategy of a murderous Empress and a Roman Pontiff. Of Irene, history says:—the reign of her husband Leo was so brief, and his death so sudden, that it was suspected he died of poison administered by his wife Irene in revenge for his opposition to her project to introduce the worship of images into the palace. But whether this charge be true or no « to obtain the government for herself, Irene with a barbarity and cruelty almost unparalleled, caused the young man (her son) to be seized and his eyes to be put out.'—What a record is that which is given by Gibbon of this Imperial Fury who instigated the triumph of Image worship! 'In the mind of Irene'—says Gibbon,—'ambition had stifled every sentiment of humanity and nature, and it was decreed in her bloody council that Constantine should be rendered incapable of the throne, her emissaries assaulted the sleeping prince, and stabbed their daggers with such violence and precipitation into his eyes as if they meant to execute a mortal sentence. The most bigoted orthodoxy has justly execrated the unnatural mother, who may not easily be paralleled in the history of crime.' »

« This authorization of Image Worship however, despite the imperial influence of the infamous Irene

did not triumph save under protest. — In 794 Charlemagne assembled at Frankfort a Council of 300 Bishops who reversed the decision of the second Nicene Council, and unanimously condemned image worship. In 814, the Greek Emperor Leo imitating Charlemagne, summoned another Council at Costantinople and also reversing the decision of the second Nicene Council decreed the abolition of Image Worship in the Eastern Churches. »

« Again a woman, the Empress Theodora, appears as the restorer of the great Idolatry. — In 842 A.D. reigning during the minority of her son she summoned another Council at Constantinople, which in conformity with her imperial will restored Image Worship in the East and so delighted were the Greeks that a festival was instituted, called the Festival of Orthodoxy. »

« Well, » said Benedetto, « History is history, — the past is the past, — the struggle-protest of continuing ages however solemn appears like something of gone-by times, but when you remind me of the everduring protest of Protestants, Jews, Mohammedans, — millions, tens of millions, hundreds of millions, one mighty voice reverberating throughout the whole world, one cannot but stay and listen to the protest of the present denouncing all image worship as a base, degrading idolatry. Most certainly the example you have given me in the revolt of the Catholic

Authorities of this most Catholic City, demonstrates how incompatible is this whole system of Image and Picture Worship not only with spiritual religion, but with civic administration and social improvement. »

A PLAGUE-STRICKEN CITY.

THE MADONNA OF THE PIGNASECCA REPLACED.

It was in 1884 that the Madonna of the Pignasecca was restored to public veneration, being replaced just at the corner of the piazza where it still is worshipped. Those who were here in Naples during the tragic scenes of the Cholera visitation of 1884 cannot have forgotten those terrible days of pestilence, desolation and death—hundreds were dying day by day—There were the long and terrible processions of hearses, of old omnibusses turned into conveyances to bear away the dead, the wild wailing of those who mourned the dying and the dead;—the flight of the panic-stricken from their nearest and dearest friends—the dead brought out from the homes of pestilence in shells or coffins only half-covered, — so that in case of swoon the dead and buried if they came back to life might be saved. Amidst all these dread scenes there were the oft-repeated processions, with cross and

banner, passing along the streets; — men, women, children, barefoot,—girls, their long, loose, dishevelled hair scattered wildly over their shoulders, all seeking thus by penance to appease the wrath of God.—God was angry: so they had been told—God was very angry. The Madonna too was angry,—all the Saints of heaven were angry, — the Angels and Arcangels, all angry, very angry. God's breath of anger was the pestilence that walked at noonday, whose arrows were flying in the darkness of the night. God was angry with the people and their Rulers. Where were the Madonnas that saved the city in by-gone times? Where the images, pictures, statues of the saints? They were cooped up in the Churches. They must be brought out. The people demanded in a tumult of wild excitement that the Madonnas and the Saints should be restored! They were restored, — and amongst these was the Madonna of the Pignasecca—She is there still!

* * * * * * *

One of the wildest and weirdest of these processions was that of a crowd of people old and young of the lower classes. Having gathered their families and friends in the dead of night, shoeless, stockingless, with wild, haggard looks, as though they searched in vain, above, around, for hope and help; as though whilst seeking mercy and deliverance at the gates and throne of heaven, they were as ready to invoke

and to implore the souls amidst the purgatorial fire,—or ready to plead for succour at the gates of hell. So passed this sad pilgrimage up the streets and streetlets leading to the Corso; then upwards still beyond, above, to the Church, the venerable monastic Church of Suor Orsola, (St. Ursula.)They move onwards, guided only by some flickering torch, wailing a De-Profundis, in the disharmony of savage, unreflecting despair.—in defiance of the law—(desolation and death had done away with law), — the outstretched hand asked alms,—alms for Suor Orsola,—alms to propitiate an angry heaven,—alms for masses for the souls departed.

Suor Orsola is one of the most interesting of our numberless Convent Churches, and through the kindness of one of our best-known writers, Prof. Terranova, we are able to give the following particulars of the blind faith of the people in the mystic and miraculous energies supposed to have made this convent church a sanctuary for all the afflicted and distressed, and its image a palladium for the city. The nuns, though not numerous, bore the name at least of a not ordinary sanctity.—They belonged to the order of the « *Sepolte Vive* »—the « *Buried alive* ». — What more rigidly holy than a nun? — what more terribly holy than a soul, a life like the BURIED ALIVE—BURIED FOR EVER. — Then the very church itself had a weird, mystic sanctity

that made it just such a place as a procession like the one we have mentioned should seek in a moment of horror and of pestilence. It is said to date from 1656 the time of that most awful plague, more terrible than the awful pest at Milan, so dramatically described by the pen of Manzoni in the *Promessi Sposi:* — more horrible than that of Florence, of which the Decamerone of Boccacio is a historic reminder. Whoever would describe the Plague of 1656 at Naples to English readers might picture it in the same lines of horror, and mortality and desolation as traced the sights and scenes, the death and terror, of the great Plague in London—the dying and the dead fell uncounted, forsaken, shunned. We give the rest of the story of the Church from an old chronicle, only preserved in a rare MS., telling of a church that Suor Orsola had designed and determined should be built on the slopes of the hill.

« It was rumoured that the scourge had come because the vow to build a church upon that site had not been fulfilled. That devoted woman Suor Orsola, her very self, had prophesied that the church would only be crected at a time when Naples would be overtaken by a great calamity." * * * * Then the vow must be fulfilled, or else the vengeance of heaven could never be appeased * * * * The chronicle thus tells of the building of the church: «Everyone became a blacksmith» says the MS. « Immense sums of

money were gathered, and the erection of the church was commenced. Then came the '*gara*' — The very first among the magnates of the people, the highest magistrates, were seen, even the noblest ladies of the city, helping to transport the stones, the wood, the iron, all that was necessary for the building: even the Viceroy, Conte Castello, was seen with a hod upon his shoulders bearing the soil for the building. »

* * * * * *

With death's dark shadow round them, deeper, darker than the night, did the procession of which we have told in 1884 wind its way up to the Church of Suor Orsola, to kneel and weep and pray to the Saints and the Madonnas there. It was a fitting place for them to seek in penitence—it was *the church of the broken vow*, which had nearly two hundred years before brought a still more terrible pestilence than then raged around.—A church, the witness of the broken vow redeemed by the votive gift of a penitent people.—No more fitting altar could they seek. There were impromptu processions all over the city — the hum of business life was stilled;—the shops closed in almost every street, the traffic of the town was stayed — The people fled! There only remained — Fear, — Sickness, pale, ghastly Sickness, — Death, Desolation and Despair!

