

THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO.

(From *The Knights of St. John*, by E.H.T.)

SUCH was the celebrated battle of Lepanto, whose results were in one way insignificant, owing to the losses incurred by the Christian allies, and the limitation put on the power of Don John by the cautious policy of the Spanish king. Yet we should be wrong to estimate the worth of any victory by the amount of its territorial conquests, or its lists of killed and wounded. The moral effects of the day of Lepanto are beyond calculation: it was the turning point in the history of the Ottoman Turks; from it may be dated the decline of their dominion; for though indeed, during the following century, the terror of Europe was still constantly excited by their attacks on the frontier of the empire, yet their naval power was never again formidable, and the long prestige of continual success was broken.* Moreover, whilst it is impossible to deny that the advantages of the victory were never followed up, and that, in consequence of the desertion of the Venetians, the league itself was soon dissolved; yet it is also certain that the further progress of the Ottomans westward was checked from the hour of their defeat; whereas every campaign during preceding years had witnessed their gradual advance.

It only remains for us to speak of the manner in which the news of the success of the Christian arms was received by those who were so anxiously awaiting the result of the expedition at the courts of Rome and Madrid. Pius V., who may be considered as the originator of the whole enterprise, had, from the first departure of the fleet, ordered continual fasts and prayers for its success. On the memorable 7th of October on which the battle took place, and which fell that year on a Sunday, all the confraternities of the Rosary had assembled in the Dominican church of the Minerva to offer their devotions for victory under the intercession of Mary. All Rome was in prayer that day, and her prayer was the *Ave Maria*. The Pope himself had attended the procession; and on returning to the Vatican after the conclusion of the ceremony, he was walking to and fro through the long suites of rooms in the pontifical palace, in conversation with some of the cardinals and Baffotti, the treasurer, on various matters of business. Suddenly he stopped as if listening to a distant sound, then, leaving his companions, he approached one of the windows and threw it open; whilst those who watched his movements observed that his eyes were raised to heaven with the expression of one in ecstasy. They themselves also listened, but were unable to catch the faintest sound that could account for his singular behaviour; and whilst they gazed at one another in astonishment, unable to comprehend the scene, Pius (says his biographer Maffei), "whose eyes had been fixed upwards for a good space, shutting the window again, and seemingly full of great things, turned graciously to the treasurer, and said, 'This is no time for business; let us go and give God thanks, for our fleet has fought with the Turks, and in this very hour has conquered.' He knelt down as he spoke, and gave thanks to God with great fervour; then taking a pen, he wrote down the day and the hour: it was the decisive moment at which the battle had turned in favour of the Christians."

The actual intelligence of the victory did not reach Rome until the 21st of October, owing to contrary winds which delayed the couriers of Colonna; so that the first news was brought by a messenger from the republic of Venice. It was night when he arrived; but when word was brought to the holy father of the happy realisation of his hopes and of the Divine assurance he had received, he sprang from his bed, and bursting into tears, exclaimed, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John;" then, hurrying to his private chapel, he summoned all his attendants and officers to meet him there, to offer their thanksgivings for the great event. A more solemn function was performed on the following morning in the Basilica of the Apostles, and none of those who had joined in the previous and reiterated prayers by which the patronage of Mary had been invoked on the Christian arms, failed to ascribe the success which had been granted, to the power of her intercession, especially as invoked in the holy devotion of the Rosary, under whose banner, as it were, the battle had been fought and won. The emotion displayed by St. Pius was in accordance with the simplicity and tenderness of his character. Not less characteristic, nor less religious, though possibly less calculated to engage the sympathy of our readers, was the calmness with which the same intelligence was received by Philip of Spain. He was at Vespers when the news was brought him, and heard it without the smallest manifestation of joy or surprise. When the office was concluded, he desired the *Te Deum* to be sung; and on the following day proceeded to Madrid, to be present at a solemn Mass offered in thanksgiving for the victory. An entire and rigid self-command was at once the virtue and the cause of the unpopularity of this singular man. As a virtue, it was the effect of natural impulse subdued and annihilated; but along with this there doubtless mingled much of constitutional reserve and coldness. As to the Venetian republic, the charge of insensibility could not certainly be brought against either its senate or its people. The religious emotion of St. Pius, and the austere self-restraint of King Philip, were there exchanged for the tumultuous expressions of popular rejoicing. The great Piazza of St. Mark was like a fair, where doge and senator, nobles and citizens, all met to congratulate one another; whilst the shouts and *viras* of the crowd rang far over the waters of the Adriatic; and by an edict of the senate the prisons were thrown open, and none of those whose relations had fallen in the battle were allowed to wear mourning, or show any outward demonstrations of grief; for their loss was rather counted to them as glory.

