

VIEWS ABROAD.

(CONCLUDED FROM OUR LAST ISSUE.)

Vienna is a fine city, many of its public buildings rivaling those of Berlin, though it is not so uniformly fine. It is almost entirely Roman Catholic. But there is a wide difference here between the rich and the very poor. Here, and elsewhere through Austria and Russia, may be seen women and children carrying mortar and bricks, pulling carts like horses and carrying immense loads on their heads, or strapped on their shoulders. We learned that the wages of laboring women there is about twenty cents per day; of laboring men, from forty to fifty cents per day; and of skilled mechanics, from seventy-five to ninety cents per day. Beer with bread and cheese seems to constitute the regular diet of the very poor. And we were told that many of this class are without home, seeking shelter for the night often in the buildings on which they work during the day. Yet one does not observe these things in the general appearance of fine cities like Vienna, Berlin and Prague.

In Antwerp and Brussels, cities of Belgium, though fine cities in many respects, in Antwerp especially, there was more appearance of poverty [R1375 : page 71] and of men out of employment, who swarm in hundreds about the docks waiting for work. We went out there early in the morning, and crowds of these men lounged about at almost every corner all through the city, but specially about the docks. They seemed too, to be just the kind for revolt when under strong leadership and goaded, as they may yet be, by greater necessity.

Odessa and Kischenev were the only Russian cities we visited, and these, especially Odessa, presented wide differences between the well-to-do and the miserably poor.

In Russia the government holds an intolerably tight grip on every man in the empire, and the stranger within their gates is always to them a suspicious character. His passport must be produced at every hotel and railway station before entering or leaving a city or town. The hotel proprietor receives your passport and hands it over to the Chief of Police, who retains it until you are ready to leave, so that any stranger could be readily traced as to just when [R1376 : page 71] he entered or left the country. Officers and authorities are simply civil, indicating that your presence is only tolerated, and any books or papers in your possession are carefully scrutinized to make sure that nothing in them is calculated to interfere with their ideas.

As we passed through a part of Russia and witnessed the squalor and ignorance and listless idleness of many of the poor *moujiks*, we wondered how they managed, even in the summer months, to eke out an existence, and imagined what trouble they would be in when the severities of winter would overtake them. Many of them live in miserable hovels made of mud and thatched with straw, consisting of only one room, and that so low that they must stoop to enter. In many cases the thatched roof slopes to the ground on all sides. The soil looked barren and they seemed destitute of everything that goes to make life even tolerable.

Leaving the Russian dominions, we next came under the authority of the Turks at Constantinople. From the Bosphorus the city looks most beautiful, but one has no sooner set foot on land than his disappointment begins. Here is every advantage of climate and location for a splendid city, but the blight of Turkish rule is on every thing. Passing up a narrow alleyway from the landing place, we were halted in front of a rough board shed to have our luggage overhauled and to produce our passport. After considerable delay and inconvenience we were permitted to proceed to our hotel, when we were surrounded by a miserable,

ragged looking set of carriers wishing to take our luggage. This disposed of, we proceeded with our guide to a hotel through narrow, dirty alleys. When we called our guide to account for taking us through so many alleys, he looked surprised, and said these were some of the best streets in the city. And, sure enough, we found it even so. In the dirty, narrow streets sleepy, disgusting dogs are found by scores, and there are thousands of them in the city. Donkeys, carts and pedestrians jostle one another continually in the middle of the streets, the sidewalks seldom being more than three feet wide, and all must look well to their steps lest they stumble over these sacred dogs which the Turks so much reverence and will not allow to be destroyed, and which are too lazy even to move out of the way. Of course they are never muzzled and you must run the risks of hydrophobia in hot weather. Then your ears are greeted from early morning till late at night by the hideous voices of the venders of all sorts of merchandise; and when they stop to rest thousands of dogs make the night hideous with their yells, and you soon want to take your departure from the Turkish capitol.

The principal cities visited in Italy were Brindisi, Naples, Pompeii, Rome, Florence, Venice and Milan. Landing in Brindisi from our voyage across the Mediterranean from Alexandria, Egypt, we were in company with a Roman Catholic Patriarch from Jerusalem and an under priest. As we had to have our baggage examined here, and the Patriarch's turn came first, we had an opportunity to see how the Italian officials reverence the priesthood. One would naturally expect that in Italy reverence for the priesthood would lead them almost to exempt them from the ordinary searching to which other travelers are subjected; but, on the contrary, with a gruff, irreverent manner, **[R1376 : page 72]** they diligently overturned everything in the old man's trunk and valises, discovering finally several bottles of wine and an expensive box of snuff. The latter they confiscated, and the grumbling dignitary packed up the rest of his effects and passed

on; but somehow his low, broad-brimmed hat and long skirts, together with his snuff, etc., made him seem rather unmanly, not to say unpriestly. The examination of our luggage was very slight in comparison, after inquiry had been made and the officials were assured that we had no dutiable goods on hand. Our guide explained this by saying that the officials always consider the word of Protestant foreigners more reliable than that of their Roman Catholic countrymen, especially the priests. Indeed, he told us beforehand that ours would scarcely be examined at all if we were not in company with the Patriarch, and that search of his trunk would probably prove that he had not correctly stated its contents.