The following facts we note of earlier visitations

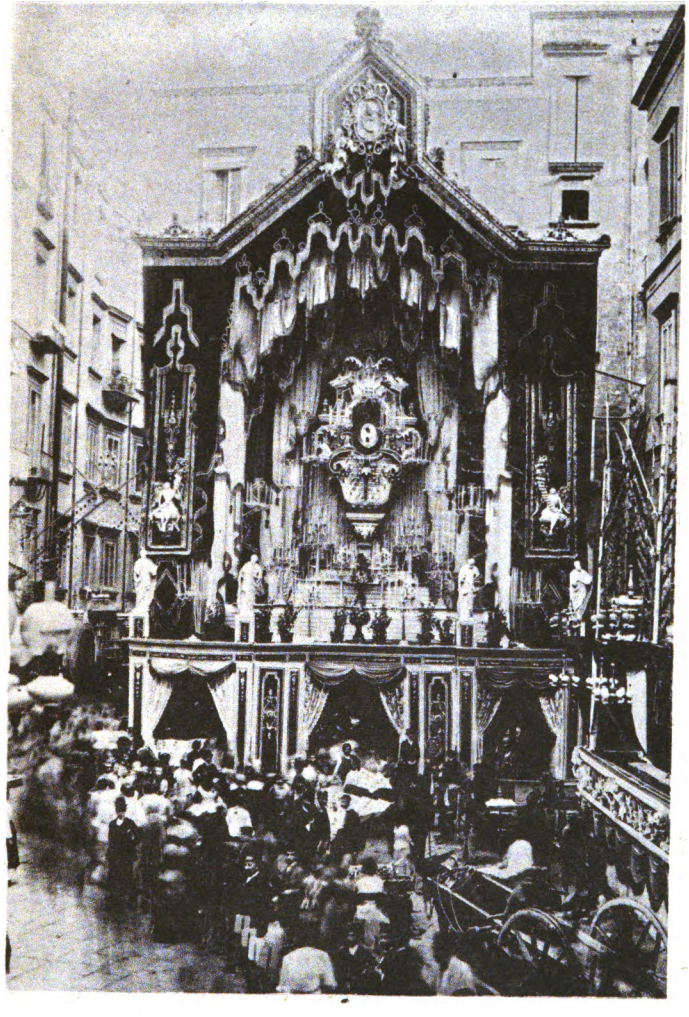
to explain the wild despair of the Neapolitans in the Cholera visitations of our times.

In the year 1656 the Plague in Naples caused the death of 350,000 persons, according to the testimony of Sig. Salvatore De Renzis. All the streets were strewed with corpses, there were none left to bury them — no grave to receive them—the grave-yards were full. 100 Turkish slave prisoners were then let out of prison that they might assist in the removal of the dead; they carried them off in carts to the Catacombs of San Gennaro dei Poveri, to caves without the city walls, to an immense ditch called the Pescina where the Hospital of the *Incurabili* buried the dead, choking up the subterranean caves and passages,—ways hollowed out beneath in the tufa,—from the Pignasecca to Chiatamone; some wide enough to let a carriage pass:—and still the dead lay unburied in the streets and some were burnt.

Celano, a contemporary historian, says that the number of the dead was *four hundred and fifty six thousand*. *Menna*,—*four-hundred and seventy thousand*, including the city and surroundings; he registered in the books of an old Guild, that as many as *nineteen thousand persons* died in one day; and that at one time *eighty thousand* corpses remained unburied.

A little church was built on a rising ground outside Porta San Gennaro, and an old man known as Fra Pacifico attended to it. He lay awaiting burial amongst the dead. — By miracle he came back to life, donned the Franciscan dress, and he was the ready-made monk, Fra Pacifico. He lived on what the faithful ministered to him; he slept in a wooden shed which adjoined the the Church. This was Fra Pacifico the Hermit in the midst of city life.

The faithful, barefooted, bareheaded, tears streaming



from their eyes, hastened to worship and pray to the Image, *imploring* IT to liberate them from the awful plague; and chanting, as they passed through the streets, a hymn. The women sang:

Madonna, all Grace and Mercy,
Who in thine arms holdst Mercy,
To Thee we come for Mercy,
Madonna fair and merciful!

Then the men answered:

Grace grant us, Mary merciful!
As did the Father
Who Mother of God hath made Thee!
Grace, grant us Mary merciful!

Ten times these verses were sung by the women, then by the men, alternately; then *One Gloria Patri;* then the verses were sung over and over, again and again.

In 1815 the plague again visited Naples and lasted six months and a half — the people, beside themselves for terror, again turned to the miraculous Image for safety— A guild was formed, and the image was decked with gems and jewels and votive offerings, and every day the box for the offerings was filled with money. The treasures of the Image were robbed by sacrilegious hands. "But the Madonna did not discover the thieves," in order we are to told, "to avoid unhappy scenes."—A lady sold by public auction her carriage and pair, and gave the proceeds to the Image; the King and Royal family were devout worshippers of it. There is a tradition that once when IT was taken processionally to the church, accompanied by a crowd of people, the four oxen that were drawing the car on which the Image was placed, just as they reached the church door fell down on their knees and worshipped the Image. This legend is still taught and printed.

We cannot tarry in our description of these days

of pestilence.—Then it was in 1884, the Madonna of the Pignasecca was replaced at the corner of the Piazza. There she has won the confidence and wonder of the whole district around by prodigy and miracle and favours she is supposed to have shown to all who have sought pity at her Shrine.

Since then, they say, there has been no ceasing of the wonders she has wrought; — and votive gift and offering have come in—a ceaseless tide of wealth. Princesses used day by day to kneel and pray before Her; ladies of high degree would stay their carriage and get out to bow before the shrine; — what did not this Madonna grant? The whole district round about took to themselves the honour of the picture and its miracles, — and the owners took the gain.

Some say the direct income must be much more than 200 francs a day, 3000 L. sterling a year, and this though « *the whole affair is badly managed* »—as said ingenuously the Chemist, the Catholic and devotee, to our friend. What might it not have been brought to yield? Could we only believe the statement made in court of law by the present principal owner, or rather by the principal of the Co. (not Limited) who own the Madonna, we should have to believe that the votive gifts and offerings do not always pay even the current expenses of lighting, and those other constant attentions a miraculous shrine like this may need, which love may suggest, and for which devotion

hastes to pay. We find it difficult to believe, what the Crown Lawyer also evidently found it impossible to admit at the trial, that such had been the dearth of funds that the owners had been obliged to sign promissory notes to save the *precious Madonna* from utter bankruptcy and shame. But enough of this, at least for the present. We have the very highest confidence in the commercial credit of the undertaking notwithstanding that her owners, and the directors of the Company are now in prison undergoing various sentences, which will keep them from home and public life, (out in the country, as it is called most elegantly and playfully by their companions,) for 3 or 4 years, and as long afterwards under the special surveillance of the police. Whatever else has been her saving power, She, or It, whichever we ought to say, has not saved her most devoted followers, and those whom she has enriched, from bloodshed, from arrest, from public trial, from prison, even from being branded as dangerous characters, and from being given over to the special watch and ward of the police. — But this may not be a lasting harm, and her credit need not fail.

The Madonna of the Pignasecca was replaced, when, during the epidemic, the authoritative order for the removal of the Images was practically revoked, and She with all the rest was given back to what is called her altar and her throne. Wild and weird

was the exultation of the people when the *Festa* was held; the streets, vicos, alleys, the houses, floor on floor, and row after row, all were brilliantly illuminated, richly festooned, — bands of music enlivening the gay fête, made all the more riotous by squib, cracker, paper bomb, a deafening canonry of shelless mortars, all the scene being tinged and coloured by bengal lights, rockets, fiery serpents, showers of stars of every garish colour, all so bright, so beautiful, St. Catherine wheels and all the gems and witchery of the pyrotechnic world. Then there were booths and stalls for the sale of fruit and shellfish.—Rosaries of chestnuts, and playthings for the children, images of the Virgin, everything that makes up a religious fair! Our illustration shows the Shrine in its festal pomp. The ornamentation reaches to the tops of the highest houses.

