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Volume VI

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I T A L Y

BY

L A D Y M O R G A N .

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ITALY

BY

LADY MORGAN.

“Malheur au bon esprit dont la pensée altière
D'un cœur indépendant s'élançait tout entière,
Qui respire un air libre, et jamais n'applaudit
Au despotisme en vogue, à l'erreur en crédit.
* * * * *

Mais ferme dans ma route, et vrai dans mes discours,
Tel je fus,—tel je suis,—tel je serai toujours.”

“We travellers are in very hard circumstances. If we say nothing but what has been said before us, we are dull and we have observed nothing. If we tell any thing new, we are laughed at as fabulous and romantic; not allowing either for the difference of ranks (which affords difference of company), or more curiosity, or change of customs that happens every twenty years in every country.”—LADY M. W. MONTAGUE.

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THE following Work has been composed from a journal kept during a residence in Italy, in the years 1819-20. The notes on Law, Statistics, and on Literary Disputes, together with the Appendix on the State of Medicine, have, at the Author's request, been contributed by Sir C. Morgan.

ITALY.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORIC SKETCHES.

*Italy under the Lombards.—Under the Republics.—
Under Spain and Austria.—At the period of the
French Revolution.*

THE fables of antiquity have assigned to the Peninsula of Italy a golden age; and history, sufficiently vague, but better accredited, has peopled its Eden plains with confederated tribes; and has covered regions with numerous flocks and plenteous harvests, where desolation now reigns over pestilential marshes.¹

The Etruscans occupying the vast and lovely tract between the Arno and the Tibur, took the start of the surrounding states. Their career was brilliant,

¹ “In un clima caldo l’irrigazione è la naturale nutrice dell’agricoltura: ma questo prezioso dono non può ottendersi senza permanenti lavori, e continue spece, la cui negligenza produce oggidì in quelle medesime provincie, in cambio di fertilità, l’insalubrità e la miseria.”—MICALI, *L’Italia avanti il dominio dei Romani*, vol. i. p. 231.

but their story brief. In their origin, brave, ingenious, and united; in their progress, corrupt, luxurious, and divided; they flourished by their unity, and fell by their divisions: but they were still to the peninsula, what the Athenians long were to Greece, when from the midst of the warlike and pastoral villages of Latium, Rome arose. Vile in its origin, barbarous in its institutions, a casual association of robbers and of outcasts became the destiny of mankind. Opposed to the Roman prowess, the states of Italy ceased to exist. Europe to the extent of its known boundaries was subjugated to slavery, and the independence of almost the entire civilized world merged in the dominion of the Quirites.

The dissolution of the mightiest social combination which had ever existed, stands foremost among those rare events that serve as beacon rocks, in the ocean of time, to break up its vastness, and give to the eye of philosophy a point of concentration and repose. When Rome fell, the elements of existing society separated, to recombine under new forms, and to unite in new proportions. A race of another mould and fibre from that with which the redundant population of the east had colonized the more temperate regions of Europe, swarmed over the cultivated plains of Italy, and violated its luxurious cities. An unknown product from the foundery of a new creation thinned the ranks of refined degeneracy; and as they poured forth in successive multitudes from their northern forests over the Alps and the Apennines, the Jura and the Pyrenees, they carried conquest in their van, and left desolation in their rear. Less animated by enterprise than goaded by want, with massacre for their means, and spoil for their object, they exterminated

while they plundered, and destroyed what they were unable to enjoy.¹ Such was the origin of those feudal dynasties, which now trace back their rights to Divine dispensation, and confound their existence with the laws of the creation.² For it is notable

¹ “Les Francs, rendus maîtres de la France, regardèrent l’agriculture et les arts utiles comme des occupations d’esclaves, ou des Gaulois. C’est ce gothique mépris pour les pères nourriciers de la patrie, cet honneur à l’oisiveté, et cet esprit d’indépendance et de domination, d’où devait sortir la noblesse héréditaire et le monstre de la féodalité, ce fléau le plus épouvantable dont le ciel, dans sa colère, peut frapper une nation libre.”—Mémoires sur les États-Généraux, par le Comte d’Entraques.

In 1777 a Constitutional Minister of France, authorized by the King, endeavoured to strike at that terrible remnant of feudality, the *Corvée*. The hereditary nobility and the clergy rose against this innovation made in favour of the people, and, in their remonstrance, made use of the following argument : —“ Que l’exemption de la *Corvée* confond les états ! que l’impôt territorial confond le clergé et la noblesse avec le peuple ! que, dans le point de droit, celui de la *Corvée* appartenait aux Francs sur leurs hommes ; que les Francs étaient tenus de faire servir leurs hommes à divers ouvrages utiles au Roi et à l’état ; que, suivant Loiseau, jurisconsulte célèbre, *la noblesse n’est tenue de payer la taille, ni faire vile corvée, mais servir à la guerre et autre acte de noblesse.*”—Observations sur les Remontrances relatives aux *Corvées* : Paris, Mar. 21, 1777.

