

NAPLES.

(CORRESPONDENT CATHOLIC 'STANDARD.')

I WRITE from the midst of a great amphitheatre, from which six hundred thousand souls gaze down on a bay, which has been the theme of poetic and prosaic pens from time out of mind. It is a beautiful sight, I vow, but I am not yet desirous of dying from a sheer and intense ecstasy of delight. Other motives I may have to wish for dissolution, but the beauty of the scene before me, has not, and cannot kill me, so to speak, with satiety. In this great amphitheatre, there is a great play of real life going on, to which life in other cities of Italy seems but a figure. There is misery, naked and hungry, creeping abroad, wan and dirty of feature, indifferent in dress, with no earthly ambition to actuate it, than to find an occupation for its idle jaws. There is wealth here, demonstrative and proud, yet clutching its gold with the relentless grasp of a Cyclop, else why are there so many thousands without bread? There is beauty, preternatural, smacking of the angelic, and enhancing, in perfection the conception which everyone forms of the All-Beautiful, the Great Prototype of all. There is ugliness, and when I use the word,

SIGHTS IN NAPLES.

I don't refer so much to the natural irregularity of features, as evidenced in many, nor to the unsympathetic complexion, nor to the imperfect mould of many of God's creatures in this particular spot of creation. I speak of that deplorable ugliness which glares forth so garishly in beauty, despoiled even physically by lives not mindful of the Ten Commandments. This brings me to say that there is sin here, too—very much of it, which is noticeable even by the unpractised eye of a stranger. There goes a little fellow, escorted by two policemen. What if his hair is unkempt and his face innocent of soap and water, and his tawny form only covered with a tunic (excuse the monosyllabic word, expressive of the same idea—it is too short) of extremely moderate dimensions? Don't look at his crusted feet, but glance at that face, symmetrical as an angel's (ought to be in our conception) and say how beautiful! Scrutinize it still more, and you will see lines around the mouth, and on the forehead, which have been formed there by sin. His eyes are black and beautiful, and most faithful mirrors of his young soul, and they tell you that he is a thief; hence he is being conducted to a "forced domicile." And there is a woman too, the fairest of the fair, dressed in rustling silks, made up according to the last agony of fashion. It were better not to stop and admire her beauty, and in your profound pity for her, you turn aside. See that handsome, well-dressed young man, standing on the street corner. How exquisitely he bows to the lady who has just passed him! There is a great deal of soul in his face, but there is mystery dark and terrible in his eyes. He is a "Cannorrist" on a polite scale, and his occupations are various. He gambles with plumed dice, reproduces bank bills, trifles with the pockets of the unwary and unsuspecting, and is at the head of a secret gang of desperadoes, whose sworn purpose is to make war upon society in every possible form. Boatmen, porters, cabman, bootblacks, tradesmen, shopkeepers of the lower order, waiters, in fact all the dependent humanity of the city and province, belong to the organization which has become strong enough in late days to make the government apprehensive for its own existence. They have their own language and countersigns.

THE PEOPLE.

If one cab-driver passes another in the streets he conveys to him with a jerk of the head, how he is going to victimize the stranger who has hired him. It is the same with the boatman. The more thoroughly they fleece a stranger the higher they rise in the estimation of their associates. Sin has a powerful empire here. Yet the faith is not extinct, nor piety. There are numberless temples here that were erected to the worship of the living God by the kings of former days who made it their line of action to please their Creator first, and they would easily do justice afterwards by the creatures, their subjects. I shall not stop to describe them, for my sketch is hurried. All these churches are open daily, and well frequented by a good portion of the middle and upper classes. An Apostle among the lower classes would enjoy no sinecure, neither would he in evangelizing the authorities. Many a noble convent of this city has been depopulated, and the inmates thereof driven out into the world. Many a stately church within and without the city has been invaded by these worse than Goths, the altars despoiled, the sacristy robbed, and the whole edifice, whose vaults once resounded with the music of praise to the Almighty, now seems as a warehouse for the reception of goods, sequestered by the Custom-house officers, or a hall for elections.

THE BAY OF NAPLES.

I had spent a day in the city. The continual roar of life in every shape, in the thousands of ambulating pedlars bellowing incessantly, in the cab-drivers ever shouting and cracking their whips at the passers by, in the numberless little boys screaming at the top of their voices the latest edition of the papers, in the fish-mongers, men and women, in the squalling, naked children that tumble promiscuously through the streets—all this, I say, made my brain reel. I would have given much to be in a quiet nook where the noise would not reach me, but such nook is not to be found in these streets. Let me make an exception of some of the churches, some of those massive piles, the granite walls of which are impervious to sound. There only can your ears find rest. But the churches are not open after night, and the noise seems to redouble its intensity. I moved down towards the bay. The water looked calm and inviting away out beyond the myriads of vessels that were huddling together in the quay. I heard a boatman sing his vesper-song to St. Lucy, and that, too, was suggestive of peace. I hailed him, and got in. The little boat seemed to have life and instinct in threading a passage through a very labyrinth of craft of all sizes. At last we were fairly beyond them all, and were alone

on the bay. We glided out, out, out, for more than an hour, and then only did I look back upon the city we had left behind us. It looked more like a great amphitheatre than ever, and the myriads of lights, glimmering in the distance, seemed to be the fiery eyes of the spectators, gazing more intensely than ever on the great scene of life enacted there. Here, at last, all was hushed into silence. The oars of our little craft seemed to be impressed with the thought that it was night, and so they played with the water as noiselessly as the moonbeams which the rising queen of night sent from the distant mountain tops, citywards, to announce her coming.