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« I have many valid reasons for having given up the life, so peaceful and retired, which I lived at Cava, and for thus making my home for a time in the midst of this vast population, » said Benedetto to the Marquis della Torre, whose guest he was and whose friendship he found to be of immense service to him both mentally and morally. »

« One reason is that an absolute change has come over the spirit and dreaming of my soul in these later days of my stay in Italy. I am no longer

able to deny that the official, authoritative religion of the Church in Italy is—not Christ or Christianity, but such an idolatrous worship of the Virgin as is the practical negation of the Blessed Saviour. Nothing could burn this conviction into my soul more deeply than what I have heard of these scenes of pestilence and despair, in which the soul of a horror-stricken city vents its natural, instinctive feeling and hope. Who was the Saviour to whom these immortal spirits turned for help and for salvation? Mary, not Jesus. It was Mary, it was her Image, that was authoritatively placed before the people. Even the four oxen who drew the car on which her miracle-working Image was borne to the church are said to have knelt down and worshipped it. This is the spiritual food the Church offers even now to the people instead of the Bread of Life. »

« My conversation with the Cardinal Archbishop has branded into my mind the unhappy conviction that the defence of the Romanist position is but strategy, evasion, used to inveigle and deceive, the feigned assertion of slaves to a supposed infallible authority, unsupported by either reason, revelation or history. »

« My association with the Jesuit Father Curci, and what I have known of that wonderful monk, Father Tosti, have revealed to me that the iron mechanical authority of the Vatican, instead of being the ultimate Oracle of Truth, and the sheet-anchor of a

peaceful rest of the soul, is but a vast Labyrinth of political and social and ecclesiastical intrigue; a piece of terrible mechanism that with its wheels within wheels crushes down every aspiration after a purer and nobler life on the part of priest and people;. rendering hopeless any movement toward better things within the pale of the Church. »

« From a human standpoint the one hope seems to be in the rise and development of the new, National Life of Italy. The mighty authority of a new, great nation's will guarantees Liberty of Conscience, thus allowing the moral forces of Christianity to act and react on the people from without the Church and in contrast with it. Spiritually, nought can save Italy but another Pentecost of Love, of Light, of Power. »

« Yes, » answered the Marquis, « but alas there are many only too ready to traduce the moral and social results of this new Italian life, and to tell of an unbridled immorality, and the burden of an increased taxation, and the like, as the sole results of the new *regime*. »

« This takes us back to the great event in the religious and social history of New Italy, when the parliament and nation, awake to the imminent social and national danger of these hotbeds of dissatisfaction and sedition, of debasing superstition, and even degradation, with brave heart, declared Monasticism effete;—a peril, and a curse to the well-being of the

people; confiscating all the monastic property, reserving only the churches for public worship, forbidding the reception of novice or professed, and pensioning off all those who had vested interests in the monastery or nunnery; retaining only present in the few monasteries preserved as National Monuments the few of the fathers who were necessary to keep up and in order the National Institution, and recognizing them only as Government servants. — »

« With one fell swoop, » continued the Marquis, « Italy gathered into her hands the whole of the monastic property — confiscating all for the public good, crushing out once and for ever the whole system as recognized and approved by the State — and bringing about the present state of things so remarkable in a country like this, the very home of the Papacy. — There is not a legal monastery or nunnery, monk, or nun, legally recognised as such in the whole length and breadth of United Italy; and the constitution of new Orders, and the « *Profession* » of postulants is forbidden by the law. — The Monastic property was disposed of, part being converted into and utilized for Governmental offices, or Municipal purposes, Schools, Law Courts and the like. The rest, broken up into little lots, was sold through the *Demanio* for the public exchequer out of which had to be paid pensions, and the like, the supposed equivalent of dower, or of other and all vested interests. »

« Italy met firmly the storm of opposition that burst forth on the '*Incameramento*' or confiscation of the Monastic property. Some said it was a death blow to Religion — Christianity itself was at stake, it was the triumph of Atheism and irreligion; it was a fatal blow levelled at the roots of the rights of private property.—*Salus popoli, suprema lex!* The answer was: the blow was levelled against, not Religion, but Monasticism. The public national danger sheltering in these centres of rebellion necessitated and authorized the suppression of the system.—The compensation for vested Interests was the answer to the charge of the violation of private property.»

«The carrying out of this great. revolutionary act was followed by scenes of graphic and tragic interest, throughout the kingdom. The authorities took possession of the Monasteries. Some of the Convents and Monasteries yielded blandly to the power they could not resist; especially those where the treasures that could be realized had beeen gathered up and wiled away into safe keeping beyond the reach of Italian law. Others either to gain time or what else, resisted; and some there were, who barricaded their monastery like a besieged fortress, and stood their ground; and a few there are who have not cleared out even yet.»

« One of these is the celebrated nunnery of Suor Orsula of which we have already told. The surrender of the fortress took place after long and useless parleying.

— The Police and Carabinieri and other authorities had to break open the door and enter by main force, *brute* force, the nuns called it; and even then, when they had entered, legal quibble and finesse stayed them from entire possession: there are men who can face the horrors of the battle field and death who feel very queer before a pack of swooning nuns, especially if they be the 'BURIED ALIVE'. »

« But the authorities proceeded slowly and yet surely.—First a school was planted there, and little by little the nuns have had to give way, as one steps back before an advancing tide. Little by little they had to give up this, then that part of the convent, which they had held so desperately. »

« In some cases, where the Nuns were homeless friendless, and unfit to be cast out upon the world, the authorities have permitted them to remain where they were, or to gather and live together in some centre, thus mitigating the severity of the law. »

« That the great and beneficent design of Italy in the suppression of Monasticism has been to some extent frustrated, is most true. That there may have been mal-administration of the immense revenues thus gathered in, and that the vested interests may have been compensated by a mere and miserable pittance, that much may have been bought in by private individuals and held for the Church or for an Order, may be all true: — That those who ought to have had

an open eye and brave heart to prevent new professions have not brought legal consequences to bear upon the illegal fact, is equally most true; and yet a wonderful revolution has been wrought, and the Convent of Suor Orsola is an example. There are now large public Day and Elementary Schools, a Boarding School, Normal Training Schools, an Industrial School, a Technical School, *Arti e Mestieri*, and not long ago, there was opened there an Institution for the training of Hospital and Home Nurses.»

« It is refreshing,» replied Benedetto, «thus to see and note some of the happier results of the great Revolution, the hope of the flower of Italian Chivalry, the fruit of the martyrdom and death of the noblest of the sons of Italy.—The Providence of heaven has gathered into one great nation, the little kingdoms, and dukedoms and states, and provinces, so that Italy is One, Independent, Free. Earthquakes do not throw up finished marble palaces. Nor do Vesuvius and Etna. The shaking of the peoples, and the overthrow of olden tyrannies and hated dynasties may not have given all the social and national results so fondly hoped, but Italy has at the voice of God come forth to new life,—she may be bound, aye hand and foot, but the mighty voice is crying: 'Loose her and let her go!'—» We love to hear the snapping of her bonds,—the breaking of her chains.—However slowly, the Education of the masses is progressing, its movement

is onward. However imperfectly her resources may be developing, they are being utilized, and road and railway, traffic by land and sea, and national order and thrift and industry, however handicapped, are leading on to more prosperous days.—What a significant picture have we here: On the one hand the Convent of Suor Orsola, of the BURIED ALIVE — poor creatures, the symbols of the past. — On the other this large and growing educational work—this cluster of educational Institutions, the symbol of the present: —the *Life of New Italy.*

THE MADONNA UNDER A CLOUD

A THREEFOLD PROBLEM — CIVIC — POLICE — ECCLESIASTICAL...

