

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### ITALIAN UNITY.

STRIKING VIEWS OF NAPOLEON I. — OBJECT OF THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA. — THE CARBONARI. — LETTER TO THE POPE. — LOUIS NAPOLEON IN ITALY. — HIS NARROW ESCAPE. — LETTER FROM MR. MORSE. — INSURRECTIONS QUELLED. — MAGENTA AND SOLFERINO. — PEACE OF VILLAFRANCA. — VENETIA NOT LIBERATED; AND WHY. — VIEWS OF M. THIERS. — FIDELITY OF LOUIS NAPOLEON TO THE ITALIANS. — ADDRESS TO THE CORPS LÉGISLATIF. — THE PAPAL STATES. — DIFFICULTY OF THE QUESTION. — SPEECH OF PRINCE NAPOLEON. — VIEWS OF THE EMPEROR. — IMPORTANT LETTER FROM THE EMPEROR.

THE following record of historical facts will give the reader an idea of the complications and perplexities with which the question of Italian unity has been surrounded; a question which still agitates Catholics and Protestants alike, and which threatens the peace of Europe. The writer will endeavor to make an impartial presentation of facts, sustained beyond all doubt by documentary evidence.

Las Casas reports the Emperor Napoleon I. as saying to him at St. Helena on the eleventh day of November, 1816, "One of my great plans was the rejoining, the concentration, of those same geographical nations which have been disunited and parcelled out by revolution and policy. There are dispersed in Europe upwards of thirty millions of French, fifteen millions of Spaniards, fifteen millions of Italians, and thirty millions of Germans. It was my intention to incorporate these several millions of peoples each into one nation. It would have been a noble thing to have advanced into posterity with such a train, and attended by the blessings of future ages. I felt myself worthy of this glory.

"In this state of things, there would have been some chance of establishing in every country a unity of codes

of principles, of opinions, of sentiments, of views and interests. Then perhaps, by the universal diffusion of knowledge, one might have thought of attempting, in the great European family, the application of the American Congress, or of the Amphictyons of Greece. What a perspective of power, grandeur, happiness, and prosperity, would thus have appeared!

"The concentration of thirty or forty millions of Frenchmen was completed and perfected; that of fifteen millions of Spaniards was nearly accomplished. Three or four years would have restored the Spaniards to profound peace and brilliant prosperity. They would have become a compact nation: and I should have well deserved their gratitude; for I should have saved them from the tyranny with which they are now oppressed, and from the terrible agitations which await them.

"With regard to the fifteen millions of Italians, their concentration was already far advanced. We only wanted maturity. The people were daily becoming more established in the unity of principles and of legislation, and also in the unity of thought and feeling, that certain and infallible cement of human concentration. The union of Piedmont to France, and the junction of Parma, Tuscany, and Rome, were, in my mind, only temporary measures, intended merely to guarantee and promote the national education of the Italians.

"All the south of Europe would soon have been rendered compact in point of locality, views, opinions, sentiments, and interests. The concentration of the Germans must have been effected more gradually; and therefore I had done no more than simplify their monstrous complication. How happens it that no German prince has yet formed a just notion of the spirit of his nation, and turned it to good account? Certainly, if Heaven had made me a prince of Germany, I should infallibly have governed the thirty millions of Germans combined.

*"At all events, this concentration will certainly be brought*

*about, sooner or later, by the very force of events.* The impulse is given; and I think, that since my fall, and the destruction of my system, no grand equilibrium can possibly be established in Europe, except by the concentration of the *principal nationalities*. The sovereign who, in the first great conflict, shall sincerely embrace the cause of the people, will find himself at the head of all Europe, and may attempt whatever he pleases.\*

The great object of the Congress of Vienna, upon the downfall of Napoleon in 1815, was so to dismember and reconstruct Europe as to hold its peoples in entire subjection to the feudal kings. Italy was, therefore, by the allies, cut up into fragments, and so parcelled out as to render any rising of the people in favor of popular rights almost impossible.

