

◉ AT HOME AND ABROAD,

OR

THINGS AND THOUGHTS

IN

America and Europe.

BY

(Sarah)

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PART II.

THINGS AND THOUGHTS IN EUROPE.

LETTER XXVIII.

Gioberti, Mamiani, and Mazzini. — Formation of the Constitutional Assembly. — The Right of Suffrage. — A Procession. — Proclamation of the Republic. — Results. — Decree of the Assembly. — Americans in Rome: Difference of Impressions. — Flight of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. — Charles Albert. — Present State of Rome. — Reflections and Conclusions. — Latest Intelligence.

Rome, Evening of Feb. 20, 1849.

THE League between the Italian States, and the Diet which was to establish it, had been the thought of Gioberti, but had found the instrument at Rome in Mamiani. The deputies were to be named by princes or parliaments, their mandate to be limited by the existing institutions of the several states; measures of mutual security and some modifications in the way of reform would be the utmost that could be hoped from this Diet. The scope of this party did not go beyond more vigorous prosecution of the war for independence, and the establishment of good institutions for the several principalities on a basis of assimilation.

Mazzini, the great radical thinker of Italy, was, on the contrary, persuaded that unity, not union, was necessary to this country. He had taken for his motto, GOD AND THE PEOPLE, and believed in no other powers. He wished an Italian Constitutional Assembly, selected directly by the people, and furnished with an unlimited mandate to decide what form was now required by the needs of the Peninsula. His own wishes, certainly, aimed at a republic; but the decision remained with the representatives of the people.

The thought of Gioberti had been at first the popular one, as he, in fact, was the seer of the so-called Moderate party. For myself, I always looked upon him as entirely a charlatan, who

covered his want of all real force by the thickest embroidered mantle of words. Still, for a time, he corresponded with the wants of the Italian mind. He assailed the Jesuits, and was of real use by embodying the distrust and aversion that brooded in the minds of men against these most insidious and inveterate foes of liberty and progress. This triumph, at least, he may boast: that sect has been obliged to yield; its extinction seems impossible, of such life-giving power was the fiery will of Loyola. In the Primate he had embodied the lingering hope of the Catholic Church; Pius IX. had answered to the appeal, had answered only to show its futility. He had run through Italy as courier for Charles Albert, when the so falsely styled Magnanimous entered, pretending to save her from the stranger, really hoping to take her for himself. His own cowardice and treachery neutralized the hope, and Charles Albert, abject in his disgrace, took a retrograde ministry. This the country would not suffer, and obliged him after a while to reassume at least the position of the previous year, by taking Gioberti for his premier. But it soon became evident that the ministry of Charles Albert was in the same position as had been that of Pius IX. The hand was powerless when the head was indisposed. Meantime the name of Mazzini had echoed through Tuscany from the revered lips of Montanelli; it reached the Roman States, and though at first propagated by foreign impulse, yet, as soon as understood, was welcomed as congenial. Montanelli had nobly said, addressing Florence: "We could not regret that the realization of this project should take place in a sister city, still more illustrious than ours." The Romans took him at his word; the Constitutional Assembly for the Roman States was elected with a double mandate, that the deputies might sit in the Constitutional Assembly for all Italy whenever the other provinces could send theirs. They were elected by universal suffrage. Those who listened to Jesuits and Moderates predicted that the project would fail of itself. The people were too ignorant to make use of the liberty of suffrage.

But ravens now-a-days are not the true prophetic birds. The Roman eagle recommences her flight, and it is from its direc-

tion only that the high-priest may draw his augury. The people are certainly as ignorant as centuries of the worst government, the neglect of popular education, the enslavement of speech and the press, could make them; yet they have an instinct to recognize measures that are good for them. A few weeks' schooling at some popular meetings, the clubs, the conversations of the National Guards in their quarters or on patrol, were sufficient to concert measures so well, that the people voted in larger proportion than at contested elections in our country, and made a very good choice.

The opening of the Constitutional Assembly gave occasion for a fine procession. All the troops in Rome defiled from the Campidoglio; among them many bear the marks of suffering from the Lombard war. The banners of Sicily, Venice, and Bologna waved proudly; that of Naples was veiled with crape. I was in a balcony in the Piazza di Venezia; the Palazzo di Venezia, that sternest feudal pile, so long the head-quarters of Austrian machinations, seemed to frown, as the bands each in passing struck up the *Marseillaise*. The nephew of Napoleon and Garibaldi, the hero of Montevideo, walked together, as deputies. The deputies, a grave band, mostly advocates or other professional men, walked without other badge of distinction than the tricolored scarf. I remembered the entrance of the deputies to the Council only fourteen months ago, in the magnificent carriages lent by the princes for the occasion; they too were mostly nobles, and their liveried attendants followed, carrying their scutcheons. Princes and councillors have both fled or sunk into nothingness; in those councillors was no counsel. Will it be found in the present? Let us hope so! What we see to-day has much more the air of reality than all that parade of scutcheons, or the pomp of dress and retinue with which the Ecclesiastical Court was wont to amuse the people.