« What a hue and cry there is about the Madonna of the Pignasecca! » said Benedetto to the Marquis and some literary friends, who were discusssing the events and progress of the city and the nation. « The whole affair seems to me a strange paradox. If what the people say be true, the Madonna has fallen into the hands of thieves, and yet She continues to multiply her miracles as though to approve the owners and to increase their gain. »

« Yes, » answered one of the company, well-known in the world of letters, whom the Marquis had introduced by the name of Santoro.

« Yes, all the daily papers, only those officially Catholic excepted, are raising a tremendous outcry against the whole affair. »

« But tell me what has the Madonna done? » — said Benedetto.

« The Madonna herself has done nothing, » replied Sig. Santoro, « unless She is to be charged with countenancing her owners, by the miracles She continues to work, bringing them such gain as makes them brave in defying the police and the civic authorities. »

« Well, » said the Marquis, « we who dont and cannot believe that the poor image, which has eyes but sees not, hands but cannot handle, can work any miracle at all, cannot blame either Image or Madonna; we can only deplore the gross superstition of the poor souls who do believe, and hold up in the pillory to public scorn and condemnation, the priesthood, especially the more intelligent of the priesthood, who by their silence on the one hand, and their direct teaching and practice on the other, promote the great Apostacy, and lead the people willing slaves to the great delusion. »

« A Free Press is one of the mightiest powers of modern progress; happily in New Italy the Press is free, marred though it may be by a too craven servitude to 'social convenience' like the family where

In order that things may go toujours tranquille
They do not express themselves quite as they feel:—

said Signor Santoro,—and then continued: « Yes, our Daily Press has spoken out. The Press may plead that it is indifferent in religious matters; it may be

more time-serving, and self-seeking, than its promoters would care to allow,—still, it is free, and it has spoken out and strongly, registering in easily deciphered characters, the problem and paradox of this Madonna of the Pignasecca. This is the way the « *Paese* » writes:

" Now that the Festa of the Pignasecca is a *fait accompli*—very—very much accomplished, we return to the subject. This public worship defies ecclesiastical jurisdiction and assumes the proportions of a real secret society. We have before this given our opinion on the matter. That this Image should be taken away from the public street; and preserved in some convenient place in the church where its devotees can give free and decorous vent to all the fervour they may feel.

Our voice resounded only like one speaking in the desert. Influences political, administrative, and electoral have paralyzed all the efforts of the Questor Sangiorgio who had set himself to face bravely the question.

The money gathered for the yearly festa this very year, far more than in the past, formed a considerable gain for the feudal Lords of the Shrine.

These now have become quite a legion. The Madonna of the Pignasecca is the Golden Dream, the sublime ideal, of the evil classes of the Neapolitans.

We desire, once more, to call the attention of the authorities to this " cult " which certainly does little to edify any one.

The civil authorities ought to enter into these doings of the *mala vita* because it cannot be allowed that the public faith be abused by evil wiles and ways that come under

the ban of the legal code and when it is an incentive to the tragedies of the stiletto and the revolver.

It is the duty of the ecclesiastical authorities not to permit all that is most to be revered in religion to be draggled in the street, and to be mixed up with the feats of a legion of evil-doers, confounding so strangely the sacred with the profane, the holy vow with the *dichiaramento*, — the challenge of the Cammorist.

Let the Most Eminent Sanfelice provide: the old proverb says: In church together with the Saints: but alas it has not been possible to put this holy Image in its proper place in the church: let it therefore remain in the streets; but let it be cared for by the ecclesiastical authority, and not by an association which is becoming more numerous day by day; and that, now a legion, threatens to become an army.

The Madonna ought not to cover with her mantle the most abandoned characters. Let the parish priest provide, and let him who is above the parish priest, the Cardinal Archbishop, see to all this; it is high time that the *Curia* should give judgment on these new *Umiliati* and *Flagellanti* of the Pignasecca. The more bigoted devotees may say to us: But do you mean to say that it is forbidden to adore the Madonna in public, and in a city so eminently Catholic as this Naples that restored the shrines of the Saints by the fury of the mob, in 1884?

Have you forgotten that the fervour of the people in these last ten years has become intenser and intenser in in so wonderful a degree that the very streets which in 1860 were adorned with two or three sacred images, now have four, five, ten, and these are increasing and multiplying from day to day?

What you want, Mr. Journalist, is really impious, an outrage, an attempt against the regal rights of Conscience.

Those who thus write, treat things in a very superficial way. We do not speak from the stand point of unbelievers, nor are we moved by an intollerant spirit: we would that the Roman Catholic Press should unite with us in this really religious propaganda.

He, who uses the Madonna for mere gain, speculating on the good faith and *simplicity* of her devotees and on the religious sentiment of the Neapolitans, does not respect Her. He does not honour the Madonna who wills at any and every cost to withdraw her image from the guardianship of him who is entrusted with the cure of souls and from the local parish authorities. He does no honour to the Madonna who makes her the occasion of quarrels, of abuses, of the shedding of blood. He does not honour the Madonna who subverts to profane uses the innumerable votive gifts of the faithful.

When her public worship assumes the character of *deception*; and when public begging becomes extortion, then the Police Authorities ought to intervene: *Suprema lex* is the public welfare: here a band of troublesome evil-doers becomes a disturbance and a danger when they come to the division of the booty.

Certainly in this case of the Pignasecca the Questor of Naples ought to intervene, seeing the indifference of all the ecclesiastical authorities from his Reverence the Priest of the Parish to his Excellency the Most Eminent and Reverend the Archbishop.

If you wish to know what has been done about the shrine of the Pignasecca, the answer is very simple: nothing.—That the Association that *robs* the sacred image is a real and powerful Secret Society! — That it is impossible for the regularly constituted authorities, civil and religious to deal with the secret regulations of devout ticket-of-leave men, and of saints that are under police supervision, and of that band of honest men (probi viri) that thrive so well on the offerings, and finds out the way

to affirm its existence by revolver shots and dagger wounds."

THE LETTER OF A VICE-SYNDIC.

« How strange to me, how utterly confusing and confused is the paradox, the threefold problem of this Madonna, » said Benedetto, « if it be a nuisance why do not the Municipal authorities intervene? If it has been inveigled into the toils of an association of malefactors why does not the police, the Questor of this great city intervene,—he has thousands of guards, armed and drilled with military training; and if all the power that defies the city and the police be really the blind religious sentiment and superstition of the people, why is it?—how can it be?—that the Cardinal-Archbishop does not break the silence and solve the problem?

« Read this letter, it tells its own tale, » said the Marquis, « it was published in the « *Paese* » and made a great impression on the public mind. »

Portici, 20th October, 1896.

My very dear Friend

Here in the calm quiet of country life I follow with pleasure the campaign waged by the "*Paese*" in order to do away with the scandal which has been so great in the Pignasecca about the famous Image of the Virgin.

I highly approve the initiative you have taken but alas your efforts most certainly will remain unfruitful, as the actual owners of the picture, people of the very worst class, are protected and guaranteed by the higher powers. Read, and then judge.

In 1893 I had the honour of having charge as Vice-Syndic of the Sezione Montecalvario. Amongst the many *protests* that reached me there was one which made a profound impression on my mind,—because, believer as I am, I could not imagine that an act so sacrilegious could have been committed. This protest declared, that a certain man called *Grimaldi*, the owner of the picture, who had a shop where he sold flour, had sent and pledged at the pawnshop on his own account all the silver and gold votive gifts which the devotion of the faithful had offered to the Virgin.

