

KIDWANE LETTERS

KIRWAN'S LETTERS
TO
CHIEF JUSTICE TANEY.
LETTER VIII.

Market-place at Naples.—A judicious Di-
scerner at its Gate.—Images every where revered.—
Church of St. Augustin.—Scene witnessed there.
—The Image of Peter at St. Peter's.—Worship-
ped by Pope and Cardinals.—The Pantheon;
Scene there.—Rome, Pagan in Fact, Christian
only in Name.

DEAR SIR,—I am not yet through with the **Palnism** of Romanism. So manifold are the points which they touch and blend, and so numerous are the institutions, rites, and ceremonies transferred bodily from the one to the other, that to exhaust the subject would require volumes; but I am not going to write volumes. Yet that you, and the poor, degraded victims of the system may

As I see, that in many of its main features it is
 Paganism, I have a few more things to
 say in order to strengthen my position. In the
 first place, let me ask you not to forget what I
 have said about holy water, incense, candles, and
 the like.

the truth, which is not always to be taken for granted. I was arrested in Italy, from the name of a rebel against the government, who rose up from among the fishermen, and who, in this square, put to death, in a most atrocious manner, many of the nobles. You enter the square, and you see a market-place by a gate-way, on one side of which I saw an image of the Virgin and Child in-

ed in a glass case, with candles burning before
and to which the peasants, as they passed out
in, always bowed the knee. In this gate-way
witnessed a most ludicrous scene, which admir-
ably illustrates the piety of the Neapolitans. On
approaching the gate, a donkey, laden with vege-
tables, as I had never seen a donkey laden before,
and driven by a brawny and boisterous master,

rambled, and cabbages, onions, and turnips were scattered around. The donkey recovered, and his disgraced driver overtook him in the gateway, where, some minutes I witnessed the farce of his bowing to the Virgin, and whipping the donkey, and then passing at him at the same time. The obvious distraction caused by his reverence for the Virgin and his rage at the gun was most distressing. And

And they are to be found in all Popish churches, they strike a stranger as one of their great peculiarities. You see

ple kneeling and praying before them and to them. Never, on any occasion, have I seen a more profound reverence manifested than I have seen toward these pictures and images in the churches of Rome, and in the presence of swarming priests, and to multitudes of these pictures miraculous cures are attributed; and healing from diseases sought from their touch, and forgiveness of sins.

in their worship. This statement may be denied by the theory of the priest, but it is true to the letter of the practice of the people. And that you, Sir, may be convinced of this, permit me to make a statement of a scene on which I gazed with my own eyes, and which may be daily witnessed in Rome.

On the lovely Sabbath morning of the 8th of June, I started in company with others for St. Peter's. We took in our way the Church of St. Augustin, famed for its fresco of Isaiah by Raffaele. Near to the right entrance is the statue of the Virgin and Child by Sansonino, which, for reasons that I could not learn, is an object for special veneration.~ Both the Virgin and Child were most

greuously robbed, and were sparkling with brilliant cuts, the magnificent donations of the opulent nobles. The church has three naves, and is supported by gigantic pillars, all of which were covered from top to bottom, and on all sides, with hearts made of different metals. Around the statue was a crowd of poor people, each intensely anxious to kiss the feet of the Virgin, and crowding their way to catch

their end. Mothers were there, holding up their
own children in their hands, and passing them
over the heads of others, that they might only
touch the venerated image. The successful com-
petitors for the holy kiss, sprinkled themselves
with water, and, after abstracting a penny or
two from their rage, and depositing it in a mone-

just by the statue, they retired, with joy and pleasure beaming from their countenances. Priests and monks were passing in and out, but they sought neither to kiss the Virgin's toe, nor to stay the idolatry of the people. And what meant those hearts which hung in thousands from the pillars and walls of the edifice? They were the voices of those who received benefit or cure.

om kissing the toe of the image made by Sansone
no! I heard, subsequently, Dr. Duff portray
with burning eloquence the idolatry of India
that no picture did he draw so gross or revolting a
that which you may witness in the church
St. Augustin, which lies within the hearing of
gunshot to the palace of the Pope! This is the
monstrous edifice, the very is Paris, I said

We passed on to St. Peter's. Here are pictures and statuary beyond number. I shall now only ask your attention to the image of St. Peter. There is in the great nave, near to the high altar, and just in the position to attract the eye of every vi-

It is a sitting figure, formed of bronze, and resting on a heavy marble pedestal. His face is as you might expect from his character as depicted in the Scriptures, impulsive and stern. His right hand is lifted as if in the act of blessing and in his left he holds two ponderous keys. The statue is a great affair in Rome, and has its history and its worshippers. Some say that, save the head

And hands, it is the old Jupiter Tonans, with the thunderbolts exchanged for the keys. I have already said, scarcely a doubt but that is so. And at states where the Pope and his cardinals go to it in gorgeous procession, and render to it, as far as the external act is concerned, as profound a worship as ever did the old Romans under the name of Jupiter.

er. I saw myself pressing down before it, kissing its toe, and rubbing it with their forehead. Indeed, by constant kissing and rubbing, several feet have been worn down; and, as I can testify, the present one is dying of consumption. While measuring its dimensions with my eye, and rubbing with my hand the wasting toes, and thinking of the wretched wickedness connected with the

whole affair, I was told that our friend of New York, on his recent visit, prostrated himself before it. If so, it is another evidence of his great desire to wear the fillet made by withered nuns from the wool of holy sheep.

...laurel and that will not obey the impulses of the sun, and that will not be attracted to the great centre of Catholic unity, are as poor in holy images and paintings as we are in holy wells, and very much for the same reason. But other countries are very rich in them. Have you not seen the head of the holy image of the Virgin and Child in the cradle—how the shoulder of the image bled with the lance?—how the shoulder of the image bled with the lance?

reserved to this day, and is exhibited with great ceremony to the faithful? Are you, can you be ignorant of the image of St. Dominic, in Calatrava, which was brought from Heaven by St. Catherine and Mary Magdalene, and which, as cardinals, bishops, and priests testify, has raised the dead, given eyes to the blind, and cured all diseases?

Is it yet visited by swarms of phantoms? This St. Dominic, you will remember, was the father of that wonderfully human institution, the Inquisition, which your good archbishop so wantonly vindictive in that erudite work on theology which he has so kindly dedicated to you. Have you not heard of the picture of St.

...by Saint John, kept in a church...