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GREAT IN LITTLE.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

A traveller through a dusty road
Strewed acorns on the lea,
And one took root, and sprouted up,
And grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at evening time,
To breathe its early vows,
And age was pleased, in heats of noon,
To bask beneath its boughs;
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs,
The birds sweet music bore;
It stood a glory in its place,
A blessing evermore.

A little spring had lost its way
Amid the grass and fern,
A passing stranger scooped a well,
Where weary men might turn;
He walled it in, and hung with care
A ladle at the brink—
He thought not of the deed he did,
But judged that toil might drink.
He passed again—and lo! the well,
By summers never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parching tongues
And saved a life beside!

A dreamer dropped a random thought;
'Twas old, and yet was new—
A simple fancy of the brain,
But strong in being true;
It shone upon a genial mind,
And lo! its light became
A lamp of light, a beacon ray,
A monitory flame.
The thought was small—its issue great,
A watch-fire on the hill,
It sends its radiance far adown,
And cheers the valley still.

A nameless man, amid a crowd
That thronged the daily mart,
Let fall a word of hope and love,
Unstudied, from the heart;
A whisper on the tumult thrown—
A transitory breath—
It raised a brother from the dust,
It saved a soul from death.
Oh germ! oh font! oh world of love!
Oh thought at random cast!
Ye were but little at the first,
But mighty at the last.

From the New-York Recorder.

SKETCHES OF FOREIGN TRAVEL.

ROME.

An American always associates life, bustle and activity in connection with a large city. This is natural, for with us the two are inseparable; but in Italy the case is different, and especially in respect to Rome. This city and Boston contain nearly the same population; but what a contrast in energy and activity the two present! Rome, comparatively speaking, has no trade; she exists on the money drawn to her as the seat of government, as the residence of the Pope, and as a resort of strangers. From the latter class she obtains much, as they liberally patronise her sculptors and painters, and her mosaic and cameo artisans. The streets present a lifeless appearance.—With one exception, they are without sidewalks. The stores are small, and not attractive. From the dull and lifeless appearance of this place, it is difficult to imagine how all obtain their livelihood. The people are not to blame, for there are to be seen in Rome as fine-looking and intelligent men as in any city in Europe; but it is the fault of the Government. The Pope is both the spiritual and temporal ruler; the Cardinals occupy all the principal stations of political power, as well as the city offices. All affairs of state are decided upon

in close conclave; and such enemies are the Pope and Cardinals to freedom of thought and public improvements; that the press is under strict surveillance; arrests are daily made for political offences; not a railroad or telegraph leads from the city; the population decreases; and twelve thousand French bayonets are required to maintain the Government in authority. Such is the present state of Rome, the residence of the great head of the Church and his Cardinals, the seat of that religion which seeks to engraft itself on every nation of the world, and which, in the United States, professes to be such a friend and advocate of liberty, education and freedom of conscience. Were not the Catholics of our country blind to their own interests, we think a lesson could here be learned. We saw the Pope—the man they so much venerate—ride through the streets of his own city on a fete-day, surrounded by his guard and in the midst of his people, and not one cheer was raised; he was received through the length and breadth of the city with profound silence. It is from this turbid and poisonous fountain they expect the pure stream of happiness and religion to issue.

The number of churches is generally considered a good standard by which to judge the morals of a people; and certainly in this respect no city can present a better claim than Rome, which contains more than three hundred. The number of priests required to officiate in so large a number, is very great.—Their name is legion; you see them in every street, at every corner; often while sitting at my window have I counted as many as twenty at a time. Their dress is a long black gown reaching to the ankles, with a very broad-brimmed black hat. The presence of so many clergy, in connection with numerous churches and the constant ringing of bells, gives to the city a decidedly religious aspect. There are also a large number of convents in the city, whose inmates almost vie in numbers with the priests. Processions are of daily occurrence. I remember that, in the course of the first walk we took in Rome, we observed a large crowd collected on the sidewalks, and on each side the dwellings were hung with flags and decorations.—Soon a long procession made its appearance, composed of priests and monks, bearing in their hands wax candles, crosses, the Virgin Mary, the crucifixion, and such emblems of their religion. What it was for we could not understand, and perhaps not one in ten who witnessed it could tell. While in Italy, we saw so many, that they ceased to excite interest. A collection of monks presents as motley a group as can be found under any circumstances. Their dress is loathsome and disgusting, composed of coarse brown cloth, reaching nearly to their ankles, without the least regard to fit or symmetry. I well remember the impression produced at the first sight of one of this class of men. It was in Genoa, while making our first visit to an Italian church.—On entering we were struck with the richness of the decorations, the gilded and frescoed ceiling, the profusion of costly marble and alabaster, and the splendid paintings. It so far exceeded anything we had imagined, that we stood ravished at the splendor. While in this frame of mind, there came before us a man with a shaven crown, clothed in a garment of coarse brown cloth, without shoes, collar, or any appearance of linen, and, without exception one of the most forbidding specimens of the human family I ever met with. He passed by, bowing three times to the altar, and then on his knees commenced to repeat his prayers with the aid of his rosary, to the end of which was attached the imitation of a skull. The contrast between the magnificence of the place and this squalid monk was almost nauseating. What, thought I, is this religion, that requires such profusion of wealth to adorn the temple,

while man, created in the image of his Maker, the noblest work of his creation, must appear in this wretched, loathsome form, more revolting than the sow that wallows in the mire? It was irreconcilable. The impression of that moment has not been effaced; the thought or sight of a monk produces the most unpleasant sensation. Did I think them sincere, I would not speak thus disparagingly of them; but the fat, sleek appearance of many of them tells too plainly that they are strangers to the austerities and deprivations they profess; and their countenances are too sensual for that pure and holy life they profess to lead.