I made the necessary investigations, and it was verified that the charge was only too true. I informed the local police authorities, and the very same evening I published an account of it in the "*Pungolo*" and the dishonest flour merchant was, as far as I remember, charged by the Law Authorities with "unlawful appropriation."

I availed myself of the indignation of the populace which the sacrilege had excited, and of the fact that it had been ordered that the street of the Pignasecca was to be kept free from all encumbrances, to make all arrangements for transporting the venerable Image of the Virgin into the adjacent parish church of S. Liborio; — alleging that the Shrine and the railing surrounding it occupied public ground.

The very day on which the removal ought to have taken place, a superior order reached me commanding me to give up this removal of the picture. Afterwards, I found out that a recommendation had been sent from no less than the Ministry of the Interior to the famous Prefect Senise, that the picture should not be removed.

Now, the Shrine has become the property of others, jail-birds, of Montecalvario, as Grimaldi, the flour merchant, the former possessor, failed and was obliged to close his shop. The present owners are three brothers whose *heroic deeds* are registered in several folio volumes care-

fully preserved in the Archives of the Police. Three months ago they were the cause of a terrible battle on the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, in which several Camorrists of the Avvocata and Montecalvario fired fifty or more revolver shots and as near as possible killed the young and courageous Police Inspector, Signor Melillo. The police found that the reason of the fight was the unfair division of the offerings presented to the picture of the Pignasecca. Just see what becomes of the money which the good people offer to the Virgin.

His Eminence Cardinal Sanfelice, gifted as he is with a truly religious spirit, holy man that he is, a very luminous example of every civic virtue, surely now can put down this scandal that you deplore, and which has sickened all *true believers*, to whom faith is a sweet comfort. But will the Cardinal do away with this scandal which we *deplore?* I have great faith in him and in his eminent virtues and am sure he cannot know all these matters of which I write, otherwise he would not have hesitated one minute to take away from these vile and sacrilegious hands the Holy Image that has become the object of a money-making affair in the hands of people without God and without faith.

GAETANO D'AURIA.

The same paper comments on this letter, saying:

The parish priest and the Cardinal look on and are silent. They are silent and these charlatans eat well, drink deeply, and when they have nothing else to do, fire away revolver shots at one another.

THE MADONNA BEFORE THE TRIBUNAL.

« Yes, » said Sig. Santoro, « but the police were ultimately obliged to move in the matter. There was a gathering of those interested in the gains in

a Caffè on the hill leading to the Corso Vittorio Emanuele.—The questions of right of interest in the Sacred Image, and of the right of jurisdiction in the different *Sezioni* of the Camorra were mooted, other *Sezioni* having claimed a judicial right in the settlement of the question of the proportional claim. — The decision was referred to a Camorrrist's Judicial Tournament. The belligerants took up their position in battle array, and fired away! In the midst of the deadly mélée a superior officer of the police, a 'Delegate' and some guards came on the scene. — Amongst the wounded was the Delegate. He was not shot, but dangerously battered. Some of the owners of the Madonna were arrested; others, later on, were run in by the police. »

« Sadly interesting was this trial as a legal manifesto shewing the inner working of the pious fraud and its unsaintly patrons, » added Sig. Santoro. « I cut out a piece of the account of the trial, given in *Roma*, — 6th of May, 1896. The whole case was very ably presented in full and open court by the Crown Prosecutor, Signor De Tilla, who amidst the most profound silence sketched some of the more tragic achievements of the Camorra and then exclaimed: »

" These *Camorristi* have even made an attack on religion, that they may utilize for themselves the alms offered by the piety of the faithful. It behoves those whose duty it is, to take the means necessary that the results

of this public discussion do not remain fruitless in regard to what touches the prestige of our religion."

« The Public Prosecutor demanded that each and all should be condemned as forming an «*Association with Criminal Intent*,» and that they should be sentenced to imprisonment for eight or nine years. The defence did not even plead, but officially left all to the mercy of the Court. The sentences varied from six to seven years imprisonment, with hard labour, plus three years special police supervision. »

« They appealed against this sentence, » said Professor De Luca, « and I was myself present when the trial on Appeal took place in the largest Hall of the *Tribunali*, our principal Law Court, and the account of this celebrated trial was published in all our daily papers. I have by me the account given by *Don Marzio*. Quite an army was ranged for the defence, amongst them being some of the most celebrated of the Neapolitan Bar. They succeeded in obtaining a modification of the sentence, being no longer condemned as an Association formed with Criminal Intent; still by this final sentence the brave Knights of the Miraculous Picture, these Vultures who prey upon the corruption and death which lie strewn everywhere o'er the deserts of a decaying Idolatry, were sentenced to three or four years imprisonment, to be followed by the special police supervision for three years. A few being mulcted in a fine of from 100 to 200 francs.

One only of the accused, 'Esposito,' being discharged. They are in prison now. »

« This trial and conviction seem to me a very solemn condemnation not only of the abuses and abusers of the Shrine, the wretched men who trafficked so relentlessly in the most sacred hopes and most religious devotion of the poor deluded people; but it strikes deeper, far deeper, as a moral condemnation of the materialism of Image Worship; it tacitly condemned the silence of both Parish Priest and Cardinal Archbishop, who neither then nor after, dared, or cared, to intervene! » — said the Marquis.

« Yes » said Benedetto, making a brave attempt to defend the Parish Priest, the Cardinal Archbishop, and indeed the Church. « Yet what a dilemma, what a curious, and perplexing ecclesiastical dilemma must have presented itself to these Ecclesiastics. Either the miracles said to have been wrought by the Madonna were false or true miracles. Rome alone can decide a question such as this. To have declared false the miracles She wrought, was to strike a fatal blow at the genuineness of all the like miraculous everywhere, to cast doubt on all the prodigies wrought in the High Places of Idolatry such as New Pompei, Montevergine, Loreto. Or else, if these miracles are true, then the Madonna covers with the mantle of prodigy and wonder all the appointments and circumstances of the Shrine. Who was the Parish Priest,

or even the Cardinal Archbishop Sanfelice that they should dare to force the Queen of Heaven and Earth to withdraw into some cold, dark, musty old church, to be locked up all the long night ?—Other Madonnas when they fell amongst thieves and did not want to stay where they had held their Court, took wings or were transported where they wished to go. The Sacred House of Loreto found itself, at least so the story goes, amongst thieves; angels came and carried it away, and there it is at Loreto; but the Archbishop may say: Does not the Madonna of the Pignasecca show She wills to be where She is, and amongst whom She is, by the favours she dispenses ? Who then is to bring the Madonna of the Pignasecca to do the bidding of the Municipal Authorities, of the Police, or of the Neapolitan Curia ?»

« There are other very curious questions arise as to the ecclesiastical right of His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop to legislate for this Shrine. The image is private property,—and according to their view, the Madonna, without even saying:—'by your leave' to Archbishop, Cardinal, or Church, has elected to dispense the marvels of her grace through the instrumentality of this picture. Now, is it within the province of an Archbishop to deal authoritatively with private property, especially miraculous property ? Is it even for a Princely Cardinal to denounce the Madonna for her choice in utilizing private property

and enriching private individuals, lay, not cleric, the rather than choosing some other Image, the indisputable property of the Church; thus drawing into the priestly exchequer, the gain of vow and offering and the like? Where can the Cardinal Archbishop find a reason that brands as theft or misappropriation the use of private gain, resultant from the traffic of private property; without, at least, opening many unpleasing questions as to the appropriation of the votive gifts and precious offerings in other miraculous centres? If ecclesiastical property bring emolument to the Church, to whom should private miraculous property give its finance?»—said the Professor. «How many and how embarrassing are the questions that come up from a legal and moral standpoint, once you admit this system of image instrumentality and miracle-working power?»

