

◎ 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 XXX.

The Struggle in Rome. — Position of the French. — The Austrians. — Feeling of the Roman People. — The French Troops. — Effects of War. — Hospitals. — The Princess Belgioioso. — Position of Mr. Cass as Envoy. — Difficulties and Suggestions. — America and Rome. — Reflections on the Eternal City. — The French: The People.

Rome, May 27, 1849.

I HAVE suspended writing in the expectation of some decisive event; but none such comes yet. The French, entangled in a web of falsehood, abashed by a defeat that Oudinot has vainly tried to gloss over, the expedition disowned by all honorable men at home, disappointed at Gaeta, not daring to go the length Papal infatuation demands, know not what to do. The Neapolitans have been decidedly driven back into their own borders, the last time in a most shameful rout, their king flying in front. We have heard for several days that the Austrians were advancing, but they come not. They also, it is probable, meet with unexpected embarrassments. They find that the sincere movement of the Italian people is very unlike that of troops commanded by princes and generals who never wished to conquer and were always waiting to betray. Then their troubles at home are constantly increasing, and, should the Russian intervention quell these to-day, it is only to raise a storm far more terrible to-morrow.

The struggle is now fairly, thoroughly commenced between the principle of democracy and the old powers, no longer legitimate. That struggle may last fifty years, and the earth be watered with the blood and tears of more than one generation, but the result is sure. All Europe, including Great Britain, where the most bitter resistance of all will be made, is to be under republican government in the next century.

“God moves in a mysterious way.”

Every struggle made by the old tyrannies, all their Jesuitical deceptions, their rapacity, their imprisonments and executions of the most generous men, only sow more dragon's teeth; the crop shoots up daily more and more plenteous.

When I first arrived in Italy, the vast majority of this people had no wish beyond limited monarchies, constitutional governments. They still respected the famous names of the nobility; they despised the priests, but were still fondly attached to the dogmas and ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. It required King Bomba, the triple treachery of Charles Albert, Pius IX., and the "illustrious Gioberti," the naturally kind-hearted, but, from the necessity of his position, cowardly and false Leopold of Tuscany, the vagabond "serene" meannesses of Parma and Modena, the "fatherly" Radetzsky, and, finally, the imbecile Louis Bonaparte, "would-be Emperor of France," to convince this people that no transition is possible between the old and the new. *The work is done*; the revolution in Italy is now radical, nor can it stop till Italy becomes independent and united as a republic. Protestant she already is, and though the memory of saints and martyrs may continue to be revered, the ideal of woman to be adored under the name of Mary, yet Christ will now begin to be a little thought of; *his* idea has always been kept carefully out of sight under the old *régime*; all the worship being for the Madonna and saints, who were to be well paid for interceding for sinners;—an example which might make men cease to be such, was no way coveted. Now the New Testament has been translated into Italian; copies are already dispersed far and wide; men calling themselves Christians will no longer be left entirely ignorant of the precepts and life of Jesus.

The people of Rome have burnt the Cardinals' carriages. They took the confessionals out of the churches, and made mock confessions in the piazzas, the scope of which was, "I have sinned, father, so and so." "Well, my son, how much will you *pay* to the Church for absolution?" Afterward the people thought of burning the confessionals, or using them for barricades; but at the request of the Triumvirate they desisted, and even put them back

into the churches. But it was from no reaction of feeling that they stopped short, only from respect for the government. The "Tartuffe" of Molière has been translated into Italian, and was last night performed with great applause at the Valle. Can all this be forgotten? Never! Should guns and bayonets replace the Pope on the throne, he will find its foundations, once deep as modern civilization, now so undermined that it falls with the least awkward movement.

But I cannot believe he will be replaced there. France alone could consummate that crime, — that, for her, most cruel, most infamous treason. The elections in France will decide. In three or four days we shall know whether the French nation at large be guilty or no, — whether it be the will of the nation to aid or strive to ruin a government founded on precisely the same basis as their own.

