FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

SKETCHES OF EASTERN TRAVEL.

NO. XVII.

[Communicated for the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.]

FLORENCE, *Hotel New York, Saturday Evening*, May 26th, 1870.—We left Rome about 7 o'clock this morning, and after a long but interesting ride of 13 hours arrived here at 8 o'clock this evening. There is railway the whole distance. The road runs through a charming country. It is like a great garden the whole way, with splendid meadows on each as you go winding about among the Appennines. Broad fields of waving grain, with mulberry trees around and across them, and luxuriant vines running in graceful festoons from tree to tree, as is the custom here, gives a peculiar charm to the landscape. Not long after leaving Rome we rode across the plain where Cincinnatus gained his great victory over Mamertine, after seeing the vision of the cross in the heavens. Before noon we crossed "the twenty Tiber" for the last time, and so took our leave of "the Eternal City." I experienced a great sense of relief in getting away from Rome for a few days, that I can analyze the feeling and resolve it into its constituent elements, but the fact remains, whatever the meaning of explanation or not. Sight-seeing, you know, especially when it constitutes your chief occupation, is very tiresome. And there is something in the mere thought of how much there is to do in this line at Rome that oppresses and wearies one. And the time is short, and the weather is hot, and the idea of fever cannot be wholly gotten rid of, these do not mend the matter much. But there is something in the political and spiritual atmosphere of the place that has a very depressing effect. It is the centre of one of the most arbitrary governments in the world. I was much amused, as we rode along in watching the operations of, two priests in the same car with us. One was a stout old man, the other a thin young one. As soon as they were seated, the old man took out his missal, and began to cross himself and "patter prayers." The exercise was long, the day was warm, and by and by he got to nodding over his devotions. Every now and then he would rouse himself, take hold of snuff, and go at it again. The young fellow took a wiser course. He settled himself at once for a good long sleep. The old man kept on, and by and by with his book, seeming quite fresh and vigorous, while the poor old man was having hard time of it with his nodding head. He nods and his snuff. It took them several hours to get through.

Certainly adopt the opposite principle to that on which old Dr.—— is said to have acted. The story is that on one occasion he was going to Europe. There were a number of cabin passengers on board. When they had been out a day or two, another clergyman on board said to Dr.——: "Dr., as there are two clergymen here and so many passengers, don't you think it would be well to hold a worship in the morning?" "Don't say a word about it," said the Dr., "*let's sink the ship* while we are abroad."

FLORENCE, *Monday Evening*, May 30th.—We had hardly been in the hotel fifteen minutes last night, had just washed our faces and taken our seats at the tea-table, when the Rev. Dr. Van Nest, of New York, who has charge of the American Union Chapel in this place, came in and introduced himself. He said *he had heard of our arrival*, and called to see if he could get some help on the morrow. It ended in an agreement for the Rector of the Epiphany to preach for him in the morning and the Rector to preach for the Holy Apostles in the afternoon. After he was gone C. and I discussed the question, over our tea, whether we should get the news of our arrival, *almost before it took place!* But we were unable to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. We concluded it was at the Union Chapel this morning. It is held in a beautiful room in one of the old palaces of the city. It was formerly used as a ballroom, but is now very tastefully fitted up for the noble purpose. There was a congregation present of from 75 to 100. The singing was excellent. The Episcopal morning service was used, excepting the Litany. The preacher's text was an excellent one: "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God." C. went off to hear the Rev. Peyce Connelly—the man who made himself famous by joining the Church of Rome, saying in it *fifteen years*, and then coming back again, because he found that Church so corrupt. C. preached in the afternoon an earnest and excellent sermon. And thus we have spent a pleasant, and, I trust, a profitable Sabbath. After service this afternoon we walked round to see one or two of the churches. San Spirito we visited, and looked with interest on it, as we walked thoroughfully through it, because it was the church in which Luther preached, when making that visit to Rome which opened his eyes to the truth and led to the Reformation. We walked through the Cathedral also, especially to get a look at that magnificent dome which was Michael Angelo's special admiration, and which Dante used to sit and gaze at with such delight.