«What is most certain is, that, notwithstanding all that has taken place, Mámma Schiavona, the Black Mother, the Madonna of the Pignasecca, is still there, and before her shrine the people bow as reverently as ever and worship her as devoutly as ever, as

The Queen of Heaven and Earth and Hell.

«What is equally certain and most terribly true is that the Madonna of the Pignasecca, is only one of the myriads of Madonnas, pictures or statues which perpetuate the idolatry of Image and Saint Worship,»

said the Marquis. « The whole system is condemned by God, degrading our people, holding them spell-bound in the toils of a materialism that is the death of intellect and the foe of every spiritual energy and aspiration. »

« She is another God.—All these Madonnas are *other Gods*. You have found her presented as vying with God, in some respects as more than God. »—the Marquis continued.

« The question is simply appalling to us who notwithstanding all our veneration for the Mary of the Gospels, look at all these matters of religion and worship in the light of the unchanging and unchangeable law of God: Ex XX. 3.4.5. Thou shalt have no other God before me..... Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children until the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.»

« If this law be indeed the revealed will of the jealous God who visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, He most surely, in the very language of this commandment denounces all image

worship, and the making and bowing down to images as making and serving other gods. It is not only a transgression of His will, but the expression of the lifeless, loveless soul that knows not the Mysterious, the Incomprehensible, the Spirit God, the Invisible, the Intangible; for it is a soul that loves not, save what is material, it is of the earth earthy.

How solemn is the warning which keeps awful, special watch and ward over this foundation characteristic of all true worship, — « *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation!* » How terribly do all the evolutions of human existence, all the forces and proclivities of nature, all the dispensations of Providence, unite to avenge the broken law, and the heart-sin of a life loveless toward the God that is a Spirit, whose worship must be the worship offered in Spirit and in Truth. What more terrible can we conceive than for the spiritual and immortal nature of man, born for the infinite, made after the image and likeness of God, designed to rest only on His bosom, to joy only in His smile, thus to sink immersed only in the material, to revel in the mere realm of sense, where all we know, or feel, or care for, is sight and sound and scent and touch! God visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children even in leaving them to sink deeper in the mud and mire of low, brute materialism with all its train of thoughtlessness and indiffer-

ence—How much, and how many, of the terrible conditi ns of social life, of fouled conscience, of spiritual dearth and death, are but the awful issues of the materialism induced by this idolatry? A Materialism that stunts every energy of the intellect, hushes to its guilty sleep the stirring conscience in man, veils in, and curtains round, the affections from the sight of the Mystery of Love beyond, — and leaves the soul in darkness, whilst death and corruption reign. »

« My heart is opened now, like Lydia's heart, to attend to and to understand the spirituality of the Gospel of the Holy Apostolic Church, » said Benedetto. « The Church of Rome does not deny; it cannot deny this holy law, it is there in its own bibles—there in the Vulgate! »

The Marquis continued: « Confused, confounded, unable to defend the infraction of this law by the whole system of Statue and Image and Picture worship—it tries, though in vain, to attenuate its crime by defining different grades of worship, and palliates the great offence by trivial subterfuge, and bolsters up the fruitful traffic by foolish legend, stories piteously incredible,—still, tacitly, it owns, most shamelessly its shame, altering or omitting in its Catechisms THE commandment, the solemn word and will of heaven. It is the system that is evil, knowingly and by artifice sustained by Priest, Archbishop, Cardinal and Pope. Else, we have no controversy with the individual, or

silly devotee, or imperious Pope. The gravamen of the charge we launch against the Papal Church is this:— It holds down by this gross Idolatry mind, and soul and life under the brutalizing influences of base materialism, grieving the Spirit God, and denying Christ: this is its crime—this in itself its penal curse.»

«Is this not seen in the facts so publicly notorious of the Madonna of the Pignasecca and its relations to the Camorra?» interposed Signor De Luca. «Is not the working of this punitive law self-evident in the moral and social condition of the people? And yet some who faithfully and vividly delineate the character of the Neapolitans, and the rotten state of society, profess sympathy for the religion and the secular and political tyrannies that have made the people what they are.»

«But how strangely contradictory it seems to us that foreigners, keen observers, who write accurate descriptions of the moral and social conditions of the masses of the people here, do not discover and point out the immediate connection of cause and effect that exist between the Religion of the people, and the wild, fatal, lawlessness of their imagination, their artful dodging, their malignant scheming, and the guilty tragedies of their life?» added the Professor. «For centuries and centuries, have the secresy and intrigue and scheming, the opportunism and base expediency of what our friend the Marquis

loves to call 'The Great Camorra,' (describing it by a term better known amongst the people than the term 'Vaticanism' which Father Curci uses,) developed evil out of evil; — Yes, for centuries and centuries, all the forces of the Greater Camorra have been acting and re-acting on the character and habits of the people with all the energy of the most sacred sanctions, human and divine, until truth as truth, purity as purity, and affection as affection, have been eaten out of their very being as by a canker-worm; I have heard the Neapolitans when wishing to describe some faithless one, say amongst themselves: 'oh his, or her, conscience is in the hands of the parish priest.' »

« A day or two ago I read '*Stories of Naples and the Camorra!*' in which most vividly the life of the Neapolitan lower classes is depicted, the woof of Camorra life running through all. The Fisherman, the Water-seller, the different grades, the initial ceremonies and mysterious working of the Camorra are only too accurately dramatized in a tracery of duplicity and intrigue, of vendetta hate; you read of their innate love of child and woman, of home infidelity, and unmerciful revenge, of pilfering and robbery, relieved only, here and there, by the honesty of thieves,—the silver thread of a mutual, natural kindliness shining out brightly every now and then. »

« The English author is represented in an introductory chapter, as taking a heartfelt interest in

Naples and the Neapolitans as one of the nationalities that had not followed the Reformation, but had developed in all that touched their emotional life under the influence of Catholicism * * * * 'he was always ready to defend 'Popery' when its influence on the lower classes was discussed in his presence.' It seemed to him not only rational but indispensable — the only appropriate form of religion for Italians.' I hardly think the lurid light his portrait-pictures throw on the fetid immorality he despicts so truly, can speak well for the influences of Catholicism that developed all that touches their emotional life. Is it not a poor compliment to us Italians or Neapolitans to regard a religion that goes hand and glove with the Camorra, instead of uprooting and doing away with it, as the only religion indispensable for us? To us it seems the condemnation of this very religion that, although for ages it has had free play for all its most potent influences, it has not saved the people from the Camorra and Brigandage: — the Camorrists are amongst the most devout followers of the 'Beautiful Mother;'—the Brigand whets his knife on the steps of the altar;—feigned poverty thrives on the dole of a false charity; and the masses of the people have been left in the ignorance which is said to be 'the mother of devotion.' In some provinces of Southern Italy, after all that has been done, eighty per cent can neither read nor write. Like priest, like people. »

« But surely if the author be convinced of the beneficial effects of the Romish faith as practised here by the people, the good it works must come out in his thrilling, descriptive dramas, » said Benedetto. « What do the stories tell about it ? »