Thus the line between Franks and Gauls was as distinctly marked at the period of the French Revolution as in the 6th century. To this remonstrance the unfortunate Louis XVI., the victim of this faction of Franks, was obliged to yield ; and he retracted the consent he had humanely given to the measure of his minister.

² “ N’en doutons pas, Chrétiens, Dieu a préparé dans son conseil éternel les premières familles ; mais principalement celles qui doivent gouverner les nations. C’est par la suite de ces conseils que Dieu a fait naître les puissantes maisons, celle de France et celle d’Autriche, dont il se sert pour balancer les

that there are no legitimate beginnings of empires; and that all monarchical governments, owing their origin to the wants or the crimes of man, are founded in conquest, or are consolidated by usurpation. Different stages of society may variously colour the event: but the Odoacres, the Alboins, the Clovises, the Charlemagnes, the Guiscards, and the Bonapartes, have all equally proceeded upon the same principle, and triumphed by the same means.

While monarchies and dynasties thus rise by physical force and moral feebleness, constitutional governments have other means, as well as other epochs, of development. The era in which they are called into existence is the brightest, and the best, in the history of humanity. It is that, in which an universal diffusion of knowledge, leading to a just appreciation of rights, demonstrates the evil of privilege, and ripens the instinct of liberty into a fixed principle of personal inviolability and political independence.

On the fall of the Roman empire, the social and political organization of Europe, her master language and universal laws, alike submitted to change, or to extinction. Every trace of the Asiatic characteristics, which distinguished her southern regions, was effaced; and the brilliant mythology she had adopted and naturalized, which had so long peopled her temperate climes with the bright imagery of more fervid zones, faded away like the phantasms of a gay dream. Then arose a system to govern the minds of men, remote alike from the divine revelation of Jehovah, as from the splendid rites of Jove. Founded in sacrifice, en-

choses humaines."—Bossuet, Oraison funèbre de Marie Thérèse, Reine de Louis XIV.

forced by persecution, with terror for its spring, and human degradation for its object, dark, despotic, exclusive, and sanguinary, it rose above all temporal power; and arrogating a divine origin, called itself—
THE CHURCH.

The northern hordes were well adapted to receive and propagate a doctrine, gloomy and powerful as the creed of their fathers; and while the altars of Odin still smoked, his followers presented themselves, smeared with the blood of victims, at the baptismal font,¹ whence they went forth to plunder, and to kill; to propagate doctrines by the sword, to punish resistance by the faggot.

During the operation of causes which desolated and re-peopled nations, the paradise, which had invited the Greeks, which had lured from the land of Canaan² and the plains of Egypt, partook largely and fatally of the changes, which were impressing a new

¹ When the bands of the fierce and petty chieftain Clovis were flying before the Germans in the plains of Tolbach, he, having in vain invoked the aid of his own battle god, exclaimed, in his despair, "God of Clotilda, I vow, if thou gainest the battle for me, to have none other god but thee." The battle was won. Clotilda, who was carrying on the war in the south, hastened to her husband's christening, burning some towns in Burgundy on her way, which belonged to her own uncle. Clovis was baptised at Rheims, with *three thousand* of his followers, for whose faith he pledged himself to St. Remi; declaring, that when he had time, he would inform them what the ceremony meant. It was upon this occasion that Clovis received the St. Ampoule, which has conferred divine right upon all his successors. An angel descended from heaven with the holy ointment to St. Remi, which lasted till the Revolution, when it emigrated with the other legitimate relics, to return with them at the Restoration.

² Maffei.

character upon society; and Italy had more than her share of the vicissitude and suffering which distracted the rest of Europe. Involved in the fiercest contests, alternately overrun and oppressed by Imperial exarchs, and Gothic chiefs, she retrograded with a rapidity proportioned to her previous superiority in arts and literature; and had already far sunk into the Cimmerian darkness of that fearful period termed the Lower Ages, when the Lombards, the last and the least known of the northern tribes, quitted their Pannonian forests, and, led on by their noted chieftain Alboin, marched in the track, usurped the power, and surpassed the fortunes of all their barbarous predecessors.

Among the vigorous races of the northern hive, the Longobardi seem to have been stamped with nature's own mark of physiological superiority. They brought with them into the enervating regions of the south, a fierce, but generous courage, and a powerful and dominant instinct of liberty, which has been found working at intervals through all the successive stages of Italy's woeful existence. It was that spirit which so early resisted the prescriptiveness of feudality, and gave the first shock to foreign influence under the German emperors. It was that spirit which enfranchised northern Italy, founded her glorious republics, and cemented that holy alliance of free citizens, the LEAGUE OF LOMBARDY, the miracle of its age, the Magna Charta of southern Europe.