I have already given an account of the manner in which the kingdom of Italy, as organized by the first Napoleon, was dismembered by the allies at the Congress of Vienna, and parcelled out among the princes of Austria.

The whole of Italy, with the exception of Sardinia, was virtually cut up into provinces of the Austrian Empire.

The Italian people were exasperated in being thus handed over, bound hand and foot, to Austria. A secret society was organized, called the Carbonari, to rescue Italy from Austrian sway. The society spread with unprecedented rapidity. It is said that during the month of March, 1820, six hundred and fifty thousand members were admitted.† In the month of July, 1820, the insurrection burst forth in Naples, and almost simultaneously in the Papal States, in Sardinia, and in other parts of Italy.

Austria, Russia, and Prussia had entered into a "holy alliance" to march their armies to crush any uprising of the people in either of their realms,— "a convention," writes Lord Brougham, "for the enslavement of mankind under the mask of piety and religion."

\* Napoleon at St. Helena, by John S. C. Abbott, pp. 272, 273.

† See Enc. Am., article "Carbonari;" also Alison's Hist. of Eu., vol. ii. p. 183

The whole military force of these three monarchies was immediately put in motion for the re-enslavement of Italy. The tempest of war burst first upon Naples. The banners of liberty were speedily trampled in the dust; the bands of freedom were bloodily annihilated; and the leading patriots were sent to the galleys, shot, or hanged. In Sardinia, the same scenes of blood and woe were enacted. Throughout Italy, the popular cause was utterly crushed. Terrible scenes of confiscations and executions ensued. Forty thousand Austrian troops were garrisoned in Sardinia to hold the little realm in subjection.

Still the members of the Carbonari were active. For ten years the volcanic fires were gathering for a new irruption. The overthrow of Charles X., and the enthronement of Louis Philippe, aroused the popular party all over Europe. Louis Napoleon, then a young man twenty-two years of age, residing with his mother at Arenenberg, in Switzerland, had, with his elder brother, joined the Carbonari. He attended a secret meeting in Rome to consult for the liberation of Italy. The pontifical government, dreading his name and influence, arrested him, and sent him, under an escort of mounted troops, out of the papal dominions.

He repaired to Florence, where he met his elder brother, who was residing with his father there. Both of the young men joined the patriots. Hortense, well aware of the power of Austria, and trembling for the safety of her sons, wrote to them, entreating them not to engage in so hopeless a cause. In Louis Napoleon's reply to his mother, he wrote,—

"Your affectionate heart will understand our determination. We have contracted engagements which we cannot break. Can we remain deaf to the voice of the unfortunate who call to us? We bear a name which obliges us to listen."

The armies of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, were immediately on the move. The name which Louis Napoleon bore, his rank, and the reputation he had already acquired as a man of ability, gave him a commanding position in the

patriot ranks. Under these circumstances, he wrote a letter to the pope.

The importance of this letter — the light which it throws upon the nature of the conflict at that time, and upon the views of the writer, whose subsequent career has arrested the attention of the whole civilized world — demands its insertion in full. This letter was written from the camp of the revolted States, at Terni, in the spring of 1831. It was sent to the then reigning pontiff, Gregory XVI., by the hands of M. le Baron de Stoelting. The baron was returning to Rome, having brought the young prince a letter from his uncle Jerome, then residing in the Holy City, and who had endeavored to persuade his nephews to withdraw from the conflict.

“VERY HOLY FATHER, — M. the Baron of Stoelting, who has brought to me at Terni a letter from my uncle, Prince Jerome, will inform your holiness of the true situation of things here. He has told me that you were grieved to learn that we were in the midst of those who have revolted against the temporal power of the court of Rome. I take the liberty to write a word to your holiness to open to him my heart, and to enable him to hear language to which he is not accustomed; for I am sure that the true state of things is concealed from him. Since I have found myself in the midst of the revolted States, I have been able to assure myself of the feeling which animates all hearts. The people desire laws and a national representation; they desire to be on a level with the other nations of Europe, — to be equal to the epoch.