A few days after followed the proclamation of a Republic. An immense crowd of people surrounded the Palazzo della Cancelleria, within whose court-yard Rossi fell, while the debate was going on within. At one o'clock in the morning of the 9th of February, a Republic was resolved upon, and the crowd rushed away to ring all the bells.

Early next morning I rose and went forth to observe the Republic. Over the Quirinal I went, through the Forum, to the Capitol. There was nothing to be seen except the magnificent calm emperor, the tamers of horses, the fountain, the trophies, the lions, as usual; among the marbles, for living figures, a few dirty, bold women, and Murillo boys in the sun just as usual. I passed into the Corso; there were men in the liberty cap, — of course the lowest and vilest had been the first to assume it; all the horrible beggars persecuting as impudently as usual. I met some English; all their comfort was, "It would not last a month." "They hoped to see all these fellows shot yet." The English clergyman, more mild and legal, only hopes to see them (i. e. the ministry, deputies, &c.) *hung*.

Mr. Carlyle would be delighted with his countrymen. They are entirely ready and anxious to see a Cromwell for Italy. They, too, think, when the people starve, "It is no matter what happens in the back parlor." What signifies that, if there is "order" in the front? How dare the people make a noise to disturb us yawning at billiards!

I met an American. He "had no confidence in the Republic." Why? Because he "had no confidence in the people." Why? Because "they were not like *our* people." Ah! Jonathan and John, — excuse me, but I must say the Italian has a decided advantage over you in the power of quickly feeling generous sympathy, as well as some other things which I have not time now to particularize. I have memoranda from you both in my notebook.

At last the procession mounts the Campidoglio. It is all dressed with banners. The tricolor surmounts the palace of the senator; the senator himself has fled. The deputies mount the steps, and one of them reads, in a clear, friendly voice, the following words: —

"FUNDAMENTAL DECREE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ROME.

"ART. I. — The Papacy has fallen in fact and in right from the temporal government of the Roman State.

“ART. II. — The Roman Pontiff shall have all the necessary guaranties for independence in the exercise of his spiritual power.

“ART. III. — The form of government of the Roman State shall be a pure democracy, and will take the glorious name of Roman Republic.

“ART. IV. — The Roman Republic shall have with the rest of Italy the relations exacted by a common nationality.”

Between each of these expressive sentences the speaker paused ; the great bell of the Capitol gave forth its solemn melodies ; the cannon answered ; while the crowd shouted, *Viva la Republica ! Viva Italia !*

The imposing grandeur of the spectacle to me gave new force to the emotion that already swelled my heart ; my nerves thrilled, and I longed to see in some answering glance a spark of Rienzi, a little of that soul which made my country what she is. The American at my side remained impassive. Receiving all his birthright from a triumph of democracy, he was quite indifferent to this manifestation on this consecrated spot. Passing the winter in Rome to study art, he was insensible to the artistic beauty of the scene, — insensible to this new life of that spirit from which all the forms he gazes at in galleries emanated. He “did not see the use of these popular demonstrations.”

Again I must mention a remark of his, as a specimen of the ignorance in which Americans usually remain during their flighty visits to these scenes, where they associate only with one another. And I do it the rather as this seemed a really thoughtful, intelligent man ; no vain, vulgar trifier. He said, “The people seem only to be looking on ; they take no part.”

What people ? said I.

“Why, these around us ; there is no other people.”

There are a few beggars, errand-boys, and nurse-maids.

“The others are only soldiers.”

Soldiers ! The Civic Guard ! all the decent men in Rome.

Thus it is that the American, on many points, becomes more ignorant for coming abroad, because he attaches some value to his

crude impressions and frequent blunders. It is not thus that any seed-corn can be gathered from foreign gardens. Without modest scrutiny, patient study, and observation, he spends his money and goes home, with a new coat perhaps, but a mind befooled rather than instructed. It is necessary to speak the languages of these countries, and know personally some of their inhabitants, in order to form any accurate impressions.