The same attitude toward the Papacy was also manifest in Rome. Our guide through the city, a well informed Italian, and a representative of a large class there, was in strong and outspoken opposition to such "superstition and nonsense," as he termed it. Nor was he satisfied with the present government, though, he said. "It is much better than the rule of the church, but what we want is a republic, like the United States of America, or like France." And as he pointed out the costly adornings of St. Peter's and the Vatican he frequently remarked, "All this extravagance is what is impoverishing the Italian people; this is not religion: it is all done for pride and power." On one of the public squares he pointed out the statue of Bruno, an independent philosopher of the sixteenth century who was arrested and executed by the Papal Inquisition. The statue was recently erected, and is regarded more as a memorial of Italian liberty from the Papal yoke than as remembrancer of the teachings of Bruno. It is a standing denunciation on the part of the people against Papal methods and doctrines, and a sure indication of the strong anti-papal feeling of the populace. Italy is too well acquainted with Papal tactics and Papal oppression to have a very cordial affection for that system. There is a growing spirit of independence in Italy, which neither civil nor ecclesiastical power will be able to cope with, when, by

and by, the people begin to realize their power, and determine to strike for freedom.

Rome is a place of wonderful present, as well as historic, interest. The ruins of a dead past lie all around on every side, and the indications of a dissatisfied present and of a future conflict are very manifest. The remains of its ancient Coliseum, the glory and the shame of old Rome, are a striking symbol of its present inglorious pose before the world. The enthusiastic pilgrims of the eighth century uttered a noteworthy prophecy when they admiringly declared, "As long as the Coliseum stands, Rome shall stand; when the Coliseum falls, Rome will fall; and when Rome falls, the world will fall." Enough of this colossal structure still stands to bear witness to the cruel barbarity of the period of the greatest "glory" of the Roman empire. It is a circular structure of massive masonry, around the interior of which are successive galleries with a seating capacity originally of many thousands, and in the center of which is a vast arena, where the bloody contests of men with ferocious wild beasts feasted the eyes of the Roman lords and ladies. Sometimes the victims were volunteers from among their best citizens; and when they fell in the conflict, as they generally did, their splendid funerals from the churches gave an additional holiday to the people. Sometimes they were prisoners of war, sometimes criminals, and many were Christian martyrs. With strange feelings we walked about these galleries and down into the arena and into some of the dungeon cells where criminals were confined until the fatal day of their sanguinary conflict should furnish amusement and entertainment to the cruel throng; and then we passed down into the great cages where hungry wild beasts were confined. With a shudder we turned away and thanked God for the ruin and desolation of the place. The Coliseum is now well nigh destroyed, and its tottering ruins aptly represent the decadence of Roman "glory" today. Pius IX., in his time, had some repairs made to preserve and prop the crumbling walls of the old Coliseum, reminding us of how he [R1376 : page

73] and his successors have tried to prop the falling structure of the similarly tottering and decaying church of Rome; but both symbol and substance are doomed to complete destruction, and doubtless will go down together in the last great conflict, when all the powers of this world fall, and the new world or age is ushered in. The old adage, "When Rome falls the world falls," seems not so far from truth, when one sees that "the new heavens and the new earth" refers to the new order of things under Christ's Millennial reign.

Rome is full of the monuments of human folly, and not the least among them are St. Peter's Cathedral and the Vatican, the Pope's palace. The former is certainly the most wonderful building in the world, as it has been the most costly. Its marble floors and columns and statues and bas-reliefs as well as its paintings are exhibitions of the skill and art of the past eighteen centuries; for the whole civilized world was laid under tribute at the time of its erection and since. Certainly, nowhere did we find superior manifestations of skill and art. However, the faces of the popes and others there represented had that peculiarly treacherous, Jesuitical expression of countenance so repulsive to the open-hearted and frank.

Noticing that one of the main entrances of St. Peter's was closed, we ascertained the reason to be as follows. It has long been the custom of the Popes to imitate Israel's Jubilee year after a fashion. (How little like the original, our regular readers will readily see – others can read in *Millennial Dawn*, Vol. II., Chap. vi.) Every fiftieth year at first, and every twenty-fifth year more recently, it has been the custom for the Pope to represent that door as leading into Purgatory, and approaching it he raps on it with a small, silver hammer, repeating certain Latin words. The Cardinals on the other side answer by attacking the wall and digging it open, when they march with the Pope through the doorway. The Pope then announces that so many souls have been

liberated from [R1377 : page 73] purgatory, and ascending to a balcony extends his hands and gives his blessing to the Italian people. This door has not been opened lately and the people have not received the pontiff's blessing – the last Jubilee passing without the usual ceremony, because the Pope claims that he is deprived of his rights by the government which the people support, and that hence he cannot bless them. The Italian people, however, are getting over some of their superstition and are realizing that the Pope's blessings in the past have amounted to ignorance, poverty and oppression, and that now they are much more prosperous without his blessing. One of them laughingly related to us these facts.