“They fear anarchy, and it will not appear; for every one, even to the humblest workman, is fully persuaded that there is no more happiness for men under the reign of anarchy than under the reign of despotism and oppression.

“If all the sovereign pontiffs had been animated with the evangelical spirit which they assure me would have guided your holiness if he had been elected in a tranquil period,

the people, less oppressed, less suffering, would not, perhaps, have been united with those enlightened parties, who, for a long time, have cast eyes of envy upon the condition of France and England.

“Religion is everywhere respected. The priests, the monks even, have nothing to fear. The Romagnols especially are intoxicated with liberty. They arrived this evening at Terni; and I render them this justice, that in the cries which they continually raise there is never one against the person of the chief of religion. This is due to the chiefs, who are everywhere men the most highly esteemed, and who on all occasions express their attachment for religion with as much force as their desire for a change in the temporal government.

“The kindness of your holiness to my family constrains me to inform him, and I can assure him upon my honor, that the forces organized, which are advancing upon Rome, are invincible.\* The chiefs and soldiers are well appointed; but they are far from wishing to do any thing which is dishonorable. I shall be too happy if your holiness will deign to reply to me.

“It is bold in me, since I am nothing, to dare to write to your holiness; but I hope to be useful to him. It is the manifest and decided wish that the temporal power should be separated from the spiritual. But your holiness is beloved; and it is generally believed that your holiness would consent to remain at Rome, with his riches, his Swiss, the Vatican, and permit a provisional government to be formed for temporal affairs.

“I declare the truth upon my oath; and I entreat your holiness to believe that I have no ambitious view. My heart could not remain insensible in view of the people, in view of the prisoners released from Civita Castellana, who were everywhere embraced and covered with tears

\* This was true so far as the papal government had any powers of resistance; but the armies of the Holy Alliance poured into Italy, sweeping all opposition before them.

of joy. The unhappy creatures! Many of them almost died of joy, so much were they enfeebled, so much have they been maltreated; but that was not under the pontificate of your holiness.

"It only remains for me to assure your holiness that all my efforts are directed towards the general good. I know not what reports have been made to your holiness: but I can give the assurance that I have heard nearly all the young people say, even the least moderate, that, if Gregory XVI. would renounce the temporal sovereignty, they would adore him; that they would themselves become the most firm supporters of a religion purified by a great hope, and which has for its foundation the book, the most liberal that exists, — the Divine Gospel.

"LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE."\*

The Austrian armies, with the armies of Russia and Prussia hastening to re-enforce them, again swept resistlessly over Italy; and the patriot bands were slaughtered mercilessly. The Austrian authorities eagerly sought for the two princes who bore the name of Bonaparte. A price was placed upon their heads. Hortense, with a mother's love, hastened to the rescue of her sons. She found the eldest dead at Forli from the fatigues of the campaign. Louis Napoleon was also dangerously sick with a burning fever. Hortense, disguising her only surviving son as a servant, succeeded in effecting his escape through a thousand perils to France, and thence to England. Thus terminated the second attempt for the emancipation of Italy.

Our distinguished fellow-countryman, Samuel F. B. Morse, chanced to be in Italy at this time. He has kindly furnished me with the following account of his personal acquaintance with some of those scenes which I am here recording: —

"It was in the spring of 1831 that I left Rome for Flor-

\* *Le Gouvernement Temporal des Papes, juge par la Diplomatie Française*, pp. 151, 152.

ence, in the midst of the attempted Italian revolution of that year. My companions, besides two English gentlemen, were two Americans, — Lieutenant Williams of the army, afterwards an aide to General Scott, and killed at Monterey in our war with Mexico; and Mr. Cranch, son of Judge Cranch of Washington. Both of them, as well as I, had been students of art in Rome.