I do not dare to trust that people. The peasant is yet very ignorant. The suffering workman is frightened as he thinks of the punishments that ensued on the insurrections of May and June. The man of property is full of horror at the brotherly scope of Socialism. The aristocrat dreams of the guillotine always when he hears men speak of the people. The influence of the Jesuits is still immense in France. Both in France and England the grossest falsehoods have been circulated with unwearied diligence about the state of things in Italy. An amusing specimen of what is still done in this line I find just now in a foreign journal, where it says there are red flags on all the houses of Rome; meaning to imply that the Romans are athirst for blood. Now, the fact is, that these flags are put up at the entrance of those streets where there is no barricade, as a signal to coachmen and horsemen that they can pass freely. There is one on the house where I am, in which is no person but myself, who thirsts for peace, and the Padrone, who thirsts for money.

Meanwhile the French troops are encamped at a little distance from Rome. Some attempts at fair and equal treaty when their desire to occupy Rome was firmly resisted, Oudinot describes in his despatches as a readiness for *submission*. Having tried in

vain to gain this point, he has sent to France for fresh orders. These will be decided by the turn the election takes. Meanwhile the French troops are much exposed to the Roman force where they are. Should the Austrians come up, what will they do? Will they shamelessly fraternize with the French, after pretending and proclaiming that they came here as a check upon their aggressions? Will they oppose them in defence of Rome, with which they are at war?

Ah! the way of falsehood, the way of treachery, — how dark, how full of pitfalls and traps! Heaven defend from it all who are not yet engaged therein!

War near at hand seems to me even more dreadful than I had fancied it. True, it tries men's souls, lays bare selfishness in undeniable deformity. Here it has produced much fruit of noble sentiment, noble act; but still it breeds vice too, drunkenness, mental dissipation, tears asunder the tenderest ties, lavishes the productions of Earth, for which her starving poor stretch out their hands in vain, in the most unprofitable manner. And the ruin that ensues, how terrible! Let those who have ever passed happy days in Rome grieve to hear that the beautiful plantations of Villa Borghese — that chief delight and refreshment of citizens, foreigners, and little children — are laid low, as far as the obelisk. The fountain, singing alone amid the fallen groves, cannot be seen and heard without tears; it seems like some innocent infant calling and crowing amid dead bodies on a field which battle has strewn with the bodies of those who once cherished it. The plantations of Villa Salvage on the Tiber, also, the beautiful trees on the way from St. John Lateran to La Maria Maggiore, the trees of the Forum, are fallen. Rome is shorn of the locks which lent grace to her venerable brow. She looks desolate, profaned. I feel what I never expected to, — as if I might by and by be willing to leave Rome.

Then I have, for the first time, seen what wounded men suffer. The night of the 30th of April I passed in the hospital, and saw the terrible agonies of those dying or who needed amputation, felt their mental pains and longing for the loved ones who were

away; for many of these were Lombards, who had come from the field of Novarra to fight with a fairer chance,—many were students of the University, who had enlisted and thrown themselves into the front of the engagement. The impudent falsehoods of the French general's despatches are incredible. The French were never decoyed on in any way. They were received with every possible mark of hostility. They were defeated in open field, the Garibaldi legion rushing out to meet them; and though they suffered much from the walls, they sustained themselves nowhere. They never put up a white flag till they wished to surrender. The vanity that strives to cover over these facts is unworthy of men. The only excuse for the imprudent conduct of the expedition is that they were deceived, not by the Romans here, but by the priests of Gaeta, leading them to expect action in their favor within the walls. These priests themselves were deluded by their hopes and old habits of mind. The troops did not fight well, and General Oudinot abandoned his wounded without proper care. All this says nothing against French valor, proved by ages of glory, beyond the doubt of their worst foes. They were demoralized because they fought in so bad a cause, and there was no sincere ardor or clear hope in any breast.