This warlike and independent race had spread and settled from the Alps to the Tibur, and had rendered itself master of northern Italy, when the dynasty of its chiefs, after a turbulent and contested reign of two centuries, fell in the person of Desiderius; and

the iron crown of Lombardy for the first time encircled the brow of a foreign victor. Charlemagne, who had won it, at the head of his barbarous Franks, affected to receive it at the hands of the Roman Pontiff:—at the distance of a thousand years, a soldier of fortune, an usurper, like himself, led on *his* ultramontains, and waiting for no holy hand to consecrate the act, himself placed the iron crown of Desiderius upon his own brow, with that threat, then so bold, but now so vain,—

DIO ME L'A DATO, GUAI A CHE TOCCA.¹

The glory of the Carlovingian race was short-lived: *Louis-le-Gros* soon lost all that Charles the Great had won. The politics of Europe changed. The Popes found it their interest to oppose the German power to the preponderance of French influence; as, to forward their own views, they had assisted the French, against the independence of Italy. The intrigues of John the Twelfth placed the diadem of the German empire and the crown of Lombardy upon the head of Otho the Great. Then the kingdom of Italy lost its individuality, and ceased to have a capital; while its new master was a stranger to his foreign dominions.

But the sway which was delegated, was lightened; and that neglect which is the natural result of a distant rule, opened the door to a new and fearful invasion. In the eleventh century, the incursions of the Huns and the Saracens, and the internal disorders of

¹ "God has given it me; woe to him who touches it"—the words pronounced by Napoleon when he crowned himself at Milan.

Italy, pressed on the very life-nerve of human endurance. The spirit of the Lombards broke forth in their Italian descendants, as the salient features of an antique coin penetrate and brighten through the rusts of time, under the force of a rude and accidental friction. The towns of Lombardy demanded permission of the Emperor to defend themselves; and political necessity produced their enfranchisement. The immunity became universal; the effect was electric. Every town had its charter, every village its diploma, to use the right given by the God of nature, the true and only right divine, the right of self-defence. In walls, raised by the hands which defended them, in municipal institutes founded in the election and the confidence of the people, existed the first rude outline of that consummation of legislative wisdom, A NATIONAL ARMY, AND A REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT. Even the Church felt the vibration of the shock given to ignorance, prejudice, and power: for the Arian bishops of Lombardy permitted a freedom of inquiry, which had some resemblance to the fearless researches of philosophy, and the mild toleration of more enlightened times.¹

The maritime states of Venice, Pisa, and Genoa, had procured their freedom before the cities of Lombardy had sued and obtained that benefit; but in the twelfth century the doctrines of civil liberty had been practically taught throughout all Italy, by the exigencies which had enforced an equal distribution of power; and the municipal ties, originated by neces-

¹ The Lombards established Arianism in Italy. "Les Italiens du onzième siècle," says Sismondi, "étaient de tous les Chrétiens les moins disposés à croire à un ordre émané du Ciel."

sity, had gradually developed into republican institutions: thus by slowly infringing upon prerogative, the States of Italy usurped their liberties, through the same means as princes acquire an unconstitutional authority.¹ The yoke of a foreign master was gradually lightened, till it was no longer felt; and the extent and limit of the imperial States became so vague and faint, that even the umpire called upon to decide them, failed in the attempt.²

The theocratic domination, first impatiently supported, was soon disputed, and its dogmas attacked; until in the twelfth century the independent States of Italy took their place among nations, and exhibited to the startled apprehension of prescriptive power as many prosperous republics, as there had been enfranchised towns. The Imperial claims were derided. Feudality escaping from her battered Donjons, sued for the protection of the free cities, by which she had been shorn of her power and restricted in her privileges. The baronial bishops were deprived of their temporal jurisdictions; and Popes, who had trodden on the necks of kings, were defied by the citizens of Milan and of Florence. Even Rome, fallen as she was, reflected the light which civil liberty had kindled; and the eloquence of a republican monk forwarded the cause of freedom in that forum, where Cicero had so often defended it.³

¹ Sismondi, *Hist. des Rép. Ital.* vol. i.

² "Trop faibles pour faire valoir leurs droits dans toute leur étendue, leurs prétentions sur la Lombardie et sur l'Italie, les Rois de l'Allemagne ne tiraient de ce pays qu'un revenu incertain."—Müller, *Hist. Univers.*

³ Arnold of Brescia, the friend and disciple of Abelard. He preached the *gospel*, in opposition to the Church, and mingled

Power thus attacked in her two great holds of authority and of opinion, roused all her energies, and coalesced all her forces. The most puissant of potentates and of pontiffs, Frederick Barbarossa and Eugene III., now closely bound by mutual interests, forgot their recent feuds in the common cause; and consecrated their holy alliance by ceremonies that portrayed their respective views. The Emperor received the crown of the Cæsars from the hand of the Pope in the Basilica of St. Peter; the Pope received the keys of his temporal power from him by whom the Cæsars were represented. Hecatombs of Roman lives were offered up on the ratification of this alliance, on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul; and a plenary indulgence was granted by the Pontiff to the German legions, which had, previously to these rites, massacred his republican flock.

