

LETTER XL.

IN NAPLES AND ROME.

THE train which bore us from Brindisi to Naples introduced us to some of the interesting scenery of Southern Italy. The Adriatic was in sight during a considerable part of the journey, while overlooking the sea were many vine-clad hills crowned with villages, whose whitewashed houses recalled Palestine with some of its cities set on a hill. The olive abounds in this part of Italy, while every field is a vineyard. It matters not what else is grown there, whether vegetables, or grass, or grain, the vine always has a place. Even where no attempt is made to cultivate the choicer kinds of grapes, in every field the common vine grows by elms planted and kept trimmed for that purpose. They are invariably in rows, and the vines often hang in festoons between them, sometimes for several hundred yards without a single break. Beautiful as was the picture, as we saw it early in the season, what must it be when the purple clusters hang from every bough? The country had every appearance of great fertility. In fact, vegetation of all kinds was so luxuriant and rank that I imagine fever and ague to be no strangers here. It was refreshing to see Indian corn growing once more, and our appetite was whetted for the roasting-ears and corn-bread of Missouri. We were really nearing home!

After traveling all night, when we awoke the

following morning we were still several hours from Naples. While we were on the lookout for Vesuvius we saw a mountain not very different from others that we had been looking at, save that a white cloud seemed to be resting on its summit—that was all. It might have been mist, but we knew from its location that the mountain was Vesuvius, and that the covering was a sulphurous cloud. I had expected to see smoke, if not flame, but there was only this white cloud, stationary, so far as the eye could see, and connected with the top of the mountain by a motionless white column. This was all that was to be seen during our stay of several days in Naples. Once or twice I thought I could detect some slight motion, and at night it appeared slightly luminous, yet this was the greatest volcano of the world, and I heard on every side that it was unusually active! My slowly-returning strength did not permit me to ascend it. Bishop Marvin attempted it, but on account of a fog the day was inauspicious for a view into its crater. He could, however, hear the angry dash of the fire-waves almost like breakers upon the shore. It was the lion growling in his den; we may hear before long of his venturing forth after his prey. There is good reason to believe, however, that no such violent eruption will ever take place again as that which buried Herculaneum and Pompeii eighteen centuries ago. Its violence then reduced its height by blowing off a considerable part of its top. It has been gradually consuming itself since then, until a difference of fully four hundred feet has been discovered in its height in the last few years. Still Vesuvius is a dangerous neighbor, and no one, after visiting Pompeii, would wish to live on its slopes. One might be pardoned for not even caring to reside in Naples.

What interested us chiefly in Naples was its great

museum and its strange cemetery. The city itself is the largest in Italy, and well located on its beautiful bay. But my notes of travel in Europe will have to be about simply the most characteristic things in each place that we visit. To attempt to sketch all objects of interest would be to make these notes far too voluminous. Moreover, we are now treading more familiar ground, so that an outline will suffice. The cemetery to which I refer was located on the leveled top of a hill just outside the city limits. It is inclosed by a high wall on three sides, and a long building on the fourth. Within this space are three hundred and sixty-five wells, one for every day of the year. Each is covered by a stone slab bearing its proper number. Early each morning the stone slab is removed from the mouth of one of these wells, and all the dead of the previous day are thrown in. Lime is then thrown in on their uncoffined bodies and the slab is cemented in its place again, not to be removed until the same day the following year. One freshly sealed told of its having been opened that morning. The man in charge unlocked several of the twenty or more chests on one side of the inclosure, and each contained a corpse ready for the morrow's burial. They were evidently the bodies of the very poor, for this is peculiarly their cemetery. Over one or two wells there stood poor women in tears. A husband or child had probably been thrown into the well beneath their feet.

The lazzaroni of Naples are far-famed. The government has done much to suppress begging, so that we found less of it than we expected, but we were often asked for alms by respectably-dressed people, who had probably begged themselves rich. Americans are proverbial for their thoughtless alms, and an American can be easily recognized anywhere in Europe.

The National Museum is peculiarly rich in treasures of art recovered from the ruined cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. Perhaps nothing was more interesting than the old frescoes which once adorned some of the buried houses. Mythological scenes were so well executed in water-colors on the plaster that many artists now count it their pride to copy them in oil on canvas. Many were painted most elaborately, and are not rivaled by any frescoes of modern times. They have been but slightly injured in some cases, and have been framed and preserved here with considerable care. Here, too, are large supplies of utensils, whether for domestic or agricultural use, which were excavated at the same time. The beds, the plow-shares, the knives, the very bread, of old Pompeii are to be found here. There is a very fine collection of ancient pottery and of glassware, with those delicate tints which come only from a long burial in the soil. The gems, the coins, the statuary, of those days have all been recovered from their sudden graves. Here, too, in the secret chamber of the museum, are kept the memorials of Pompeii's shame. Vice had actually crystallized in frescoes, bronzes, and marbles. The destruction of that wicked city came none too soon, if we are to judge of its moral rottenness by these material evidences of its crimes. Wicked as is the world to-day, it may be doubted whether any city can rival this in gross sins.