We shall not dwell on the tokens of gratitude showered on the victorious chiefs,—on those revivals of the classic triumphs which filled the streets of Rome on the entry of Colonna,—nor on all the

* Cervantes calls it "that day so fortunate to Christendom, when all nations were undeceived of their error in believing the Turks to be invincible at sea." *Don Quixote*.

laurel-wreaths and orations, the poems and painted galleries, and other similar memorials of the great event, which the gratitude and the genius of the day presented to the conquerors of Lepanto. There was another kind of gratitude owing, and to a different victor: and the Church well knew how to pay her debt. The voice of Catholic Christendom agreed in attributing the victory to the intercession of Mary; and the invocation, "Help of Christians," was introduced into the Litany of Loretto in the memory of the fact. But St. Pius was scarcely content with so slender an acknowledgment as this. "In the revelation granted to him of the victory," says Maffei, "it had been also made known to him that the prayers of the brethren of the Holy Rosary had greatly contributed to the same. Being therefore desirous of perpetuating the memory of this, he instituted a feast, appointed for the 7th of October, in honour of 'Our Lady of Victories.' But Gregory XIII., admiring the modesty of his predecessor, who, being a religious of the Order of Friars Preachers, had not chosen to make mention of the Rosary, for fear he should be thought rather to have sought the honour of his order than that of truth, desired that in future the feast of our Lady of Victories should be kept on the first Sunday in October in all Dominican churches, and wherever the Confraternity of the Rosary existed, under the new title of the 'Festival of the Holy Rosary,' which was thenceforward no longer to be celebrated on the 25th of March, as in time past it had been. This was finally extended to the whole of the Church by Clement XII., who changed the wording of the Roman Martyrology to its present form: 'The Commemoration of our Lady of Victories, which Pope Pius V. ordained to be observed every year, in memory of a famous victory gained at sea this day by the Christians over the Turks, through the help of the Mother of God; and Gregory XIII. likewise ordained the annual solemnity of the Rosary of the same most Blessed Virgin to be kept on the first Sunday of the month for the same cause.'"

Baronius, in his notes on the Martyrology, has commented on these words, saying they are but the confirmation from the hand of Clement of that which had been already declared by Gregory XIII., namely, that by the common consent of the Catholic world the victory of Lepanto was due to the intercession of Mary, invoked and obtained by the prayers of the brethren of the Rosary, and of the Dominican Order; not only the prayers offered up before the battle, but those especially which were rising to Heaven at the very moment when the tide of victory turned in favour of the Christian league.

On one of the northern hills of Rome may be seen another monument of the Church's gratitude to her mother and protector: it is the Church of our Lady of Victories. There, upon walls dazzling with the rich colours of their jaspers and marbles, hang the tattered and discoloured banners of the infidels. The church was raised to receive them, and to be a witness to all ages of the omnipotence of prayer.

Nor, considering how slight were the immediate and apparent results of the victory of Lepanto,—so slight, indeed, that historians have spoken of them as null,—will the pious mind fail to note and admire how, with prophetic eye reading futurity, the Church saw in that event the crisis in the fortunes, and the incipient decay, of that monstrous anti-Christian power, whose advances, so far from being arrested, seemed only to be accelerated by any check it might chance to encounter. The commemorations of the Church are not only preludes of victory, but triumphs already accomplished and secured.—(Concluded.)

WHAT IS A DRUNKARD?

THE following is taken from the pastoral issued by the Most Rev. Dr. Warren, Bishop of Ferns, Ireland:—"What is a drunkard? A man whose heart is full of vice, and whose life is full of sin, that will never know, nor even suspect, the hundredth part of the crimes he committed until he shall see them revealed before his astonished eyes at the tribunal of Christ, where the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light. The drunkard if entrusted with the care of another's property, steals; in his dealings he will lie and cheat, to procure the means of gratifying the cravings of his insatiable passion. If he is a parent, he will eat the flesh and drink the blood of the hapless little ones whom he has brought into the world! He will consume in drink the price of the food that should nourish them, as well as of the clothes that should cover and protect their infant bodies.

"But I do not intend to go too far; I am determined not to become a drunkard," says the incipient lover of drink. Be assured, my dear people the love of drink and the pleasure of drinking are most deceptive and dangerous. In these respects they resemble the seductive woman mentioned by St. John in the Apocalypse, who gives her abominations to drink, but presents to her victims in a cup of gold. You say you do not intend to lose your soul through the love of drink, that you do not intend to become a drunkard. True, you do not, but neither did any of the victims of intoxication who are now in the unquenchable fire intend to bring themselves into that place of torment; nor did any of the victims of drink, men or women, with whom you are acquainted, or of whom you have heard, intend to reduce themselves to that of misery, degradation, and hardness of heart. Yet they reached that state in due time. Their unhappy career had its small, imperceptible beginning; its perhaps slow, but steady progress; its fatal termination. Warned by the sad fate of so many others, let those who begin to feel a growing fondness for drink be on their guard in time. Let them not be deceived by their good intentions; let them not be too confident in their fair, and in what seems to them firm, resolutions. Let them not say, 'I shall go so far and not farther.' So others thought, so others said, but they began to go the way of ruin; they loved the danger, they encouraged, they gratified a love of drink, and they perished by it. They were taken in the net of the hunter. 'The wicked shall fall,' says the Holy Ghost, 'into his net.' 'The devil's net,' says St. Hilarius, 'is pleasure, which the flesh offers us as a bait, in order to attract us, deceive us, and make us fall.' And, alas! how many has the pleasure of drink allured into the net and snares of the evil one."