

But, through all the beauty, the mountain, Vesuvius, long supposed incapable of harm, heaved up floods of fire from underneath the fruitful vineyards that clad its sides, and destroyed these towns—the one in a tide of flowing red-hot lava, the other beneath a pond—as cloud of ashes—preserving for the student and the antiquarian records of inestimable value, and affording to all, we should think, a true example of the worth of life, and the world's pursuits; a theme much insisted upon, but little taken to heart.

Some years before this time, along these shores travelled the Great Apostle of the Gentiles, on his way to the Judgment Seat of Caesar, for it was at Puteoli he landed when his voyage from Asia Minor terminated, and that port is identified with the modern Puzzuoli, which lies six miles to the west of Naples. How great a shadow on that day did the fair sun of Italy cast upon her soil; one sufficient to sanctify it in our eyes were this alone its claim to such regard, and what wonder that the faith prevailed in that land which such royal blood empurpled.

But it is not only because of the landing of St. Paul there that Puzzuoli is interesting from a Christian point of view; in its amphitheatre, whose ruins still remain, early martyrs testified in death to the faith, and amongst them, in the year 305, was exposed to wild beasts the holy Bishop of Beneventum, St. Januarius. But, as it frequently happened, the beasts, more humane than the men who would have made them ministers of cruelty, refused the atrocious task required of them, and the martyr was beheaded with the sword.

It was the habit of the faithful of the times to gather up the blood of those who died for the faith. They soaked it in cloths or sponges, and it was frequently preserved in vials, which, with the instruments of his torture, were placed by the grave of the martyr, when his mangled body had been obtained by his brethren and buried. Numbers of such vials, or ampullæ, remain to the present day, and from amongst them, that containing a portion of St. Januarius' blood, is preserved in the Cathedral of Naples. At ordinary times this blood, as may be supposed after the lapse of so many ages, is in a dry state, and as a dark substance adheres to the sides of the flasks, which in their turn are contained in a glass case; but on September 18, the feast of the Saint, and now and then on other occasions, a miracle is performed, for the blood liquifies, becomes of its proper colour in the fluid form, and even bubbles and boils so as to fill completely the vials.

This is a wonder which has been much controverted, but which yet is incontrovertible. The miracle is performed in the open church before an immense multitude of people, and in such a manner as to render any attempt at deceit an impossibility. The glass case, containing the ampullæ, alone is touched by the priest officiating. Deceit would be impossible, for there is no chemical substance known that could be affected as this blood is affected, and so made to pass for it; and for this is pledged the word of Sir Humphrey Davy.

But they who deny God or His Church must needs also cavil at the works of God. Such things as this are judged too trifling. Yet blood of old cried from the earth to God and acquainted Him with murder. Why should it be now thought unworthy that it should testify to man of the like deed? There are those who forget that they are but dust of the earth, and that when God deals with them, their littleness is taken into account. Their pride is such that, in event of a miracle being needed for their conviction, they would not think it too much to ask that the very gates of Heaven should be thrown open, and its ineffable light flashed upon their impure vision, or the sounds of the angels' choirs wafted within reach of their polluted ears,

W I S D O M.

"Wisdom," says the wise man in Scripture, "is an estimable treasure, which they that possess it become the friends of God." Now, my brethren, you are aware that theology is a science which sounds and investigates, interprets and expresses, the Divine utterances of God in the Scriptures. The greatest of theologians, St. Thomas of Aquinas, asks himself this question, "What is wisdom?" And his answer is, "*Sapientia est scientia per causas altissimas*"—Wisdom is knowledge springing from the highest causes. We must not exclude any form of earthly knowledge. The Church demands and seeks for it. But wisdom is knowledge, which first of all comes from the Supreme Cause—the knowledge which lets God into the soul; the knowledge which purifies the intelligence by the truth of Divine faith, which man can never reach by his natural powers. Unless the very hand of God be there, the intelligence of man, by its natural powers, can never come to have a knowledge of the things of heaven. The arrow lies motionless upon the ground, but when the archer takes it up, puts it to his bow, and draws it, he sends it flying through the air. So the intelligence of man in its natural sphere, only helped by the natural knowledge of which I have spoken, lies there dead. It has its natural circle around it. It can go through that circle, and master everything within that circle of natural truth. Beyond it never can go unless, like the arrow in the archer's hand, the Almighty God takes it, bends it to the bow of Divine inspiration, and sends the arrow of human intelligence into the depths of Divine knowledge. Therefore that knowledge is only the knowledge which is circumscribed when graced by nature; but comes in the form of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity—when grace comes in which purifies the heart, as well as illumines the mind—then, my dearly beloved, that which before was knowledge becomes wisdom, because wisdom is the knowledge which aspires to the Lord through the highest causes. And this is the reason why although the world was so highly instructed, educated, and civilised before the coming of our Lord, yet the Apostle of the Gentiles does not hesitate to say, "The world by its knowledge knew not God." They refused to recognise God in their

knowledge, and therefore God turned their knowledge into folly. Yet knowledge, human knowledge, is esteemed—nay, is sought by the Church of God. It is esteemed and sought for as a preparation of the soul for those high truths, for those high practices, which the Church teaches and imposes upon her children.—FATHER BURKE.