Thus prepared and pledged, these two great protectors of the social order of that day marched with their foreign cohorts of thousands and tens of thousands against the liberties of Italy. Milan, then the most beautiful and populous of the Italian cities—Milan, with her faithful ally Tortona, was the first destined object of this imperial and holy crusade, as she had been the first, by her illumination and prosperity, to alarm its leaders. But it was in vain that

the doctrines of civil liberty with the precepts of the Christian faith. He painted the Saviour as the first of reformers, and the Scriptures as the basis of political freedom. The people, kindled by his eloquence, assembled at the capitol to substitute a senate for a conclave. The result of this sedition was the union of the Pope and the Emperor; and Arnold was burned alive, by the advice of St. Bernard, the director of the Pope's conscience.

thousands were opposed to hundreds; and that disciplined and permanent armies, fresh from conquest and from slaughter, were led against citizen soldiers, inferior in skill as in numbers. Tortona indeed was laid in ashes, the plough passed over the streets of Milan, her name was erased from the list of nations, and history shudders at the details which truth extorts from her records. But in the destruction of these fair and free cities, in the extermination of one half of their inhabitants and the sufferings of the other, originated the great pact of Italian emancipation and national confederacy. The Imperial conqueror received congratulatory homage from feodal princes and legitimate kings; from prelates and from Podestas (the corporators of those times); but Italy stood apart. Stunned, not subdued: superior to complaint, she armed for vengeance. The re-action was as terrible as the offence which had excited it. Invading legions were routed with an almost exterminating slaughter; and the hitherto invincible enemy of the independence of Italy, defeated on the very site of his former conquest, was driven forth a wanderer, to die obscurely, amidst the ruin of his disastrous fortunes.¹

¹ After his complete defeat, on his second invasion of Italy, Barbarossa was reduced to fly almost alone, through the mountains of Savoy, and to seek shelter from Count Humbert. Pavia alone, of all Italy, remained true to him during the twenty-two years which had elapsed between the two invasions. He had brought from the remotest parts of Germany seven powerful armies, and had armed, in his personal cause, a million of men. By a sort of poetical justice, the career of his baffled ambition terminated in defeat and disgrace, on that spot on which he had obtained his most signal triumphs over liberty and right.

Milan and Tortona arose rapidly from their ashes. The free States of Italy, animated by one principle, and united in one cause, confederated their powers; and sacrificing municipal jealousies to national independence, instituted *The League of Lombardy!*¹

While Milan, Florence, Sienna, and Tortona, were combating for rights, and Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, were protecting them; while knowledge and commerce were opening new sources of strength to the free States, among which alone they could flourish, and a national feeling was spreading its influence from the Alps to the Apennines, the neighbouring kingdoms, engaged in endless contests for privileges and prerogatives, exhibited the same spectacle of feudality retarding the civilisation of the communities it infested. In France an anarchical hereditary nobility were selling the nation, and opposing the king:—alike traitors to the people, and rebels to the sovereign, they epitomized all the evils of a system, which Italy alone had the spirit to resist, and the perseverance to subdue.

Circumstances foreign to the internal policy of the Italian republics arose, to increase their influence,

¹ The League of Lombardy was confirmed by the Treaty of Constance, in 1185. The Emperor, by that treaty, granted to the Republics all the *droits régaliens*; all the privileges they had acquired by custom, time, and prescription; the right of raising armies, fortifying cities, and exercising civil and criminal jurisdiction, within their States, with all the advantages which their independence had claimed, their arms won, and their force protected. The Republics were legally acknowledged by the Emperor and the Pope; and the long struggle for Italian liberty ended in a complete triumph over the most formidable coalition which Church and State have ever opposed to human happiness and natural right.

and enlarge their powers. The contests of the Guelph and Ghibeline factions,—the first headed by the immediate descendants of Otho the Great, the second led on by the reigning house of Germany—gave a new importance to the independent cities, from the weight they were capable of flinging into the balance of whichever side they adopted. Hatred to the son of Barbarossa was the inheritance of every Italian citizen ; and whatever party stood opposed to the reigning family of Germany, had the Republics of Italy for their natural ally. It was also the interest of the Pope to oppose the increasing influence of the Emperors ; and by joining what was then considered as the liberal party, he became for a period united in alliance with the free States.