We visited the Church of San Lorenzo this morning to see two things, viz.: the Sacristy and the Medicean Chapel. The chief interest of the former lies in the four finestatues which it contains, by Michael Angelo, representing Dawn and Evening, Day and Night. The Chapel is interesting as containing in its vault some seventy members of the celebrated family of the Medici; and also for the beauty and splendor of the highly polished Florentine Mosaics in marble with which its walls are covered. We went visited the Church of Santa Croce, termed the Italian Pantheon, on account of the many tombs and monuments it contains of the really great men of Italy, whose ashes are sanctified their country with glory. Three of these tombs and monuments especially interested me. The tomb of Michael Angelo, whose remains lie in one of the chapels of this church. There are three fine marble statues on his tomb, representing painting, sculpture and architecture—the three sister arts in which he was equally gifted and great. The second was the tomb of Dante. It is a cenotaph, as he lies buried at Ravenna. But the monument is surrounded by a fine white marble bust of the immortal poet, whose peculiar and strongly-marked features it was a pleasure thus to contemplate. The third monument on which I gazed with peculiar interest was that of Galileo. A fine bas-relief statue of the noble philosopher stands over it. The countenance is full of life and expression. As you gaze on it, you almost see the lips move; as it rises from the memorable chair, when, just after he had weakly recanted the ruinous error in reference to the rotation of the earth, which alarmed and infallible Rome had charged upon him, he turned round and muttered, "*E pur si muove*, though."

But I digress. This we went hastily through those two churches of Florence—the Pitti and the Uffizzi. But we shall visit these again and more leisurely. I did therefore I shall not dwell

afternoon we rode out

with Dr. Van Nest to visit his orphan asylum, a short distance from the city. The surroundings of Florence are very beautiful. It is circled by hills that are very interesting in their historical associations. On one of these stands Fiesole, where are the remains of the ancient town of Florence, which is at least 4,000 years old. This is famous as the place where Cataline arranged the plan for the execution of his diabolical conspiracy. On another hill is a castle-like building in which Galileo prosecuted his scientific studies and where he and Milton had their interviews together. I have been greatly interested in Dr. Van Nest's operations for the cause of truth in Italy. The asylum contains thirty Italian orphan girls of their Protestant teaching, and who are training for the important position of teachers. It is held in one of the convent buildings which have been suppressed by the government. It has been purchased for this purpose, but is only the remainder of the debt and secure means to enlarge the number of those who receive the benefit of the institution. They have room for a hundred children instead of thirty. It is a noble effort for the enlightenment of Italy. I know of no way in which those who wish to aid in spreading the light of the Gospel in this dark land can better attain that object than by aiding to support an enterprise like this. We went into the girls' school-room; they sung several familiar Sunday-school hymns for us. "I have a Father in the promised land," "Shall we gather at the river," and "Marching along," sounded very sweet in the soft rich language of Italy. I could hardly keep the tears back while listening to the touching sound of the children's voices. It brought before me my own dear school and all the loved ones there more vividly than anything I had met with since leaving home. Dr. Van Nest spoke with feelingly of the great dearth they met with of children's books of a religious character; in contrast with what we have here. He expressed an earnest wish for a volume of sermons for children, like the "Hills," or some of the series to which it belongs. I asked what it would cost to translate and print an edition of one such volume. He said the translation could be done for nothing, and the expense of printing would be about 500 francs, or $100. I told him I would be responsible for that amount, and he said he would have the work begun at once. I thought our Sunday school cause ought to be a work like this; at a low rate, I should esteem it a privilege cheaply purchased to be permitted at such a price to set the "Hills from the Fountain of Joy" flowing through this land of spiritual barrenness, and to have the opportunity, on paper, if not in person, of talking to the little ones something at least of "the old, old story of Jesus and His love."

Tuesday Evening, May 31st.—We have spent this day mainly in visiting the American artists in their studios. Our friend, Dr. Van Nest, was kind enough to go with us and introduce us to the artists. I will not trouble you with an account of all on whom we called, but just mention two or three with whose works we were more particularly pleased. One of those was Mr. Mead. He is a young man of very great promise. From the Old Bay State. He has executed the model for the great monument to Mr. Lincoln, to be erected on his grave at Springfield, Illinois, to cost $250,000, and will be probably the finest monument in the place, and will be elevated far off the palm from among some thirty distinguished artists who contended with him for the prize. We had hoped to have the pleasure of seeing the model, but found to our great regret that it was just in process of being taken to pieces for shipment to America, and so could not be seen. The base and shaft of the monument are to be of granite, and the figures, of which there are some seven or eight besides the central one, of bronze. The whole is to be executed in our own country.

Mr. Mead has also a very interesting group representing Columbus before Queen Isabella. He holds a globe in one hand, while with the other he is pointing out the course he purposes pursuing in reaching the Western world. And the Queen is offering him her jewels to defray the expenses of his journey. The effect of the whole is exceedingly fine. This group has been purchased by one of the merchant princes of New York for $20,000.

