

A REMARKABLE CHAPTER.

FRAGMENTS OF ANNA MARIA TAIGI'S PREDICTIONS. SEE PROPHECIES COMPARED WITH THOSE OF OTHER GIFTED SOULS.

The following fragments were collected by P. Calixte, and he says that he had them from the lips of persons worthy of credit.

When the judgment she announced shall overtake the wicked, the dead bodies round Rome shall be as numerous as the fish which a (then) recent inundation of the Tiber had carried into that city. All the enemies of the Church, secret as well as known, will perish during the darkness, with the exception of some whom God shall soon after convert. The air shall be infected with demons, who will appear under all sorts of hideous forms. Blessed candles will preserve from death, as well as prayers to the Blessed Virgin and the holy angels. After the darkness, St. Peter and St. Paul shall descend to preach throughout the earth. A great light emanating from them shall rest upon him whom God has chosen for the future Pope (the *Lumen in Caelo* of St. Malachi's well-known prophecy). St. Michael, appearing on earth, shall chain up Satan until the times of the preaching of Antichrist. Religion will everywhere extend its empire. Russia will be converted, as will also England and China; and all nations will rejoice in contemplating this splendid triumph of the Church. Then will be accomplished the prophecy of our Lord: 'There shall be one fold and one shepherd.' After this, the Santa Casa of Loreto will be transported by angels to Rome into the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. P. Calixte observes that the Blessed Joseph Labre had made a similar prediction, and had also said that it would be transferred before the end of the world to France.

P. Calixte has something of his own to add to these various current reports. 'A pious prelate,' he says, 'a Cameriere Segreto of his Holiness, assured him that Anna Maria foretold the definition of the Immaculate Conception, the holding of the Vatican Council, and the proclamation of the Pontifical Infallibility, in spite of the long and insidious opposition of the principal Catholic States. He also said that she announced the sanguinary struggle that has taken place between Prussia and France, and the humiliation and enfeeblement of the latter because she had forgotten her obligations as eldest daughter of the Church. To the horrors of foreign and civil war were to succeed sanguinary conflicts with the revolutionary faction; and this state of desolation was to last until the people of France should cast themselves at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff, conjuring him to put an end thereto by an act of supreme authority. The Pope would then send a legate into France to enquire into the state of things, and, on the report made to him, would name a Christian king to occupy its throne.'

To these fragments of reported prophecies we may subjoin a contribution from the Abbé Curicque, who, in his 'Voix Prophétiques,' vol. ii. p. 155, says, 'On Monday, the 7th of February, we had gone to assist in the Basilica of San Crisogono, in Trastevere, at the first Vespers at the Feast of St. John of Matha, whose Religious serve that sanctuary. We had then the happiness of praying for a long time at the glorious tomb of Anna Maria. A little before the office began, we went into the sacristy, where we saw the Postulator of the cause of the Venerable, and we obtained from that Father both some relics of Anna Maria and some interesting details as to the state of preservation of her mortal remains. We questioned him also as to the future. The Postulator replied that the Venerable Servant of God had foretold that Pius would re-enter at the close of his reign on the integral possession of the patrimony of St. Peter; and, moreover, those amongst his enemies who were the fiercest opponents of his temporal power would not remain alive to witness this glorious triumph.'

There is a general convergence, so to say, and striking resemblance in the scope of all modern prophecies, which confer no little importance upon them, taken as a whole, in the eyes of those who, according to St. Peter's counsel, are 'looking for and hasting into the coming of the day of the Lord.' But any attempt to illustrate this point would be quite beyond our present object, which is simply to compare Anna Maria's prophecy of impending judgment, and its results with analogous predictions of certain other souls who were favored with like revelations. Two women of eminent holiness and supernatural gifts in our days have made announcements similar to those of Anna Maria, one of whom was her contemporary, a married woman, and also a Tertiary of the Trinitarians, Elisabetta Canori Mora. In the year 1820, she saw in a vision an awful judgment full upon the world, which in all its particulars exhibits a marked coincidence with the prophecy on the same subject attributed to Anna Maria. She first beheld the heavens opened, and the Prince of the Apostles descend, surrounded with glory and with a number of celestial spirits singing canticles. He was arrayed in Pontifical garments, and held in his hand a pastoral staff, with which he traced an immense cross over the earth, the angels meanwhile singing, 'Constitues eos principes super omnem terram—Thou shalt make them princes over all the earth.' She then beheld the faithful gathered, under the image of a flock of sheep, beneath four sheltering trees, which a touch of the Apostle's crozier had caused to spring out of the earth at the four extremities of the cross. 'Then,' she said, 'I understood in my inmost heart that St. Peter had caused these trees to spring up as a place of refuge for the faithful friends of Jesus Christ, and to preserve them from the terrible chastisement which was to overwhelm the earth.' We are reminded of the angel in the Apocalypse who is bidden not to hurt the earth until the servants of God have been sealed in their foreheads, and of the mysterious Thau spoken of by Ezechiel. After this symbolical vision, in which the flock of Christ was consigned, under the figure of docile sheep, to the protection of the chief pastor, he returned to Heaven, and then quickly followed the judgment. Thick clouds veiled the firmament, and a terrible wind, like the roaring of a furious lion, arose, sweeping the whole earth, and striking terror into man and beast. Men at that crisis she described as in the height of revolution and engaged in massacring each other pitilessly. To the vengeance they were thus mutually exercising on each other was now to be joined that which the powers of Hell were commissioned by God to inflict.