The details of these long and frightful feuds are too well known to dwell upon. In their results they were fatal to humanity. The rival ambition of Popes and Emperors contributed to embroil Italy in sanguinary and civil contests, to divert her States from the pursuit of their true interests, to revive the influence of feudality, to originate the establishment of permanent armies, and give importance to the talents and prowess of military chiefs;¹ to the detriment of the more meritorious private citizen and patriot magistrate. Yet with all these impedi-

¹ The exigencies of turbulent times extended the sphere of the army ; and, by changing a national militia into a permanent force, laid the foundation of future subjection. The petty *suzeraines* of Italy who still preserved their chieftainries—the seigneuries of Este, of Ferrara, and Verona—grew into consequence. Then were multiplied the famous Condottieri, the “ Capitaines d’honneur et d’armes,” men of predatory habits and military skill. “ Le perfectionnement de l’ar-

ments to improvement and prosperity, Italy, free Italy, took the lead of feudal Europe. Whatever light was emitted came from her superior illumination. Industry and independence flourished in Milan; liberty found her palladium in Florence, where counters were opened for the commerce of the world; and arts, literature, and science, again raised their temples on their ancient sites. The political springs of other governments were thrown into action by the moral mastery of Florentine minds;¹ and while this republic lent ministers to other nations, she chose her own statesmen from her poets and philosophers—poets and philosophers who were not less distinguished as patriots and freemen. In quick succession she produced Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio; and the world had no parallel for her intellectual superiority. Agriculture kept pace with manufactures. She clothed royalty with the gorgeous products of her looms, and supplied improvident nations from her granaries.

The existence of the Italian Republics was a sole-
 more," says Müller, "des gens d'armes fut l'ouvrage des gentilshommes. Leur force était irrésistible, et la force militaire ainsi se trouva entre les mains des nobles."—*Histoire universelle*.

¹ There were assembled at Rome, to congratulate Boniface the VIIIth, twelve ambassadors from different states, all Florentines. These were, Vermiglio Alfani, from the Emperor; Musciatto Franzesi, from Philip of France; Ugolino da Vicchio, from the King of England; Rimeri, from Bohemia; Simone di Rossi, from Andronicus, Emperor of Constantinople; Guicciardo Bastari, from the Great Khan of Tartary; Manno Adimari, from K. Charles of Naples; Guido Talanca, from Frederick of Sicily; Bencivenni Folchi, from the Grand Master of Rhodes; Lapo Uberti, from Pisa; Cino Diotisalvi, from the Seigneur of Camerino; and Palla Strozzi, from Florence.

cism in the reigning system of Europe; and their example dangerous to its permanency. From contemporaries they obtained no sympathy, for they still kept in advance of their own times. Generations rose therefore successively to crush what they dared not imitate; and they called on the ministers of their own errors to exterminate the *few*, whose progress in wisdom and liberty shamed the dark and fettered *many*. Despotism and bigotry, obeying the call as often as it was given, started from the fortress, and rushed from the cell, and clanked the chain, and kindled the faggot. The State shook her iron sceptre, the Church unfurled her red-cross banner. Princes and pontiffs, linked in fraternal hatred against freedom and truth, renewed the vows of Eugene and Barbarossa; and imperial legions, armed by kings, and blessed by infallible priests, were let loose against the rights and the happiness of a few free cities, who had proved by the test of experiment, that knowledge and civil liberty are the sole bases of human virtue and civilization.

The existence of liberty in Italy was like the natural day of her brilliant climate; it rose in bursts of splendour, and sunk in sudden and unprepared darkness. Her republics invaded, environed, overwhelmed by the successive armies of Europe, which had either raised or protected her domestic enemies, till distrust at home became more formidable than even the danger from without;¹ her rich soil bathed in the blood of her sons, vainly shed in her defence; her States

¹ The Visconti, Sforza, Medici, D'Este, Farnese, etc. etc. who all owed their power and permanency, if not their elevation, to the intrigues of Austria, France, Spain, and the Popes.

divided by papal intrigues and feudal pretensions ; her plains the field chosen by contending potentates, to dispute their unfounded and ambitious claims to the country they desolated ; Italy, to the last gasp of her independence, exhibited the results of her free institutions ; and like the dying gladiator of her Capitol, was sublime éven in the last pang of dissolution. Her splendid capitals were invested, besieged and ravaged, and suffered under the accumulated horrors of war, pestilence, and famine, brought on by the occupation of the Austrian and Spanish armies ; her best citizens, and immortal authors were put to the torture, and branded with the name of conspirators,¹ for defending their country against domestic tyranny, upheld by foreign interference ; a flood of demoralization was let in upon her society by the licence and crimes of foreign troops and predatory bands ; and from the walls of Milan, to the sanctuary of the Vatican, the loveliest country of Europe was desolated by acts of savage atrocity and brutal violation, from which even at this distance of time humanity shudders and recoils.²

¹ In the affair of the Orti Oricellari, Agostino Capponi and Pietro Paolo Boscoli, a man of letters, were decapitated, upon the pretext, true or false, of conspiracy against Julian and Lorenzo di Medici ; and Machiavelli was imprisoned, ruined, and tortured, and his noble spirit broken down to the composition of his "Prince," which many have considered as a formal retraction of those principles which had actuated him through life.—See Guicciardini, and also Machiavelli's Letters.