MOUNT VESUVIUS.

It was indeed an impressive scene, impressive with a beauty entirely local. Away off to the right I saw a mighty shadow uplifted towards heaven, a gigantic altar, from which a thick dark smoke of sacrifice arose, blackening the heavens in its ascent. It is a mountain with charred and cindered sides. Away off from its base lies a city without any inhabitants. The bay is quiet, impressively so, but the awful stillness of that great city is oppressive. Its fate looms up in your mind like a spectre. We only know enough of its former history to make it mysterious. The terrible element that sleeps in the caverns of that mountain woke up one day, and belching from its hiding-place, it rained destructively on the city, and utterly annihilated it. That mountain, and the charred victim at its base, form a picture of the past.

ST. ELMO.

In front of me, high above the city, towers another mountain, not smoke-crested, but crowned with an emblem of peace—a beautiful church. There is a monastery there, but no monks. All is quiet, as in that other city of the past. Hundreds of holy men in white garments once lived there, and prayed there, and brought blessings on the present city below. Where are they? Gone too, though no material fire banished them. No other element was brought to their destruction than the will of man, and yet the silence of that mountain not only oppresses, but saddens you. A monastery without monks, a temple without priests, an altar without a God. That, with the sinful, noisy, blazing, throbbing city down below, forms a picture of the present. I seemed to have been in a dream while drifting away out in that bay, yet there is a reality engraven on my memory, which time cannot efface, a picture of two mountains overtowering two cities—Vesuvius, Pompeii; St. Elmo, Naples.

CATHOLIC LOYALTY.

THE Pittsburg 'Catholic' speaks as follows in refutation of the accusation that Catholicity is incompatible with loyalty to one's country, than which no accusation is less plausible:—"When Norway was taken from the King of Denmark, and given to Bernadotte by the allies for his services to them, and his perfidy to Napoleon, the Roman Catholics offered their lives and their all to resist the infringement of the rights of their Protestant King, and in their conduct gave a rare and noble instance of their fidelity and loyalty. In the several revolutions which have convulsed Continental Europe in 1847, in France, in Hungary, in Naples, in Lombardy, have the Catholic clergy been ever mentioned in connection with disloyalty? In the mania for the overturning of thrones, which seized on the people of many of the States of Europe during that eventful period when princes fled before the hurricane of popular indignation, and abandoned their capitals in consternation, the Catholic clergy, with the fealty which has always characterised their sacred calling and social standing, preserved their goodwill and affection for the lawful authorities."

One of the fullest, clearest, and most succinct resums of the contents of Dr. Newman's late pamphlet has been made by a writer in the 'Illustrated London Graphic' of January 30—a paper which is quite as aristocratic and ultra-Protestant as the 'Pall Mall Gazette.' The admissions, indeed, are so startling, so just in themselves, and so flattering to Dr. Newman and to Catholics generally, that we cannot refrain from reproducing some of them:—"Dr. Newman tells us that this is likely to be his last publication. We earnestly trust it may not be so, and that he will still have many more words to be addressed to a generation which—whatever may be its fault—has at least come to esteem him almost as he deserves to be esteemed. But if he elects to retire finally from the field, it certainly will not be because his right hand has lost aught of its cunning. Eloquence, grace, and vigour of style, power of statement, closeness of reasoning—all these gifts are as manifest in this pamphlet as they were in any of Dr. Newman's writings of thirty years ago. Yet that which perhaps strikes us most of all in it is the exquisite urbanity and dignified courtesy of its tone. Considering how Mr. Gladstone, by 'passionate invective' and loose and ill-considered charges, had bared his back to the lash which Dr. Newman so well knows how to wield, the gentleness with which he is here dealt with is well-nigh astonishing; but the reply is none the less crushing for its calmness. That it is a complete vindication of Catholics from those imputations upon their loyalty urged by Mr. Gladstone is a point as to which, we should say, amongst other people of sufficient intelligence there could hardly be two opinions."

LATIN AND GREEK.—Latin and Greek and metaphysical philosophy are valuable acquisitions. From the ancients we may borrow much wisdom and the highest cultivation of style. A knowledge of Latin and Greek gives the possessor a truer appreciation of his own language. The mere learning of these languages is a valuable intellectual exercise for young people; and in after life the classics are dear to the heart of the scholar—even when he has forgotten them—for the youthful recollections associated with their study. It is a common custom to give the title of "learned man" to any one who can quote an appropriate sentence from the ancient authors. Sydney Smith says:—"Classical quotations are the watchwords of scholars, by which they distinguish themselves from the ignorant and illiterate."