She beheld legions of demons assuming the form of men and beasts, and ranging the whole world, to execute the decrees of God's justice on the wicked—on their possessions, on the fruits of the earth, on towns, on villages; 'nothing,' she said, 'will be spared.' In short, they will fill the earth with ruins, specially devastating those places where God has been outraged and blasphemed, and where sacrileges have been perpetrated. Meanwhile the faithful, under the protection of the holy Apostles, shall remain uninjured both in person and in property. After the judgment, she again beheld the heavens brighten, and the chief of the Apostles descend, accompanied by angels singing hymns to his honor, and acknowledging him as prince of the earth. Then she saw St. Paul come down from Heaven, commissioned by God to traverse the earth and chain up the demons. She beheld him drag them before the Prince of the Apostles, who consigned them again to the Hell from which they had been loosed. After this follow particulars precisely similar to those already given, as contained in Anna Maria's prophecy of the miraculous election of the holy Pontiff, the '*Lumen in Caelo*,' and the reconciliation of earth with heaven.

In regard to this prediction we will make one observation, which is susceptible of wider application. Clearly the opening of this vision is figurative. The seer herself did not believe that St. Peter literally planted four large trees, under which the faithful gathered in the guise of sheep. This leads us to ask how much of the remaining portion is also to be taken as symbolical, and how much must be understood literally. That a great judgment of some kind is described, in which Hell will take a permissive part, and a singular protection be afforded to the faithful, there can be no question. But are the subsequent apparitions of St. Peter and St. Paul, their preaching to the world and the chaining of Satan, events which the bodily eyes will discern? Or, if the eyes of some may be opened to behold them, as were the eyes of the servant of the Lord fighting for Israel (4 Kings vi. 17), or as those of Attila, the Scourge of God, when he was about to march with his Huns to the destruction of Rome, and the Vicar of Christ went forth to meet him, were opened to see the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul menacing him in the air, will the vision be patent to all? This point it seems impossible to decide. It will be evident that what we have here suggested applies to the parallel announcements of Anna Maria Taigi, though we have given our reasons for inclining to the opinion that the threatened judgment of the three days' darkness is to be literally, not figuratively, understood.

The other holy person who has made similar predictions is a Neapolitan widow still living and now about forty-eight years of age, Palma-Maria-Addolorata Matarelli, a native of Oria in the Terra di Lavoro. She enjoys a great reputation for sanctity, has received the stigmata, and on every Friday has a participation of the agonies of the Passion, including the Sweat of Blood. She is also said to possess the gift of bilocation. Of future events she speaks as confidently as others do of what is passing before their eyes; but on this subject much reserve is practised by her directors—a reserve in every way the more imperative because the subject is still living; and in such cases it is well known what jealous caution the Church prescribes, from the danger of possible illusion. She is greatly revered by the people of Naples, a circumstance naturally irritating to Victor Emmanuel's Government. She was accordingly subjected to a severe inquiry by the civil authorities on the 8th December, 1863, which in that year fell on a Friday, as also to a medical examination; the result being the more complete establishment of the supernatural facts exhibited in her person. Fragments of her prophecies have been divulged. She is reported to have spoken of republics being set up in France, in Spain, in Italy; of the civil war which was to burst forth afterwards in these countries, simultaneously with other chastisements, such as plague and famine; of the massacre of priests and of some dignitaries of the Church; of the trials through which the City of Peter would have to pass and the sufferings it would endure from the fury of the wicked; of the extermination of the latter; the destruction of Paris; of the dense darkness and infection of the air by devils, and the use of blessed candles as a means of preservation; of supernatural portents which should appear in the heavens; and of a dreadful war which, however, would be of short duration and would be followed by the peace of the world and the triumph of the Church, of which Pius IX. was to see the commencement.

The following is extract from the Bishop of Paderborn's Pastoral: "Recognise no one as your pastor who does not enter into the sheep-fold by the true door, who has not his mission from the Chair of St. Peter, and is not united with the Holy See in the unity of the Faith, and by the bond of true and sacerdotal obedience. It is better for you, fathers and mothers, to teach your children the truths of the Christian religion yourselves than to hand them over to 'hirelings and robbers' to be instructed and trained. It is better for you, heads and members of families, to build up one another in the Holy Faith, by common prayers and holy hymns and songs, rather than than to have any share in the sacrilegious ministrations of apostate priests, whereby the majesty of God is not honored, but rather dishonored and outraged. And even to the hour of death have no communion with schismatic and heretical priests, but (supposing that you cannot have a faithful priest to attend) excite in yourselves an act of perfect contrition, for this, with a desire after the Holy Sacrament, will cleanse the soul from all the sins which cling to it. The grace of God, indeed, is necessary for such perfect contrition; but He will give this grace richly to all who humbly beg for it. So, too, for the baptism of your children, for the burial of your relations and friends, for the blessing of the Church upon your marriages, do not, under any circumstances whatever, call in a priest who has apostatised from the Church, whether he be heretic or schismatic; that you may have no share in heresy, apostasy, or schism. If orthodox and faithful priests fail you, then let the baptism of your children be performed by some faithful layman; bury your dead yourselves, amid hymns and prayers; and as regards the blessing of the Church upon your marriages, wait for the instructions which I will make known to you in due time, as soon as I am authorised to do so by the Holy See," &c.