² "Era veramente la Lombardia ridotta nelle maggiori angustie : desolata dalla peste, in balía alla licenza militare, doveva obbedire al capriccio ed alla sfrenatezza d'un esercito, a chi la vittoria pareva che rendesse tutto lecito, et a chi i comandanti istessi doveano permettere come un' indennizzazione

In 1521, the star of the house of Austria held the ascendant in the political hemisphere of the world,¹ and Charles the Fifth was advancing with rapidity to universal monarchy, that consummation so often and so devoutly wished by royal ambition, when one little city, with its band of patriots, opposed the views of the most powerful sovereign which, since the days of Charlemagne, the world had seen. The glory of this resistance was reserved for Florence. Milan, having first fallen a victim to her petty sovereigns and to the intrigues of France, was ravaged by the Imperial troops, under circumstances more terrible than those that had fallen on her population when Barbarossa had passed the plough over her ruins. But Florence, in spite of the crimes and frequent usurpations of the detested and deposed Medici, still struggled for liberty, and resisted the domestic tyranny of a family long supported by the greatest potentates of Europe. The Medici had hitherto united with the house of France, with which they were allied; but the increasing power and successes of Charles induced Pope Leo the Tenth to change his system; and he entered into engagements with the Emperor, who bound himself to back the house of Medici in their claim to the sovereignty of Florence, and to take the Holy See under his especial care. This alliance was afterwards renewed by Clement the Seventh.

Francis the First, that *preux* whose life was one

alle paghe che non ricevevano, gli assassini, gli stupri, i saccheggi." Pignotti, vol. ix, p. 72.

¹ "Cioch' è stato dagli storici chiamato *la propizia stella della Casa d'Austria*."—Ibid. p. 38. Charles the Fifth was grandson of the Duke of Austria, called Maximilian the Pen-nyless.

perpetual falsehood,' having first united with the Florentines against the Emperor and the Pope, broke with his allies. By the disgraceful treaty of Cambray, which was gossiped over by two old women,² he delivered Florence into the hands of its hereditary tyrants, and implacable foes, the Medici and the Emperor.

Florence now stood alone, and it was her fatal pre-eminence to wind up the last act of Italy's direful tragedy. The first article in the treaty between Clement and Charles stipulated for the restoration of the splendour and establishment of the house of Medici in the person of Alexander, the husband of the Emperor's illegitimate daughter. The republic of Florence, which had so often and so recently hunted the Medicean faction from her gates, refused a despot though offered by one who had become the umpire of Europe. Negotiations had already proved vain. The Emperor would hear nothing from the Florentine ambassadors, as long as Florence affected to maintain an independent government: the Pope would listen to no terms, but those which should place his family upon the throne of Tuscany. The ambassadors rejected both with disdain; and refused to in-

¹ Francis, when a prisoner in Spain, and weary of confinement, pledged his honour to the Emperor, that he would return to Madrid, if permitted to visit his dominions. When he reached the frontiers of France, he burst into a fit of laughter at Charles's credulity; and, arriving at Paris, built a little pavilion, and calling it Madrid, took possession of it, with "Me voici à Madrid." So much for *Tout est perdu, fors l'honneur*.

² The two ladies who thus settled the affairs of nations were, the famous Louisa, queen mother of France, who, having robbed the Exchequer by a forgery, caused her son's most faithful minister to be hanged for the defalcation: the other was Charles the Fifth's aunt Margaret.

sult the people by repeating them. The scabbard was then flung away; and the citizens of Florence undertook to defend their State against the troops of combined nations. The Pope's army was composed of the soldiers who had lately besieged him in his retreat in St. Angelo, and was made up of all the Spanish and Austrian corps, which had not fallen victims of their own excesses in the dreadful sacking of Rome. To these were joined the refuse of the Italian population, outlaws and banditti, and the still more fearful and better-organized Masnadieri. Such was the force led on by a Prince of Orange, which Clement the Seventh with parricidal impiety directed against his native city; while himself and the Emperor were engaged in getting up the pageant of the Imperial coronation at Bologna.

Arrived within view of Florence, this fierce and formidable army paused breathless with admiration; and contemplating its lovely site, the richness and elegance of its gardens and villas, and all the symptoms of opulence and civilization with which its industry and free institutions had covered it, they struck their spears in ferocious threatenings, and shouted that insult which was meant to shew their contempt of a commercial people, and indicated the true motive of their mercenary warfare.¹

Opposed to this dreadful picture of outrage and violation, the internal preparation for the siege of Florence was a gracious contrast. But the details,

¹ “Apparecchia, O Firenza, i tuoi broccali d'oro, che no venghiamo a comprarli a misura di picche.”—Varchi, *Istor* l. 10.