THE POPE AND THE EMPRESS.

(From the 'Nation'.)

THE halls of the Vatican palace of the Popes have been the theatre of many memorable scenes. Thither for over fourteen centuries have flocked pilgrims from every European land, and from many countries unknown to the mighty warrior-rulers who piled up the glories of pagan Rome. And now, for many a year, from beyond the Atlantic the stream has also set, as if to keep up by a continuous current, the tradition of Christendom. Very different, indeed, were those pilgrims in station, in disposition, in motive. There were, in the days of faith, holy men from our own nation, and many others, apostles of their time, who went to report their labors among the heathen, and to crave a blessing on their work. And in later ages thither went the philosophic infidel, like Gibbon; the classical critic, like Niebuhr; the sceptical dreamer, like Bunsen. Kings and emperors went there, in the days of their power—Canute, the Norse conqueror of England; the long line of the Othos; and in less pacific mood, the bad breed of the Hohenstauffen; and, not least, the Czar Nicholas, only thirty-one years ago, red with the blood of Poland, to hear from the aged Gregory the language of truth, as he never heard it in his life elsewhere. Thither fled the weary-hearted—banished bishops, who refused to yield to tyrant force; scared scholars, like the crowd who, with Bessirion, escaped from Constantinople, before it was overwhelmed by the flood of Ottoman barbarism; broken-hearted exiles, like our O'Neill and O'Donnell, whose bones still rest beneath St. Peter's shrine on the Janiculum; princes tired of reigning, like the Swedish Christina, or dethroned by fickle fortune, like the Bonapartes, after Waterloo. The bare list of those visitors, even of the most distinguished among them, would be a marvellous catalogue, such as cannot be associated with any other spot on earth. But among all who have trodden those halls there was none around whom more thrilling or more pathetic memories gathered than the visitor whom they received lately. All the arrangements showed that it was no ordinary personage who was expected. The Pope's maggiordomo and chamberlain stood at the foot of the magnificent staircase to receive the visitor on alighting with humble obeisance—an honor shown only to the highest monarchs. The approaches to the audience chamber were lined by the Palace Guard, while the Noble Guard were drawn up in the ante-chamber. At the door the venerable Pontiff met his guest, who, touched to the heart at such evidences of respect and such goodness of heart, sank at his feet in an outburst of weeping. Well, indeed, might that visitor weep; for it was Eugenie, once Empress of the French, wife of a man who was bound to the Pope by many and closest ties. It was some time before she could be comforted, and yield to the Pope's entreaty to be seated; and then she remained in close audience with his Holiness for an hour and a half. We cannot be surprised that the flood of memories which came upon her when she first found herself face to face with Pius IX., completely broke down all that stern self-control into which she has schooled herself. In the days of her prosperity she had earnestly desired to visit the Pope, to bring with her her son, the hope of her life, to receive the blessing of the Pontiff, who is also his godfather. Her pious wish had been always thwarted; and now its fulfilment was granted, under very different circumstances indeed from what she had hoped.

COLOR POISONING.

A BELIEF in color poisoning by means of green dresses and green wall-papers has already been forced upon the public by some tolerably conclusive evidence; but it seems that the mischievous propensities of this color are far from being yet fully exposed. A French savant, M. Paul Bert, has just exhibited against it articles of impeachment of the gravest character, supported by reports of a whole series of startling experiments. If his theory is true, it is not only the arsenic used in producing the color which does the injury, but the actual color itself; and a mere ray of green light is capable of affecting the health of the person exposed to it, apart from all aid afforded to it by the smell or presence of arsenic. To demonstrate this alleged fact, M. Bert has submitted several specimens of the sensitive plant to rays of different colors thrown upon them through stained glass, and in every case those which were treated to the most brilliant green light withered and died in the shortest time. In those plants which were exposed to a red light a peculiar phenomenon was observed; the tips or spikes of the leaves prolonged themselves and grew forward in a lean and hungry fashion horizontally with the branch from which they sprang; while in a blue light a contrary effect was produced, the spikes standing out abruptly and perpendicularly from their stem. On one of the plants being enclosed in a sort of lantern, having red glass on one side and green on the other, instead of shrinking away from the poison on their right to the rosate antidote on their left, the leaves, as if by a fatal fascination, turned with one consent the other way, and literally looked death in the face.

M and Madame Monard were recently travelling by train from St. Amand to Valenciennes (Nord) with their young child, owing to the sudden opening of the door, fell out of the carriage. The mother instinctively sprang after the infant. When the train reached Valenciennes, M. Monard related the circumstance to the station-master, who placed an engine at the disposal of the distracted husband to seek his wife and child. The latter was found to have escaped with a mere stun, but its mother had a shoulder dislocated and a leg broken.