"The day we left Rome was an exciting and eventful one to us. In the morning, we were at the headquarters of the papal army at Civita Castellana; and in the evening, having passed over the interval between the two armies, we arrived at the headquarters of the Bolognese or Revolutionary army at Terni. We arrived at dark at the post-house, which was the headquarters of General Cercognani, who, being apprised that a party of Americans had arrived from Rome, invited us to share the accommodations of the post-house with him and his staff.

"While at supper, the general introduced us to a courteous gentleman as the Baron Stettin, who, speaking English fluently, and having travelled extensively in the United States, made our evening pass very pleasantly. After conversing on a great variety of subjects, he said to me, —

"You are perhaps surprised to find me here at the headquarters of a revolutionary general?"

"I replied, that, knowing his antecedents, there certainly was some mystery in the fact.

"Well," said he, "I will tell you why I am here. The two sons of the late king of Holland, Louis Bonaparte, are here; and their friends, anxious lest they should compromise their position, have sent me to persuade them to return."

"I, of course, manifested the surprise I felt in common with my companions. We could not but applaud the devotion and daring of the noble young men for a cause which appealed so strongly to all our sympathies for the long-oppressed Italians; and we could not but secretly hope that our courteous friend the baron might not be successful in his mission. So strongly were our sympathies aroused in

favor of the Italian uprising, that our enthusiastic military companion, Lieutenant Williams, proposed to leave us to pursue our journey to Florence alone, while he offered his services to the commanding-general; and it was with difficulty that he was reasoned out of his determination, so suddenly formed from the impulse of a brave and generous heart.

"We left in the morning; and, on our arrival at Florence, we found that our intercourse at the headquarters at Terni had compromised us with the authorities, and we were peremptorily ordered to quit Florence in twenty-four hours. After much vexatious negotiation with our consul, we were found to be harmless artists, intent on study and the arts of peace, and not on revolution. We were then permitted to stay some months under close surveillance. It is needless to say that this attempt at revolution very speedily succumbed to the overwhelming force of Austrian intervention.

"While in Florence, passing one day by the Church of the Trinity, I was attracted by the funeral decorations of the exterior of the church, and, entering, found a lofty and splendid catafalco, upon which were the mortal remains of some distinguished person. On inquiry, I learned that the funeral solemnities were in honor of one of the noble brothers,—the young Bonapartes. The other lives to see his earliest efforts for oppressed Italy crowned with success, and he himself occupying the most brilliant throne in Europe, justly admired for his largeness of soul, and the unsurpassed wisdom of his prosperous administration."\*

Queen Hortense, on her heroic journey for the rescue of her sons, met General Amandi, minister of war of the Italian provisional government. He said to her,—

"Your majesty has indeed reason to be proud of being the mother of two such sons. Their whole conduct under these sad circumstances has been a series of noble and courageous actions; and history will remember it."

\* This communication was written three years before the disasters of the Franco-Prussian War.

Eighteen years more of grinding oppression passed sadly away until 1848, when the French again rose, and, driving Louis Philippe from the throne and the kingdom, established the republic. These events roused anew the liberal party throughout all Europe. Charles Albert, then king of Sardinia, was the only ruler in Italy who had even the semblance of independence of Austria. Emboldened by the example of France, which had constituted a republic on the basis of universal suffrage and of equal rights for all, he ventured cautiously to commence introducing popular reforms into his kingdom. All over Italy the revolutionary movement burst forth. Again the armies of Austria were on the move, and, in a series of terrible battles, swept the whole Peninsula with billows of fire and blood. Charles Albert, as he fled from the disastrous field of Novara, where his forces had been utterly routed on the 22d of March, 1849, said to General Durando,—

"This is my last day. I have sacrificed myself to the Italian cause. For it I have exposed my life, that of my children, and my throne. I have failed in my object. Since I in vain sought death, I will give myself up as a last sacrifice to my country. I lay down my crown, and abdicate in favor of Victor Emanuel."