We next visited the studio of our great countryman, Mr. Hiram Powers, and were deeply interested in examining some of his unrivalled busts. His Eve and his Greek Slave are known and admired all over the world. Mr. P. never works on groups of any kind. His chief excellence lies in busts and single figures. In the production of these he stands without a rival. In Mr. Ball's studio we saw a group with which we were greatly delighted. It is one of his last and best productions. The figures in it are about half the natural size. It represents Mr. Lincoln in a standing posture. The figure of a slave is kneeling before him. His chains have fallen from his hands, and are seen lying on the ground. Mr. Lincoln is stretching out his hand over the prostrate form of the slave, as if just uttering those memorable words from the close of his immortal proclamation of Emancipation, which are inscribed in letters of gold on the base of the group: "And on this act I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God." The whole effect of the group is of the finest possible character. If I were purchasing sculpture, I know not that I have seen any piece since leaving home that I would rather have than this. This splendid group is for sale. I hope some patriotic American, who appreciates the true character of Mr. Lincoln and the grandeur of this act in our national history, will do himself the honor of securing this truly American work. Our last visit was to the studio of Mr. Gould, a very talented artist, from Boston. He is just finishing an ideal subject that is exceedingly beautiful. He calls it "The Wind." A graceful female figure, light and ethereal-looking, stands erect, yet bending slightly forward, as if about to fly; her flowing robes, bound in a starry balbrick round her waist, are waving in the most graceful fashion. Her head, her, as she gazes with an earnest look in the direction from which the wind is supposed to be blowing. The design is unique, while the grace and beauty of the whole figure are charming. In one corner of his studio Mr. G. has a marble bust, representing the head of Christ, which is remarkably fine, while in the opposite corner is another, of the same size, intended to represent the head of Satan. The artist has aimed to throw into it all his ideas of the most intense malice and fiendish wickedness which must meet in the soul, and engrave their indelible lines on the features of one "once archangel fallen." And he has been eminently successful in the effort. It is hardly possible to imagine a finer contrast than is presented in these two heads. On the one side you see purity, peace, majestic tranquility; the third of the human and the embodiment of the divine; on the other you see pride, ambition, hate, scorn, and all the wholly possession, mingled in marble, in most striking and surprising manner. I would have given anything to have gotten a good photograph of these two heads; but they are not to be had. Few things are more gratifying to the patriotic feelings of an American abroad than a visit to the studios of his countrymen in this Athens of Italy.

MYS. G., the artist's wife, came forward as we entered her husband's studio, and spoke to me with great warmth. She introduced herself as a Philadelphian, and expressed her pleasure at seeing a face that was familiar to her from her native city. R. N.

OUR POTSVILLE LETTER.

[Correspondence of the Phila. Evening Bulletin.]

POTTSVILLE, July 8, 1870.—The stereotyped "All quiet along the Potomac" might well be applied to Schuylkill county at present. Everybody is waiting to see what the fifteenth of July will bring forth, that being the day set for the beginning of the eight-hour movement. It seems pretty certain that after next week very little coal will be sent from this county until the end of the suspension. The action of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad in raising rails to a figure quite out of the range of shippers has—been followed by the Schuylkill Navigation Company, which is controlled by the Reading Railroad, and which advanced tolls and freights fifty cents per ton, to take effect to-morrow. This, it is thought, will stop every operation in the county.

It is a little singular, and yet no more than was to be expected, that the first effects of the rise in tolls were felt by the road itself before the order went into effect. Its announcement incensed the working operators to such a degree that they immediately refused to sell coal to the road, and it was with difficulty that a sufficient supply could be procured this morning to provide fuel for the engines. "Curses, like chickens, come home to roost."

The prospect ahead looks dark everybody feel blue. Coal is the life of our people. When it ceases to flow through Sharp Mountain Gap, the entire region, as a market, money ceases to flow in upon us, and when this state of affairs continues for months as in the present instance, its effects are plainly visible in elongated visages and depleted pockets. A more miserable, poverty of people than ours are to-day would be hard to find. They grumble at everything. Even the weather don't suit them. Merchants talk of locking up their stores and emigrating; mechanics talk of the Sheriff's visit with cheerful resignation. All say, with a despairing calmness, and with that unknown Anglo-Saxon which always comes to the rescue when polished Greek and Latin derivatives prove insufficient, "Let 'er rip; we can stand it as long as anybody, and when the crash comes we'll all go down together, and none can blame another."

But, notwithstanding the grumbling, business goes on as usual, and improvement is the order of the day, in this town at least. A safe deposit company is putting in foundations with brick "fore" firm at the everlasting hills," with the intention of building on them an eighty elegant brick structures with handsome fronts are taking their places; palatial residences are being erected in different parts of the borough; the unsightly broken and worn-out pavements which have disgraced the town so long are being rapidly relaid and new ones going down where none were laid before; the hay-wagon nuisance has been banished from its old accustomed place in the busiest part of town, and the hogs and goats are doomed to follow; and despite the dull times and the lack of money, we expect that by the close of the summer we shall have a town to be proud of. Let the good work go on, for it is sorely needed. What do we care if Peter does borrow from Timothy to pay Paul? Does not Paul "borrow" from Peter to pay Timothy? And when the crash does come, and we "all go down together," shall we not find, when the dust clears away, and we have time to look around us, that we are still on the same relative level, and that no one is hurt more badly than another.