While there is poverty in Italy, and an enormous debt rests upon the people, we, nevertheless, found much less poverty than we expected, no abject want being outwardly noticeable. The people look well, have comfortable looking homes, are generally comfortably clad and seem industrious and thrifty. Nor are the marks of Romanism so distinguishable in Italian faces as in some other parts of the world – America, for instance – probably because the people there have less reverence for ecclesiastical dignity, having been brought into closer contact with it and suffered more from it.

The buried and now partially exhumed city of Pompeii, near Naples, Italy, is a wonderful testimony of the past. We walked through its narrow, stone-paved streets, so narrow that two wagons could not pass each other; the sidewalks being three and sometimes four feet wide. At short intervals were public drinking-fountains of stone, worn smooth by the hands of those who stopped to drink. There are butcher-shops with meat-blocks, etc., and baker-shops with large bake-ovens, very like those of the present day, their kneading-troughs, etc., and some of their bread was found, just as left in the ovens, when the city was buried in the volcanic ashes of Mt. Vesuvius. We walked into the private

dwellings, generally square with an open court in the center, observed the faded pictures frescoed on the walls, an occasional bit of statuary, or a "Welcome" inscribed on the floor at the entrance, or a small fountain in the centre of the court.

We saw the various articles of furniture, etc., recovered from the ruins – their bedsteads, chairs, stoves, cooking vessels, tableware, jewelry, surgical and dental instruments – the latter very [R1377 : page 74] similar to those of the present day. We entered their ancient temples, circus, theaters, courts of justice, etc., and saw some of the petrified bodies of the ancient inhabitants in various positions, just as they were overtaken by the calamity of that fatal day. Over eighteen centuries have passed since that time, but here is their record as plainly written as if they had perished but yesterday.

As we ponder over these strange scenes, the query of Ezekiel comes forcibly to mind – "Can these dry bones live?" – and then the prophecy that, in his own good time, God will cause these dry bones (as well as all the rest of the world, typified by the "whole house of Israel") to hear the word of the Lord and to live, and to know that he is the Lord. – Ezek. 37.

In Paris we were continually reminded of the part which the French are preparing to take in the coming battle of the great day. There is intelligence, pride, ambition, a restless spirit of liberty and a determination to assert and to contend for their ideas, which, while they continually lead to factions and party-strife, also make them enemies abroad. They are out of sorts with the rest of the world and almost equally out of sorts with each other. Paris is a splendid city, and speaks well for the French people in many respects, yet here in the capital all their national traits of character, both good and bad, are shown with greatest prominence.

While the city looks well and prosperous, the poor there have a very poor showing, and enjoy but little of the comforts of home

and family life. Often the best they can afford is an attic to lodge in while they take their meals at some of the cheapest restaurants. The French peasantry, however, seem thrifty and enterprising, and their little homes and farms are neatly kept.

Everywhere throughout Europe we found preparations for war; but the statesmen fear socialism still more, and war prospects serve well as an excuse for armies which dare not be disbanded for fear of anarchy. In answer to our queries a merchant of Vienna replied: "It is a common saying that, if you turn the wheel of fortune three times you may have three wishes, but if the people of Europe could have one wish granted, that would be the answer to the question, *How shall we solve the social problem?*" Another gentleman, a judge of one of the courts of Germany, doubtfully shook his head when this subject was mentioned, and said, "We fear great trouble and are doing all we can to avert it, and we hope, *we hope (?)* for better things." And so it is everywhere.

The socialistic sentiments in Europe evidently do not arise as a general thing from actual distress among the people so much as from an awakening intelligence which begins to discern the principle of human brotherhood, and the common rights of all as members of that brotherhood, and to a rising ambition on the part of the middle classes to secure so far as possible their imagined, as well as their real, rights.

Viewed from a religious standpoint also, the trend of thought in Europe is revolutionary. The current is very generally set in the direction of rank infidelity, which, when accomplished fully, will be a complete revolution from the former unquestioning faith, or rather credulity, in whatever a time-serving clergy chooses to put forth as divinely inspired truth. Those days are already past and the world is rapidly waking from its former lethargy. From the general awakening a few, here and there, are rising to a clearer apprehension of truth and righteousness, but the majority seem

bent on discarding all truth as well as superstition and are going to the opposite extreme.

Such, briefly stated, is the outlook of the great battle-field of Europe. Yet, notwithstanding these ominous signs of the times and the divine prophecies of their inevitable culmination, which must of necessity be only a few years in the distance, having confidence in the power that is now holding the winds until the servants of God are all sealed, and to control them even in their wildest commotion so that their destructive power shall only be let loose long enough and only go far enough to accomplish the divine will in the chastening and preparing of humanity for better conditions, we rejoice even in this, and hasten to accomplish our appointed work of sealing the elect. Let all his messengers make haste; for indeed "the time is short."

– MRS. C. T. RUSSELL.
