

© AT HOME AND ABROAD,
OR
THINGS AND THOUGHTS
IN
America and Europe.

(Sarah)

BY
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PART III.

**LETTERS FROM ABROAD TO FRIENDS
AT HOME.**

precious part of its inheritance; — only so many incredible things have happened of late. I am with William Story, his wife and uncle. Very kind friends they have been in this strait. They are going away, so soon as they can find horses, — going into Germany. I remain alone in the house, under our flag, almost the only American except the Consul and Ambassador. But Mr. Cass, the Envoy, has offered to do anything for me, and I feel at liberty to call on him if I please.

But enough of this. Let us implore of fate another good meeting, full and free, whether long or short. Love to dearest mother, Arthur, Ellen, Lloyd. Say to all, that, should any accident possible to these troubled times transfer me to another scene of existence, they need not regret it. There must be better worlds than this, where innocent blood is not ruthlessly shed, where treason does not so easily triumph, where the greatest and best are not crucified. I do not say this in apprehension, but in case of accident, you might be glad to keep this last word from your sister

MARGARET.

TO R. W. EMERSON.

Rome, June 10, 1849.

I RECEIVED your letter amid the round of cannonade and musketry. It was a terrible battle fought here from the first to the last light of day. I could see all its progress from my balcony. The Italians fought like lions. It is a truly heroic spirit that animates them. They make a stand here for honor and their rights, with little ground for hope that they can resist, now they are betrayed by France.

Since the 30th of April, I go almost daily to the hospitals, and though I have suffered, for I had no idea before how terrible gun-shot wounds and wound-fevers are, yet I have taken pleasure, and great pleasure, in being with the men. There is scarcely one

who is not moved by a noble spirit. Many, especially among the Lombards, are the flower of the Italian youth. When they begin to get better, I carry them books and flowers; they read, and we talk.

The palace of the Pope, on the Quirinal, is now used for convalescents. In those beautiful gardens I walk with them, one with his sling, another with his crutch. The gardener plays off all his water-works for the defenders of the country, and gathers flowers for me, their friend.

A day or two since, we sat in the Pope's little pavilion, where he used to give private audience. The sun was going gloriously down over Monte Mario, where gleamed the white tents of the French light-horse among the trees. The cannonade was heard at intervals. Two bright-eyed boys sat at our feet, and gathered up eagerly every word said by the heroes of the day. It was a beautiful hour, stolen from the midst of ruin and sorrow, and tales were told as full of grace and pathos as in the gardens of Boccaccio, only in a very different spirit, — with noble hope for man, and reverence for woman.

The young ladies of the family, very young girls, were filled with enthusiasm for the suffering, wounded patriots, and they wished to go to the hospital, to give their services. Excepting the three superintendents, none but married ladies were permitted to serve there, but their services were accepted. Their governess then wished to go too, and, as she could speak several languages, she was admitted to the rooms of the wounded soldiers, to interpret for them, as the nurses knew nothing but Italian, and many of these poor men were suffering because they could not make their wishes known. Some are French, some Germans, many Poles. Indeed, I am afraid it is too true that there were comparatively few Romans among them. This young lady passed several nights there.

Should I never return, and sometimes I despair of doing so, it seems so far off, — so difficult, I am caught in such a net of ties here, — if ever you know of my life here, I think you will only wonder at the constancy with which I have sustained myself, —

the degree of profit to which, amid great difficulties, I have put the time,—at least in the way of observation. Meanwhile, love me all you can. Let me feel that, amid the fearful agitations of the world, there are pure hands, with healthful, even pulse, stretched out toward me, if I claim their grasp.

I feel profoundly for Mazzini. At moments I am tempted to say, “Cursed with every granted prayer,”—so cunning is the demon. Mazzini has become the inspiring soul of his people. He saw Rome, to which all his hopes through life tended, for the first time as a Roman citizen, and to become in a few days its ruler. He has animated, he sustains her to a glorious effort, which, if it fails this time, will not in the age. His country will be free. Yet to me it would be so dreadful to cause all this bloodshed,—to dig the graves of such martyrs!

Then, Rome is being destroyed; her glorious oaks,—her villas, haunts of sacred beauty, that seemed the possession of the world for ever,—the villa of Raphael, the villa of Albani, home of Winckelmann and the best expression of the ideal of modern Rome, and so many other sanctuaries of beauty,—all must perish, lest a foe should level his musket from their shelter. I could not, could not!

I know not, dear friend, whether I shall ever get home across that great ocean, but here in Rome I shall no longer wish to live. O Rome, *my* country! could I imagine that the triumph of what I held dear was to heap such desolation on thy head!

Speaking of the republic, you say, “Do you not wish Italy had a great man?” Mazzini is a great man. In mind, a great, poetic statesman; in heart, a lover; in action, decisive and full of resource as Cæsar. Dearly I love Mazzini. He came in, just as I had finished the first letter to you. His soft, radiant look makes melancholy music in my soul; it consecrates my present life, that, like the Magdalen, I may, at the important hour, shed all the consecrated ointment on his head. There is one, Mazzini, who understands thee well,—who knew thee no less when an object of popular fear than now of idolatry,—and who, if the pen be not held too feebly, will help posterity to know thee too!