And again: If business is dull and we have nothing to do, we have so much the more leisure to enjoy this delightful weather. Surely this weather was made for open air life, and he who wants to lie behind a counter or over a desks, is guilty of contempt of one of nature's greatest gifts to man. It is rank treason to neglect such a balmy air and such sky and smiling earth as last night's thunder-storm has given us to-day. It was made for a pure day, and I was glad to see several parties start off on the country to enjoy it. May they bring out this morning to enjoy it. May they experience a ride on such a morning as much as does WIDO.

OUR WILMINGTON LETTER.

[Correspondence of the Phila. Evening Bulletin.]

WILMINGTON, July 8th.—This morning a locomotive attached to a passenger train on the Wilmington and Reading Railroad ran off the track within the city limits, causing a detention of about two hours, and no damage, except breaking the locomotive. The accident was due to a misplaced switch.

There is great deal of growling just now about the increase recently made in city taxes, and, of course, the Democrats are trying to make the most of it, though the members of that party voted for the increase. In fact, there was nothing else to be done. Last year, for buncombe, the Democrats foolishly reduced the rate one per cent., and thereby so diminished the receipts as to create a floating debt, which renders necessary the present increase. But really, after all, they are quite moderate; city tax being but fifteen per cent. of annual interest on the assessments, equal to 90 cents on the $100; add 2 per cent. on the annual interest for school tax, and the whole interest is 91 02 on the $100. Does Philadelphia get of that easy? Some of the papers here have compared New York or Baltimore and they would get a little more than half of the amount. Our city does enable them thereafter to pay such taxes as Wilmington imposes with cheerfulness.

The colored people of this town held an immense meeting at Dover on the 5th inst. to celebrate the adoption of the Fifteenth amendment. Addresses were made by several gentlemen, among the number J. T. Bailey, our candidate for Congress, who made telling address, though not given to public speaking. Running for Congress seems to have called up his speaking powers. The demonstration is said to have had a good effect and improved strength to the joints of some "weak-kneed" Republicans, who begin to think that such a ticket is plainly to be voted that day, with ballots in their hands, are not as considerable acquisitions to the Republican ranks in a county in which the party would be a hopeless minority forever without such aid.

The New Orleans firemen alluded to in my last paid their visit to our city and were feasted and marched around by the Waterwitch Company. Everything passed off pleasantly, and they professed to be much pleased with their visit.

Quite an amusing and at the same time alarming incident occurred in our harbor last Tuesday. One of the harbor tug-boats was lying at the wharf of one of the steamboats plying between here and New York, when the latter arrived, and wished to take the tug to get out of her way. On board the tug were her engineer and captain, and, by accident, one of her owners, a well-known gentleman, and president of one of our banks. The latter grasped the helm and the tug started, but owing to the short time required to make the boat careened badly and threatened to capsize. This alarmed the engineer that he jumped overboard, and the stern of the tug then swung around towards Market street bridge. The captain and the owner jumped on to one of the abutments of that structure, and abandoned the tug, which seemed to give her an impulse in a new direction, and she made a bee-line for a steamboat wharf on the south side, striking one of the piles with her plated prow and splitting it in two. She then turned round and made another a schooner, which was suddenly deserted about that time; but, fortunately, she ran between the vessel and the wharf, and was there caught before she had succeeded in seriously injuring anything. The affair was very amusing after it was over, but owners of shipping thereabouts could not see the fun while the little vixen was cruising around on her own hook.

The new faculty of Delaware College was installed on Wednesday. Hon. William M. Purnell, the new President, is from Dalmimo, and was, of I mistake not, Postmaster of that town under Lincoln's first Administration. He organized the Purnell Legion of Maryland, and was one of the staff officers of Gen. Lee. He Johnsonized and afterwards disappeared from politics, seemingly because he was disgusted with the company into which his change threw him. He is said to be amply qualified for the new position, and to be a man of broad and liberal views.

The Peninsula Conference, Methodist, and the railroad company is busily engaged in preparing cars for the trade. Notwithstanding the estimate of the Peninsula Conference, I believe the crop will be equal to that of last year, and the fruit certainly will be a much finer quality. I have all along been confident of this, but the official statement of the Conference rather staggered my confidence in the trustworthiness of my own sources of information. The Conference was in session when it was not so much aimed at as was the probable effect on communion ness in the short crop. The Peninsula expect that it will be below the probable yield. From several stations, from which I have had accounts of blossoms, the blossoms will be twice or three times as great as the Association estimate them. The larger number are shipped from Dover, Smyrna, and, possible, nearly, if not quite, two millions of bushels will come over the Delaware Railroad. DALE.

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