u But to return to the hospitals: these were put in order, and have been kept so, by the Princess Belgioioso. The princess was born of one of the noblest families of the Milanese, a descendant of the great Trivulzio, and inherited a large fortune. Very early she compromised it in liberal movements, and, on their failure, was obliged to fly to Paris, where for a time she maintained herself by writing, and I think by painting also. A princess so placed naturally excited great interest, and she drew around her a little court of celebrated men. After recovering her fortune, she still lived in Paris, distinguished for her talents and munificence, both toward literary men and her exiled countrymen. Later, on her estate, called Locate, between Pavia and Milan, she had made experiments in the Socialist direction with fine judgment and success. Association for education, for labor, for trans-action of household affairs, had been carried on for several years;

she had spared no devotion of time and money to this object, loved, and was much beloved by, those objects of her care, and said she hoped to die there. All is now despoiled and broken up, though it may be hoped that some seeds of peaceful reform have been sown which will spring to light when least expected. The princess returned to Italy in 1847-8, full of hope in Pius IX. and Charles Albert. She showed her usual energy and truly princely heart, sustaining, at her own expense, a company of soldiers and a journal up to the last sad betrayal of Milan, August 6th. These days undeceived all the people, but few of the noblesse; she was one of the few with mind strong enough to understand the lesson, and is now warmly interested in the republican movement. From Milan she went to France, but, finding it impossible to effect anything serious there in behalf of Italy, returned, and has been in Rome about two months. Since leaving Milan she receives no income, her possessions being in the grasp of Radetzky, and cannot know when, if ever, she will again. But as she worked so largely and well with money, so can she without. She published an invitation to the Roman women to make lint and bandages, and offer their services to the wounded; she put the hospitals in order; in the central one, Trinita de Pellegrini, once the abode where the pilgrims were received during holy week, and where foreigners were entertained by seeing their feet washed by the noble dames and dignitaries of Rome, she has remained day and night since the 30th of April, when the wounded were first there. Some money she procured at first by going through Rome, accompanied by two other ladies veiled, to beg it. Afterward the voluntary contributions were generous; among the rest, I am proud to say, the Americans in Rome gave \$ 250, of which a handsome portion came from Mr. Brown, the Consul.

I value this mark of sympathy more because of the irritation and surprise occasioned here by the position of Mr. Cass, the Envoy. It is most unfortunate that we should have an envoy here for the first time, just to offend and disappoint the Romans. When all the other ambassadors are at Gaeta, ours is in Rome, as if by his presence to discountenance the republican government, which he

does not recognize. Mr. Cass, it seems, is required by his instructions not to recognize the government till sure it can be sustained. Now it seems to me that the only dignified ground for our government, the only legitimate ground for any republican government, is to recognize for any nation the government chosen by itself. The suffrage had been correct here, and the proportion of votes to the whole population was much larger, it was said by Americans here, than it is in our own country at the time of contested elections. It had elected an Assembly; that Assembly had appointed, to meet the exigencies of this time, the Triumvirate. If any misrepresentations have induced America to believe, as France affects to have believed, that so large a vote could have been obtained by moral intimidation, the present unanimity of the population in resisting such immense odds, and the enthusiasm of their every expression in favor of the present government, puts the matter beyond a doubt. The Roman people claims once more to have a national existence. It declines further serfdom to an ecclesiastical court. It claims liberty of conscience, of action, and of thought. Should it fall from its present position, it will not be from internal dissent, but from foreign oppression.

Since this is the case, surely our country, if no other, is bound to recognize the present government *so long as it can sustain itself*. This position is that to which we have a right: being such, it is no matter how it is viewed by others. But I dare assert it is the only respectable one for our country, in the eyes of the Emperor of Russia himself.

The first, best occasion is past, when Mr. Cass might, had he been empowered to act as Mr. Rush did in France, have morally strengthened the staggering republic, which would have found sympathy where alone it is of permanent value, on the basis of principle. Had it been in vain, what then? America would have acted honorably; as to our being compromised thereby with the Papal government, that fear is idle. Pope and Cardinals have great hopes from America; the giant influence there is kept up with the greatest care; the number of Catholic writers in the United States, too, carefully counted. Had our republican gov-

ernment acknowledged this republican government, the Papal Camarilla would have respected us more, but not loved us less; for have we not the loaves and fishes to give, as well as the precious souls to be saved? Ah! here, indeed, America might go straightforward with all needful impunity. Bishop Hughes himself need not be anxious. That first, best occasion has passed, and the unrecognized, unrecognized Envoy has given offence, and not comfort, by a presence that seemed constantly to say, I do not think you can sustain yourselves. It has wounded both the heart and the pride of Rome. Some of the lowest people have asked me, "Is it not true that your country had a war to become free?" "Yes." "Then why do they not feel for us?"