« The evident result of the Religion of Madonna, Pope and Priest, the only Catholicism known to the Neapolitans, with their superstitions of Saints and Purgatory, is the festering of this false, foul birth of the Camorra; or the hound-like faithfulness of bright, artful *Peppiniello*, the boy gatherer and vendor of cigar ends; or the savage vendetta of the hero *Gabriele*. Leaping from beneath the shadow of a tree in the villa, he treacherously stabbed the Colonel as he bent over his sickly wife, to avenge the seduction of *Giulia*, the empty-headed sister of Gabriele's wife, *Antonetta*. She afterwards betrays him, enamoured of a foreigner, an artist.—' If only Gabriele could be put out of the way,' said Antonetta, — but ' she dared not do it.' Discovered, Antonetta, gave her lover one last, long kiss, ' what did it matter who saw it now,' said she, and hurried off to the police-station and informed of her husband having a clasp-knife longer than the police regulations permitted. She gained her point,—he was arrested, imprisoned, then freed; he takes his cruel revenge by packing up his things and starting for Rome by the night train; then returns hoping to inflict a life-long torture on his guilty wife,

but they are reconciled through a sermon, more Christian than any I have heard from Romish pulpit, and that certainly seems more like a prose paraphrase of an Evangelical hymn than a papist sermon. There was no mention of the Virgin. True to life as are the earlier parts descriptive of the Sermon, the latter part is misleading. It is the only page in the whole series of these stories that is unfaithful to the general spirit and tone of what now we see and hear. I have listened to many a sermon. I never heard a finish such as that he describes. The priest began in the very broadest Neapolitan dialect by 'mimicking a girl going to Mass with her mother, and thinking only of her finery and the lovers she might attract. She (Antonetta) laughed heartily at it as every body in the church did. * * then came a representation of two drunken men, and a number of popular scenes. * * * Finally the preacher gave a picture of illicit love, too frank to be described to the English reader, but his audience were not offended by it.' That is the true style. I have heard myself a sermon on Temptation, given by two priests, one representing the Confessor, the other the penitent girl confessing. You may imagine the questioning and the answering; all was too *frank* for me to reproduce; and the fouler the suggestion, the richer seemed to be the treat for the congregation. I have never heard the life of the Saviour so reviewed. I never heard Christ so preached. *It is always* MARY

NOT CHRIST. Christ is a Saviour only as he saves by Mary; » — continued Professor De Luca, adding:

« These tales of the Camorra are true to life,— tales of bloodshed, of house-breaking, of usury, of cruel revenge, of diabolic hate and cruelty, — a diorama of kaleidoscopic horrors. — All that might seem a semi-humanizing of their black-mailing is attributed to *Don Antonio*, the one unbeliever, who commits premeditated suicide on the Cumæan shore, in sight of Ischia. »

« All this seems anything but a demons tration of the good influence of Popery. It shows that the only reason why this Catholicism suits the Neapolitan is, because it appeals to the emotional nature. It shows too that the Camorra can match it, intrigue by intrigue; mystery and secrecy by mystery and secrecy. »

« Of good characters, or Monk or Priest or Nun, I can only remember two: — the monk *Brother Francesco;* and the priest, *Don Diodato*. The former saves *Giulia* from abandoning herself to an evil life by placing her in a Convent, and then marries her to *Salvatore*, who finds himself bound by vow made to the Madonna during a horrible tempest that if she would save him, he would marry a fallen woman. With the exception of these characters, and some sane counsel given by a priest which might have been given by any Christian man and outside the Confessional, we do not find any traces of a purifying and elevating religious influence exerted by the faith of

the people. Am I not right, my dear Santoro? »

« Yes, » replied Sig. Santoro, « I think you have given a fair impression of how these stories reveal unintentionally the moral powerlessness of Roman Catholicism to reclaim the masses, and save the people from their deep degradation; as also of the strange way Popery dovetails in with Camorra life; but you made a mistake in regard to one little matter. It was not Gabriel who rushed off to Rome, it was the artist-lover, who had been warned that there was no escape from the *vendetta*, the worse than Corsican revenge of Gabriel, save by the cowardly flight that abandoned the guilty wife to brave alone the deadly passion of her infuriated husband. It might have been quite 'Neapolitan' for the husband in his madness to have rushed off, say to Fuordigrotta, or Pozzuoli, or Baiæ, or away to Portici or Torre del Greco, to nurse there the frenzy of his passion, but a *Gabriele* would hardly think of going to Rome. He stayed at home and hatched his hellish plan of wreaking vengeance on his wife. »

« The Madonna of the Pignasecca is a true story of the Camorra and of what is dubbed the only religion appropriate to Neapolitans; » said Benedetto, « how is it that so many and so keen observers do not discover in the indomitable Lawlessness and Intrigue of the Camorra, a limited reflection of the world-wide Camorra, with its army of Jesuits, and its vile moral code as taught

by Saint and Doctor of the Church; with its Most Holy Inquisition of the past and present, and its moonlighters and boycotting? The child is very like its father or its grandfather. It is a kingdom within a kingdom, where all is lawful that is expedient. »

« My dear Benedetto » said Professor De Luca, « whilst these foreigners with the mere superficial knowledge they can have of the effect of the religion of the people shower their encomiums on both faith and priesthood, hear what one of the most popular of the Neapolitan writers and dialectic poets, Sig. *Ferdinando Russo*, says: I will read from his « *Usi e Costumi Napolitani.* » Hear his description of the effects of this Papist Materialism and Intrigue. No one knows the Neapolitan people better than he. »

" I do not think there is any people at the same time both so religious and so superstitious. This sentiment is so clenched into the soul of every one of the populace that you cannot find an atheist among them, nor a materialist, no, not if you would pay a million to find one. The lost woman, the thief, the man of the knife, the criminal classes, all carry quite a load of Rosaries and Scapulars, placed with all veneration between their under-vest and their skin, a tape or little chain holding as many as thirteen amulets as a preservative against bad luck: — amongst these, generally, you will find the vest of the Madonna del Carmine and the medal of the Immacolata.

Very intelligent, artistic, naturally imaginative, glowing with generous impulses, full of heart, really good as it is, our populace has an unpardonable weakness for the priest of the olden times, of whom for centuries it

has been the slave. The priest has such an ascendency over the lower and middle classes, that in many homes and families, no one moves a finger, not a step is taken, nothing is determined on without the consent of Zi Prèvete, of the Rector, or of the Padre Provinciale. They mix themselves up with everything, they poke their noses in everywhere. In those families where they exert their baneful influence no girl is married unless they approve. They yoke them to their cars, they subjugate them by a thousand ascetic practices, they clip the wings of their young imaginations and fantasy, and dim the golden dreams of their first and early life. Many of the victims thus vanquished, little by little are transformed into mere bigoted devotees,—their hearts hardened they become yellow-faced, querulous and malignant, and dedicate their dowry to some saint or protectress or make over their property to some *Congrega*, or Monastery, or other, and they are lost; others are almost obliged to take the veil. They struggle, but they yield to the evil suggestion of their confessor, who educates them slowly as he desires, inspiring the distaste for all that is beautiful, estranging them from the most holy affections, even from the love of their family:—so, very often, the poor ignorant girls, held in as by the iron band of the common superstition, contaminated by the constant, imperturbable and implacable dropping that the priest instils into their being with wily and laborious effort, at last cast themselves into the abyss opened before their feet with such diabolic foresight by these false servants of God.

The unhappy woman who has fallen through want, or by the vile betrayal of her lover, gives herself to the tempestuous evil life of prostitution making vows to some Saint Protectress. To her she prays that she may be able always to obtain a living, she prays that her body may be preserved from disease. She vows to keep a lamp

ever burning like the priestesses of Vesta, and to take to her altar tapers and offerings on the days of her *festas*. The most favourite of these Saints, when they are not one or other of the Madonnas with whom heaven is filled, is Saint Anna. The first money she lays out in the morning is for the little measure of oil for the lamp. And some have such a respect for their Madonna or Saint that before they give themselves to their unholy love they turn the image with its face to the wall.

The thief, the hired assassin ready to use revolver or knife, the criminal classes, free or under arrest, are most fervent in their devotions to the Madonna and the Saints, and vow to make pilgrimages to Montevergine or the Madonna dell' Arco, and to give alms, and to pay for four or five masses for the poor souls in purgatory who have no one else to pay for them, if they manage to escape the claws of justice.

Before they commence to break into a house many thieves make the sign of the cross, and before betaking themselves to one of their judicial fights, the Camorrists and their aspirants often go and dip their hands in the holy water in the nearest Church, to be sure that the revolver may not miss fire, or the stiletto slip from their grasp.