The churches in Rome abound in works of art, some of them of the most costly and splendid description. It has been the work of centuries to produce them, and now they form a collection of immense value. It can almost be said, that there is hardly a church in Rome finished; there is always room for some new painting or sculptured tomb. Some of the churches present a singular appearance; perhaps they may have been built some centuries, but still remain in an unfinished state. On entering, one is much disappointed at the first appearance; perhaps the larger portion of the walls is left merely whitewashed, without the least decoration; the whole place has a comfortless, barnlike look; but, on examination, in all probability more has been expended on decorations than would suffice to build a dozen handsome churches in our country. The dome may be frescoed by one of the best artists of the sixteenth century; some of the altars in the chapels may have splendid paintings; some five or six of the chapels may be most extravagantly finished, in the richest taste conceivable, while many of the adjoining ones have nothing but the bare walls of stone, waiting for some rich family to adopt it as theirs and ornament it, or perhaps until the funds of the church shall allow further expenditure.

In the construction of their churches, there seems to have been no attention paid to the comfort of the congregation. It is true, some are small, but most of them are very large and comfortless. The walls are of such thickness as to be almost impervious to the heat, and on a warm summer day, the chilliness of the atmosphere on entering is so great as frequently to produce colds. The floor is unobstructed by any pews. If a person wishes to sit, he hires a chair for one or two cents of women who attend to this business. The greater part stand or kneel on the cold marble floor. The place being so large that but a small portion of the audience can distinguish a single word that is said by the priest. By means of bells, information is given when to stand, kneel, or pray. The greatest confusion exists during service; the constant entering and departure of people; the performance of three or four services in the same building at one time; the moving of chairs, and the collecting of money by the women who keep them. It is immaterial how devoutly engaged a person may be; perhaps, in the middle of prayers, the women move about, asking for the hire of the seats. All these things detract from the solemnity of worship, and contrast strangely with the neatness and comfort of our churches, and the orderly manner in which we conduct the services. A Protestant audience go to a church for instruction and worship; but a Catholic to attend to the external forms of religion.

SUEL.

The Coptic Christians.

In a late book of travels in Italy and the East, published in London, we notice the following sketch of the present Copts of Egypt, the descendants of the ancient Egyptian Christians, and the degenerate representatives of the once celebrated Egyptian Church:—

"The Copts of the present day have entirely lost their ancient learning, and are both intellectually and socially degraded, though still retaining a proud recollection of their ancestors. After having been thinned by ages of persecution and apostasy, they still amount to some one hundred and fifty thousand persons, nearly ten thousand of whom reside in Cairo, in a quarter specially assigned them.—Great numbers live in the district called the 'Faioom,' and the remainder are scattered up and down in the cities and towns, where, for the most part, they fill the offices of secretaries and accountants. Their language is radically the same with the old Egyptian, but with many foreign mixtures and additions.—It is not spoken, but is still used in their sacred books and public services; and it now furnishes a valuable key to the study of the hieroglyphics. From the numerous monasteries in the East, so many manuscripts in the Coptic and Sahidic dialects have been discovered by the venerable Archdeacon Tattam, and others, that a complete copy of the Sacred Scriptures has been recently printed, I believe, in their language. The Coptic texts are in the main orthodox; but the people are divided into various sects, Jacobites, Eutychians, Monophysites, and Monothelites. Some of their practices are peculiar. They use both circumcision and baptism. The former is not deemed essential; but they consider that a child dying unbaptized will be blind in the future life. Pilgrimages they highly esteem, especially to Jerusalem, where they have a convent; and like the Jews and Mohammedans, they abstain as well from pork as from things strangled, and from blood. Their religious orders consist of a patriarch, bishops, archbishops, priests, deacons, monks, and nuns. The patriarch is always unmarried.—The bishops are usually so, or widowers.—The priests are allowed to marry, but only to virgins. The deacons have the same privilege, but they are often mere boys. Monks and nuns take a vow of celibacy; and in some religious establishments they reside together; and, generally speaking, marriage is sanctioned only among members of their own body.—In the ceremonies of marriages and burials, and in their general habits, they differ but little from the Mohammedans. Their costume, however, is usually confined to gray or gloomy colors. Their feelings are not, of course, friendly towards their Moslem oppressors; but are less hostile to them than to Christians of the Greek Church, an antipathy which they appear to have derived from their ancestors of the seventh century, and to which may be chiefly attributed the success of the Mohammedan invasion. The Abyssinian Church is an offshoot from the Coptic, and is supposed to have been founded about the middle of the fourth century. It holds the same doctrines and rites; and its chief *abooona*, or metropolitan, is nominated by the Coptic patriarch."

AFRICA.—Letters from Sierra Leone, dated 13th May, received by the Hellespont, state that the intercourse between Gambia and that settlement was rapidly extending. The number of native traders that had left Sierra Leone for the Gambia since the 1st January was 125, taking with them upwards of 1,500 packages of cola nuts, a description of produce which is in great demand in the interior, although six years ago the trade was unknown. It is added that our friendly relations with the Liberian Government had been in some way disturbed, and that the British Consul at Monrovia had returned by the present packet.—A thousand pine apples were shipped by this conveyance, and new trade in that fruit may, it is thought, be carried out to a considerable extent, as the pines being in season from October to May, they will arrive at the best time for consumption in this country. Twenty-three passengers were left at Sierra Leone from want of room on board the steamer.—*London Times, June 9th.*