“Get ready, Florence, your golden brocades; we are come to purchase them with our spears.”

all splendid and beautiful as they are, belong to nobler and more ample pages, than that in which they are now only recalled, as dates in the history of human virtue. The patriot death of Niccolo Capponi :¹—Michael Angelo hastening from his great work to shut himself up in the city of his birth in the hour of her greatest need, pouring his glorious earnings into her public coffers, and raising walls for her defence with those hands which had painted the Divinity on the walls of the Vatican, and chiselled the immortal Moses, the wonder and admiration of posterity :—Savonarola² purchasing his certain martyrdom in the dungeons of Rome by preaching resistance to the holy crusade, and stirring up a love of ancient liberty :—three thousand of the Florentine youth of the highest rank, self-armed, marching solemnly to the altar, and pledging themselves on the holy scriptures to defend the liberties of Florence to the last drop of their blood :—two thousand of the elders, from the age of 40 to 55, armed like their sons, and taking the same holy engagement in the presence of their wives and children :—the most luxurious of the aristocracy consenting to the destruction of their villas and galleries without the walls, for the protection of the city :—the more tragic sacrifices made of kindred and friends whom

¹ Foreseeing the impossibility of saving Florence, whatever might be the efforts of the citizens, his heart broke under the conviction; and his dying words were a lamentation for his country.—Vita di Niccolo Capponi.

² Varchi, Istor. l. 11. Benvenuto Cellini, who was afterwards incarcerated in the dungeon where Savonarola died the most heroic of deaths, makes a most pathetic allusion to the sufferings of his predecessor, in describing his own.

the people demanded as victims for having notoriously betrayed their country, as spies or emissaries of the Pope and Emperor :—the brave sorties against the formidable foe, and the wild attacks upon the Spanish and German troops in their own camp—all these traits of patriotism and public spirit could not save the devoted city, where liberty clung to her last altar.

Florence fell : but in her last agony, with pestilence within her walls, and the ferocious enemy at her gates, and want and exhaustion thinning her armed ranks, the people still demanded to be led to battle and to die upon their ramparts. Famine effected what a superior force could not achieve. The Florentines capitulated ; but even in the moment of laying down their arms, they stipulated for their liberties, and proposed a definite constitution to the conqueror. The Emperor gave them a despotic prince, and that prince a Medici.

Italy fell with Florence. From that period, broken and parcelled out, she beheld the greatest part of her dominions under the unlimited power of Spain and Austria ; until the separation of the States of Charles the Fifth left the greater portion of those fertile tracts called by the Lombards the Kingdom of Italy, under the dominion of Spain.

The chain of foreign and domestic despotism was gradually drawn to its extreme tension. Sixtus the Fifth followed up the system of his immediate predecessors, augmented the power of the pontiffs, and established a police in Rome that tended to exterminate the faint workings of freedom, which still broke out at intervals in the turbulence of the Roman patricians ; until the total debasement of that order laid them in the dust, from whence they have never risen.

The maritime republics still boasted of their independence, but their liberties were gone; and the principalities of Italy sunk into the last stage of degradation and bigotry. Towards the latter end of the sixteenth century, a strong tendency towards the concentration of power manifested itself in all the governments of Europe. The republics were taught to become aristocratic, the monarchies to be absolute, the pontiffs more independent of the conclave. The policy of Philip the Second of Spain, himself a monster in the human genus, but an abstract perfection of despotism, was adopted in almost every cabinet of Europe. From that moment the most fatal effects were produced on the moral and political existence of society. Wars ceased to be national, and became the affair of governments for the interests of particular families; public spirit disappeared, and public opinion lost its influence; men ceased to be citizens, and were only considered as subjects. On the continent the system was universally successful; and, if it failed in England in spite of the unremitting efforts of the four Stuarts, she owed her salvation to her two glorious revolutions.¹

From this period the Moorish gallantry of Spain, the generous independence of the old Castilian character, were extinguished under the influence of her kings and Inquisition. A few epigrammatic poets and playwrights² could not rescue France from the

¹ The first revolution, though unsuccessful, and *therefore* stigmatized by the name of rebellion, was the parent of English liberty, and exhibited an ardour, a generosity, and an intellectual vigour in the people, much superior to those displayed in the more calculated movement of 1688.

² "Siècle de grands talens bien plus que de lumières."—Volt.

vilest corruption in manners, and the darkest despotism in government. Germany could scarcely retrograde; and she remained not more free than in the days of her Barbarossa, and only more enlightened as the Reformation broke partially upon her gloomy and cumbrous dulness. The northern governments were still in a state of simple savagery, redeemed by some scintillations of independence, which brightened at intervals in Sweden. Prussia was scarcely known under her petty chiefs, but as a German district; and Russia, slowly emerging from absolute barbarism in the beginning of the seventeenth century, without laws, government, morals, or letters, exhibited in that ingenious and energetic savage her czar Peter, "the head and front" of her national civilization.

But Italy—Italy, which had so long characterized the northern hordes as ultramontane barbarians, which had thrice given to Europe letters, arts, and sciences, under the Etruscans, under the Romans, and under her republics,—Italy, which could not be uncivilized, suffered a severer penalty, and was degraded. She lost her living character, and became a dead letter among nations. The traveller visited her existing capitals, as antiquaries descend into buried cities, for the relics they exhibit and the monuments they preserve. The only symptoms of animation which varied her fatal repose, were the battles fought on her plains by her foreign masters with their foreign foes.