Less than an hour's run on the cars brought us to Pompeii itself. Terrible as was its destruction, and so complete that it long lay forgotten in its sudden burial, yet it exists to-day, hardly less a city than before the clouds of cinders swept down on its ill-fated populace. True, its streets are silent and its houses empty, but the excavations have been so complete as to discover to the world the ancient city as it stood nearly twenty centuries since. The

roofs of the houses are, of course, generally wanting, for these were in most cases removed in order to clear them of the immense mass of ashes within, but the city itself is well defined, with clean, well-paved streets, temples, stores, theaters, forum, private houses, and cemeteries. We enter by the old sea gate, for the eruption which destroyed Pompeii filled up the bay for more than a mile, so that there is now a broad plain where before the waters reached to the very walls of the city. The streets are paved with large blocks of lava. The houses are built either of the same material or of small bricks placed diagonally in the walls. Here is a *basilica*, where courts of justice were held. At one end is the judge's seat, while back of and partly beneath it is the dungeon, where was found the skeleton of a criminal who was doubtless awaiting his sentence when suddenly called to answer before another judgment-seat. On yonder street is the wine-merchant's shop, with his huge wine-jars just as he left them, only empty. Near it is the baker's, from whose oven was taken the famous loaves. There are numerous private residences, with their courts, fountains, baths, and apartments as they were when occupied by their owners. One in particular has a tragic interest because the remains of the entire family were found in it. The father was a large wine-merchant, and his family took refuge in the spacious wine-cellar of his house, where they all perished from suffocation, while he himself met a similar fate in his garden. Near his house is the Herculaneum Gate, through which the famous Apian Way led into the city. Just outside the gate we saw the guard-house, where was found the skeleton of the soldier on guard. The storm of fire found and left him at his post.

Some seven of these skeletons are preserved in the museum near the sea gate. Some of them died

in great agony, as is evident from their open mouths and contorted limbs. I call them skeletons, but they are more strictly petrified bodies, for their shape is perfect, and they appear as hard as stone. The bodies of a man and two women, supposed to be husband, wife, and daughter, are preserved in one case. The petrified body of a dog excites much interest. It is so perfect that his dying *howl* seems petrified, too. Some of these skeletons have been discovered in the last few years, and the excavations now going on may disclose others.

It is very revolting, while even walking the streets of this city of the dead, to have thrust upon you evidences of their unblushing vice. Living they advertised their shame, and when quick destruction came upon them, as upon Sodom and Gomorrah, it but perpetuated the story of their wickedness. They profited not by example of the Cities of the Plain. Their infamy was even greater, in view of greater light. Yet these were the descendants of those cultured Greeks whose artists made the marble breathe, and painted so exquisitely that the birds picked at the grapes upon the canvas. Alas! this is not the only case where the highest culture has been wedded to the greatest vice.

From all that I could learn the people of Naples are more superstitious than those of Rome. Here, in its cathedral, according to popular belief, occurs twice each year the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, while images of the Virgin are more frequently seen over the doors of the houses. We saw here, too, not far from the heart of the city, an immense crucifix with the figure of life size. I saw others like this in the rural districts in different parts of Europe, but in no considerable city save Naples. Yet with all this, and the example of Pompeii, and the presence of muttering Vesuvius, Naples is known as one of the vilest cities

of Europe. Superstition cannot save any more than culture.

While Bishop Marvin remained to make the ascent of Mount Vesuvius, I took the cars to Rome, in order to witness some of the exercises connected with the celebration of the pope's jubilee-year. The scenery on the way was a happy combination of hills and glens, with fine fields of ripening grain. The vine, so abundant in Southern Italy, is somewhat less frequent here, but by no means wanting. I reached Rome on Saturday night, June 2. The morrow was to be the great day of the jubilee which celebrated the fiftieth year since Pius IX. was made a bishop. By a strange coincidence the day was also the anniversary of the unification of Italy and her deliverance from papal supremacy. Victor Emmanuel's soldiers were marshaled for review by the king on one of the hills of Rome, while the pope's followers, under the leadership of Cardinal Simeoni, were assembled for high mass on another. The great service of the day was not in St. Peter's, as I had supposed it would be, but in the Church of St. Pietro in Vinculi, so called from its containing the chain with which it is said Peter was bound while in prison in Jerusalem, as well as his chain while at Rome. These chains hang together in front of the high altar of this spacious church. While I arrived at an early hour I found the edifice already crowded. Like all the other Catholic churches in Rome, it is without seats, so that the dense mass within its walls must have numbered six or seven thousand souls, counting one soul to each body. The church was festooned with thousands of burning wax-tapers, while, not in the best taste, strips of gilt border were hung about its grand marble columns. On one side of the altar were seats for Catholics of royal blood, whose devotion had brought them to Rome on this great occasion. They were mostly

princes, princesses, and dukes, from the minor countries of Europe. Their attendants did not deem it out of place to use their opera-glasses in eyeing the dense crowd. In short, as is too often the case in Protestant congregations, on special occasions, a murmur of conversation filled the church, which was not wholly discontinued during the services. Where I expected to see one priest I saw twenty throughout my week's stay in Rome; and nowhere were they so surprisingly numerous as here this morning. Fully one-tenth of that great throng were priests, either local or visiting. Mingling with the congregation, most of them were all curiosity to see what was going on, while now and then some followed in their breviary the prayers of the mass. Cardinal Simeoni, who seems to be the pope's immediate representative, was present in his red robes to conduct the service. He was assisted by a numerous body of white-robed attendants, much of whose time seemed occupied in adjusting the cardinal's vestments according to the different parts of the service. The singing was superb of its kind, the best voices of Rome being in the choir, and all specially drilled for this event. While the great throng were listening to the music or watching the ceremonies, many bowed at the side-altars to receive the wafer. There was no sermon, only one of those elaborate ceremonials for which Rome is so famous.

I looked in at St. Peter's on my way back to the hotel. The only services there were at the side-altars, or "chapels," as they are called. The great event of the day was in the other church, where petty traders did a good business in selling jubilee-medals with the pope's profile. But for these, and an oil-painting over the door, representing the pope's elevation to the episcopacy fifty years ago, a stranger might have been at a great loss to know the nature of the occasion.