Yet even now it is not too late. If America would only hail triumphant, though she could not sustain injured Rome, that would be something. "Can you suppose Rome will triumph," you say, "without money, and against so potent a league of foes?" I am not sure, but I hope, for I believe something in the heart of a people when fairly awakened. I have also a lurking confidence in what our fathers spoke of so constantly, a providential order of things, by which brute force and selfish enterprise are sometimes set at naught by aid which seems to descend from a higher sphere. Even old pagans believed in that, you know; and I was born in America, Christianized by the Puritans, — America, freed by eight years' patient suffering, poverty, and struggle, — America, so cheered in dark days by one spark of sympathy from a foreign shore, — America, first "recognized" by Lafayette. I saw him when traversing our country, then great, rich, and free. Millions of men who owed in part their happiness to what, no doubt, was once sneered at as romantic sympathy, threw garlands in his path. It is natural that I should have some faith.

Send, dear America! to thy ambassadors a talisman precious beyond all that boasted gold of California. Let it loose his tongue to cry, "Long live the Republic, and may God bless the cause of the people, the brotherhood of nations and of men, — the equality of rights for all." *Viva America!*

Hail to my country! May she live a free, a glorious, a loving life, and not perish, like the old dominions, from the leprosy of selfishness.

Evening.

I am alone in the ghostly silence of a great house, not long since full of gay faces and echoing with gay voices, now deserted by every one but me, — for almost all foreigners are gone now, driven by force either of the summer heats or the foe. I hear all the Spaniards are going now, — that twenty-one have taken passports to-day; why that is, I do not know.

I shall not go till the last moment; my only fear is of France. I cannot think in any case there would be found men willing to damn themselves to latest posterity by bombarding Rome. Other cities they may treat thus, careless of destroying the innocent and helpless, the babe and old grandsire who cannot war against them. But Rome, precious inheritance of mankind, — will they run the risk of marring her shrined treasures? Would they dare do it?

Two of the balls that struck St. Peter's have been sent to Pius IX. by his children, who find themselves so much less "beloved" than were the Austrians.

These two days, days of solemn festivity in the calends of the Church, have been duly kept, and the population looks cheerful as it swarms through the streets. The order of Rome, thronged as it is with troops, is amazing. I go from one end to the other, and amid the poorest and most barbarous of the population, (barbarously ignorant, I mean,) alone and on foot. My friends send out their little children alone with their nurses. The amount of crime is almost nothing to what it was. The Roman, no longer pent in ignorance and crouching beneath espionage, no longer stabs in the dark. His energies have true vent; his better feelings are roused; he has thrown aside the stiletto. The power here is indeed miraculous, since no doubt still lurk within the walls many who are eager to incite brawls, if only to give an excuse for slander.

To-day I suppose twelve thousand Austrians marched into Florence. The Florentines have humbled and disgraced them

selves in vain. They recalled the Grand Duke to ward off the entrance of the Austrians, but in vain went the deputation to Gaeta—in an American steamer! Leopold was afraid to come till his dear cousins of Austria had put everything in perfect order; then the Austrians entered to take Leghorn, but the Florentines still kept on imploring them not to come there; Florence was as subdued, as good as possible, already:—they have had the answer they deserved. Now they crown their work by giving over Guerazzi and Petracchi to be tried by an Austrian court-martial. Truly the cup of shame brims over.

I have been out on the balcony to look over the city. All sleeps with that peculiar air of serene majesty known to this city only;—this city that has grown, not out of the necessities of commerce nor the luxuries of wealth, but first out of heroism, then out of faith. Swelling domes, roofs softly tinted with yellow moss! what deep meaning, what deep repose, in your faintly seen outline!

The young moon climbs among clouds,—the clouds of a departing thunderstorm. Tender, smiling moon! can it be that thy full orb may look down on a smoking, smouldering Rome, and see her best blood run along the stones, without one nation in the world to defend, one to aid,—scarce one to cry out a tardy “Shame”? We will wait, whisper the nations, and see if they can bear it. Rack them well to see if they are brave. *If they can do without us*, we will help them. Is it thus ye would be served in your turn? Beware!