Thus ended the third attempt at a popular uprising in Italy. Charles Albert soon died of a broken heart. Two more years passed away, when the empire was re-established in France, and became a power which all Europe was constrained to respect. Count Cavour was prime-minister of Victor Emanuel.

The Sardinian court, after a few years, applied to the imperial government in France to learn if France would aid Sardinia against Austria, should Sardinia enter upon the work of popular reform. The pledge was promptly given. Sardinia cautiously commenced introducing enactments of liberty. Austria remonstrated, declaring that liberty in Sardinia would excite discontent in other parts of Italy. Two hundred and fifty thousand Austrian troops were moved to

the Sardinian frontier. The ambassador of imperial France immediately informed the Austrian court that "France could not look with indifference upon the invasion of Sardinia."

Unintimidated by this menace, the Austrian army, in April, 1859, crossed the Ticino, and commenced its march upon Turin.

It was under these circumstances, as we have already described, that the armies of France were sent to the aid of the Italians. In the great victories of Magenta and Solferino, the Austrians were driven from Sardinia and from Lombardy. And here will the reader pardon me for a little repetition, as I endeavor to present in chronological sequence the efforts which have been made for the emancipation of Italy?

All Italy, in one general burst of enthusiasm, rose against the Austrians, and were flocking to the banners of France and Sardinia.

Dynastic Europe was alarmed. The spirit of the French Revolution of 1789 had risen from its grave. Hungarians and Polanders were grasping their arms. Ireland was exultant that her hour of opportunity had come. Sardinia and France were now pushing triumphantly forward for the liberation of Venetia, that Italy might be free to the Adriatic; that united Italy might be organized into a kingdom upon the basis of universal suffrage and of equal rights for all men.

Under these circumstances, England joined Prussia, as we have mentioned, in an alliance with Austria, to prevent the liberation of Venetia and the unification of Italy. France and Sardinia were informed, that unless they immediately arrested the march of their victorious armies, and left Venetia in the hands of Austria, in accordance with the treaties of 1815, all the military power of both Prussia and England should be brought forward to the aid of Austria. This was an appalling menace. It was certain that all Europe would thus be involved in the most sanguinary of wars. Thus the

liberating army was arrested. The peace of Villafranca, which recognized the liberation of all the rest of Italy, left Venetia in chains.

This intervention and coalition of the dynasties against Italian liberation compelled the French army to return across the Alps, leaving its work but partially accomplished. We have already given the glowing protest of Kossuth against this action on the part of the British government.

The leaders in this Italian revolution were willing, in order that they might disarm monarchical Europe of its hostility, to relinquish the idea of a republic, and to accept monarchical forms imbued with republican institutions. Father Gavazzi, in a letter addressed to the British cabinet, dated Aug. 4, 1860, wrote, —

"We fight for the sole purpose of uniting all Italy under the constitutional sceptre of Victor Emanuel. Let Englishmen repudiate the idea that there is any thing republican in the present movement; since the most ardent advocates of republicanism have sacrificed their views to the great cause of our independence, unity, and constitutional liberties. Be sure, that, if there is no intervention in our fightings, we shall arrive to crown in our capital our dear Victor Emanuel king of Italy."

M. Thiers, and the party which he led in France in opposition to the imperial government, were bitterly opposed to the sympathy which the emperor manifested for struggling Italy. In the celebrated speech of M. Thiers in opposition to both Italian and German unification, before the Corps Législatif, in March, 1867, he said, —

"As for me, when distinguished Italians have spoken to me of unity, I have said to them, 'No, no, never! for my part, I will never consent to it:' and if, at the time when that question came up, I had had the honor to hold in my hands the affairs of France, I would not have consented to it. I will say to you even, that, upon that question (pardon me for being personal), the friendship, very ardent and sin-