The flight of the Grand Duke of Tuscany followed. In imitation of his great exemplar, he promised and smiled to the last, deceiving Montanelli, the pure and sincere, at the very moment he was about to enter his carriage, into the belief that he persevered in his assent to the liberal movement. His position was certainly very difficult, but he might have left it like a gentleman, like a man of honor. 'T was pity to destroy so lightly the good opinion the Tuscans had of him. Now Tuscany meditates union with Rome.

Meanwhile, Charles Albert is filled with alarm. He is indeed betwixt two fires. Gioberti has published one of his prolix, weak addresses, in which he says, that in the beginning of every revolution one must fix a limit beyond which he will not go; that, for himself, he has done it, — others are passing beyond his mark, and he will not go any farther. Of the want of thought, of insight into historic and all other truths, which distinguishes the "illustrious Gioberti," this assumption is a specimen. But it makes no difference; he and his prince must go, sooner or later, if the movement continues, nor is there any prospect of its being stayed unless by foreign intervention. This the Pope has not yet, it is believed, solicited, but there is little reason to hope he will be spared that crowning disgrace. He has already consented to the incitement of civil war. Should an intervention be solicited, all depends on France. Will she basely forfeit every pledge and every duty, to say nothing of her true interest? It seems that her President stands doubtful, intending to do what is for *his* particular interest; but if his interest proves opposed to the republican principle, will France suffer herself again to be hoodwinked and enslaved? It is impossible to know, she has already shown such devotion to the mere prestige of a name.

On England no dependence can be placed. She is guided by no great idea; her Parliamentary leaders sneer at sentimental policy, and the "jargon" of ideas. She will act, as always, for her own interest; and the interest of her present government is becoming more and more the crushing of the democratic tendency. They are obliged to do it at home, both in the back and the front parlor; it would not be decent as yet to have a Spielberg just at home for obstreperous patriots, but England has so many ships, it is just as easy to transport them to a safe distance. Then the Church of England, so long an enemy to the Church of Rome, feels a decided interest with it on the subject of temporal possessions. The rich English traveller, fearing to see the Prince Borghese stripped of one of his palaces for a hospital or some such low use, thinks of his own twenty-mile park and the crowded village of beggars at its gate, and muses: "I hope to see them all shot yet, these rascally republicans."

How I wish my country would show some noble sympathy when an experience so like her own is going on. Politically she cannot interfere; but formerly, when Greece and Poland were struggling, they were at least aided by private contributions. Italy, naturally so rich, but long racked and impoverished by her oppressors, greatly needs money to arm and clothe her troops. Some token of sympathy, too, from America would be so welcome to her now. If there were a circle of persons inclined to trust such to me, I might venture to promise the trust should be used to the advantage of Italy. It would make me proud to have my country show a religious faith in the progress of ideas, and make some small sacrifice of its own great resources in aid of a sister cause, now.

But I must close this letter, which it would be easy to swell to a volume from the materials in my mind. One or two traits of the hour I must note. Mazzarelli, chief of the present ministry, was a prelate, and named spontaneously by the Pope before his flight. He has shown entire and frank intrepidity. He has laid aside the title of Monsignor, and appears before the world as a layman.

Nothing can be more tranquil than has been the state of Rome all winter. Every wile has been used by the Ocurantists to excite the people, but their confidence in their leaders could not be broken. A little mutiny in the troops, stimulated by letters from their old leaders, was quelled in a moment. The day after the proclamation of the Republic, some zealous ignoramuses insulted the carriages that appeared with servants in livery. The ministry published a grave admonition, that democracy meant liberty, not license, and that he who infringed upon an innocent freedom of action in others must be declared traitor to his country. Every act of the kind ceased instantly. An intimation that it was better not to throw large comfits or oranges during the Carnival, as injuries have thus been sometimes caused, was obeyed with equal docility.

On Sunday last, placards affixed in the high places summoned the city to invest Giuseppe Mazzini with the rights of a Roman citizen. I have not yet heard the result. The Pope made Rossi a Roman citizen; he was suffered to retain that title only one day. It was given him on the 14th of November, he died the 15th. Mazzini enters Rome at any rate, for the first time in his life, as deputy to the Constitutional Assembly; it would be a noble poetic justice, if he could enter also as a Roman citizen.

February 24.

The Austrians have invaded Ferrara, taken \$ 200,000 and six hostages, and retired. This step is, no doubt, intended to determine whether France will resent the insult, or whether she will betray Italy. It shows also the assurance of the Austrian that the Pope will approve of an armed intervention. Probably before I write again these matters will reach some decided crisis.