The thief who robs a church often before making off with the sacred utensils and the silver votive gifts, prostrates himself if he have time, and repeats three *Aves* and a *Gloria* for the success of the undertaking. Sometimes he recites the following stanza, quoted by De Blasio in his book:

I dont do it because I despise you,
I dont do it that I may rob you,
I do it only that I may eat!
Avemaria, gratiâ plenâ.

The enormous crowding of the criminal classes to the most solemn popular festivals, shows that the camorrists

and evil-doers of all classes of the people who do not hesitate when it is a question of committing a crime, or a misdeed of any kind, be it against person or property, are powerfully influenced by the impulses of their Religion, although they have only a confused and muddled idea of it. The people go to *Montevergine*, to *Piedigrotta*, to the *Madonna dell' Arco*, to *the Four Altars* at Torre del Greco, to *the Lilies* at Nola, to the *Flight of the Angel* not only to guzzle and revel, but because they thus fulfil their vow."

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« But what are even these indications of the religious influence exerted by the gross idolatry of statue, picture and relic worship, compared to what we hear of not infrequently among the Brigands, » chimed in the Marquis. « In an account of the Trial of the brigand brothers *Giuseppe* and *Carlo Frattaruolo*, the former is described as not having anything of the assassin in his appearance save in the glitter of hate that flashes from eyes, that look out from beneath his dark, thick eyebrows. — His shoes of bright patent-leather, his hair parted strait down the middle and sleekly plastered, and the silk handkerchief, which, thrown around his neck serves as a shirt front, gives to his small person anything but the appearance of an ideal Brigand; yet in court he declares: 'Mancini had said whilst skinning a hare from which he had just cut off the head, just so would he skin us and cut off my brother's head and mine. I remembered that, and leaping on him, with a short knife I cut off

his head. I would have cut out his heart, but I could not as the knife was not sharp,—I only cut the muscles of his breast. I would have roasted and eaten them as I was hungry, but I was not a wild beast.' This is the same man who had declared before the court, speaking of one called Ferri: then the boy brought him his clothes, and his scapular of the Madonna del Carmine, and I told him he should give himself into the care of the Virgin.' »

« A famous Brigand, Tiburzi, was killed in an encounter with the Carabinieri, at Sandonato, near Orbitello. On his corpse were found amongst other implements of his evil art, '*a triangular dagger, a tin box with matches, a mask made out of an old brown hat; around his neck was the scapular of the Madonna del Carmine.*' This was only a year ago. »

« Roman Catholic papers do not make much a-do about the devotion of Brigands to the worship of the Madonna and their wearing her scapular, as a talisman; they reserve their encomiums for those great and wealthy, such as General Pettinengo, of whom the '*Italia Reale,*' says: Ignatius di Genoa, of Pettinengo, Senator, to shew his devotion to the Most Holy Mary, venerated especially in Carmagnola, under the glorious title of the Immaculate Conception, during his life time had twelve of his Decorations made up and framed, and imposed on his heirs the obligation to have them presented to the miraculous

Image of the Immaculate Conception in Carmagnola, inscribing it to her in token of sincere, lively, and undying gratitude for mercies received. All his life and salvation are ascribed to Mary.—In this document no mention is made of Jesus Christ. »

« In Sicily the '*Mafia*' is what the Camorra is in Naples, only, if possible, *more so*, lately I read in the «*Paese*,» of December, I think something about the deeds of the Mafia, a comment on an article in your '*Macmillan*.' There is a church near the river Oreto, close to Palermo, dedicated to the souls of the brigands executed by law, but who died in grace with the Church. There the tombs of these heroes of the forest are covered with flowers, and with the kisses of the religious passers by, who very often, after offering their prayer, put their ear to the grave-stone expecting to receive an answer, and go away happy or sad according to the response. 'In this perverse religion,' said the author, 'has the Mafia laid its foundations; in it centre, from it go forth, almost all the crimes that are committed in Sicily. All Brigands have need of it, and without it certainly they could not exist.' »

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« It is like sinking down into the mire, like being bespattered with mud, thus to get behind the scenes that hide the working of these miraculous Shrines, » said Benedetto. « The more *religious* the people, the more abandoned their life. »

« But, » he continued, « what can truly Christian love and zeal and work do to redeem beautiful Naples, and fair Italy? We must pray for another Pentecost, — for the Spirit that reproves the world of Sin, of Righteousness, of Judgment, — what else can we do? »

« We hear the voice of Jesus that comes pealing from the well at Sychar: God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. — The Father seeketh such to worship Him. » said the Marquis.

« By this law, and by all the loving and potent influences by which the great and good God energizes and carries into activity the working of this law, God himself would vitalize humanity and uplift it from being only of the earth, earthy, the slave of the merely material, of the transient, of the seen, and would disclose, outopening before it, all the immensities, the infinities of the spiritual and heavenly world and life. »

« '*We must replace Jesus Christ on his throne*' vainly cries Cardinal Archbishop Bausa. Rome cannot. She enthrones Mary and dethrones Jesus. We are *replacing 'Jesus Christ in that princely place which is rightly His, in the knowledge, in the love, and in the hopes of this Christian people,'* as the Jesuit Father Curci said, and tried to do, » continued the Marquis. « I am a member of an Evangelical Church, — I am a Methodist. Fully do we avow that solemn conviction

which was the mightiest Christian power of Curci's life: '*the return to Christ and to the Holy Gospel is that which alone can save the present generation.*' This, this is what the different Evangelical Churches and Denominations and Missions are working toward. Their motto is that of the Cardinal Archbishop who says: '*to be perfect, we only need to look on Christ and do his will.*' What he said in dubious faith we sincerely say to each Italian as we offer the Bible: '*God speaks to every man in his own language in this book; in the sublimest manner in the Holy Gospels. I want thee to read them frequently; I want thee to teach thy children to read them.*' But where the Archbishop stops, simply recommending the Bible and Bible-reading,—where he contradicts his own teaching by not seeking to disseminate the Scriptures, really opposing the sale of them, our Bible Societies are giving forth year by year, thousands and ten thousands of copies of the Sacred Scriptures; working as Father Curci worked within and without the Church. — Not dubious are the signs that the heavenly leaven is working through the length and breadth of the kingdom, seen not merely in the existence and working of the Christian Churches which are planted in so many of the principal cities and in many a village and townlet, — but in its influence on society in general. Still more the aggressive movement organized by Rome, to the social danger of which the eyes of statesmen and politicians and

even of the Italian Government seem to have been opened, declares it. Yes, again, the civil power has stept forward to give the solemn warning that sedition, even cloaked in the mantle of the Religion of the State is to be treated as the wild, recreant vagaries of Anarchism.

«One word before we part,» said Benedetto; «If once again I can say, and do say, with the Apostle Paul: '*For me to live is* CHRIST,' I have to thank God. I also thank you my friends, for all your kindly help. I confess the happy change which the sights and life of Italy have wrought in me; and very much do I owe to the Madonna of the Pignasecca as an object-lesson demonstrating indisputably how the mystery of Iniquity doth work, but that it must, it doth already, give way before the light and life of Christ.»

ERRATA-CORRIGE.

PAGE		LINE	FOR.	READ
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88	—	2	umindful	unmindful
98	—	8	Bartholemew	Bartholomew
104	—	8	song many a of	song of many a
108	—	1	satannic	satanic
132	—	12	as	has
135	—	11	hymm	hymn
138	—	22	seem	seems
141	—	8	way in Church	way the Church
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228	—	24	taken from	taken from Tosti's writings
233	—	3	Athenasian	Athanasian
236	—	22	answed	answered
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243	—	20	inconquerable	unconquerable
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