Up to the middle of the eighteenth century, Spain ruled the two Sicilies by viceroys, who occasionally maddened the people into insurrections by cruelties and exactions; and she gave Princes, by conquests,

treaties, and alliances, to the feudal States of the interior ; while Tuscany and Lombardy lay benumbed in lifeless torpidity under the house of Austria. To general and long operating causes which had nearly extinguished the primitive elements of the Italian character, was added one necessarily and powerfully influential, a peace of fifty years. The despotism which had depraved, now ceased to gall : the sybarite subjects of the Italian sovereigns vegetated under a bondage, which became mild in proportion as it was unresisted. Deprived of every principle of re-action within, and totally unmolested from without, excluded alike from all collision of interest and all communication of intellect, the descendants of heroes, of poets, of patriots, and of sages, were lost in a voluptuous tranquillity and steeped in dull licentiousness : in religion bigots, in morals abandoned, in intellect infantine, and in the scale of nations a nonentity. In the midst of this universal and death-like repose, the crash of distant thunders, such as the Capitoline Jupiter or the chief of the Christian Vatican had never fulminated, was heard bursting over the eternal summits of the guardian Alps. The electric lights which broke along the political chain of Europe, let fall their sparks upon the plains of Lombardy ; the shock was felt in the voluptuous bowers of the Arno, in the gorgeous galleries of the Quirinal, and from the Sempron to Vesuvius all Italy responded a fearful vibration. A revolution in public opinion first manifested its existence by terrible symptoms in France, where every human abuse had reached the utmost possibility of endurance. This was the arrival of one of those great epochs in the history of humanity which return at remote intervals, like astronomic

phenomena. Grand, splendid, and overwhelming, they are the results of the moral instinct of man urging forward the cause of that truth, which is to lessen the weight of his evils and to increase his sum of good. For all tends but to that, the here and the hereafter, the ox offered to Isis, and the light analyzed by Newton. History has recorded these epochs as they appeared, the luminous *avatars* of mind, in Egypt, in Greece, in Italy, and in England. She has also recorded the shock of temporary interests successively opposed to their duration and influence. But though power and system have from age to age forced a recoil, they have neither broken the spring of the impulse, nor obliterated the trace of the passing impression. It is thus the tide, ebbing as it flows, marks the circle of each successive wave on the sands from which it retires ; until, finally effecting its immutable law, it covers with its waters the whole waste of shore where rocks and shoals have vainly stemmed its incursions. To trace the result of this European revolution in Italy, which broke up for ever the stale institutes of feudality, and the power of the Church, is the object of the following pages ; to which the foregoing brief sketch of Italian story has been deemed necessary. For while the classical annals of Italy, with all their vices and crimes, make a part of the established education of England, the far nobler history of the Italian Republics, “ *les siècles des mérites ignorés*,” remains but little known, notwithstanding the analogy of their free political institutions to our own, and their early dissemination of knowledge through the rest of Europe.

CHAPTER II.

PASSAGE OF THE ALPS.

Lans-le-bourg.—Mount Cenis.—Ancient and Actual Condition of the Road.—Passage of the French Army.—State of the Military Forces of France at the period of the Revolution, and of the Italian Invasion.

SAVOY, with all its wild variety of soil and scene, its vestiges of extinct volcanos, and sunny vales of pastoral beauty, may be considered as the vestibule of the Alps. As their mightier regions are approached, the country gradually loses its character of civilization, the last stunted vine withers upon the heights of Modane, and culture has ceased to clothe the interstices of rocks with its forced products, ere that acclivity is ascended, where, in the midst of "*regions dolorous*," stand the clustered hovels of the village of Lans-le-bourg.

The exhaustion of a long journey is a species of malady; and the peculiar weariness, physical and moral, which hangs on the close of each day's progress, may be said to be the periodical paroxysm of the disease. The truth of this remark is only to be verified in all its intensity by Continental travellers; and it is never perhaps more strongly illustrated than by

those who, like the writer of these pages, reach the foot of the Alps at the close of a wearisome day, and catch through the deepening shadows of a dreary twilight, and the drifting eddies of a snow-shower, the first glimpses of those regions, which appear to the morbid perceptions of exhausted nature—

“An universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good.”—MILTON.

The dark, narrow, plashy lane of Lans-le-bourg is terminated to the left by a spacious building, which rises directly opposite to the ascent of Mount Cenis. This building includes a barrack, and an inn,¹ built by the French. All else around was one wild waste of snow; and the murky huts of Lans-le-bourg looked like a Lapland village.

The passage of the Alps, from Hannibal to Napoleon, has been always described as awful and terrific; as something worse

“Than fables yet have feign’d, or fear conceived.”

Benvenuto Cellini’s journey over them to France, in the sixteenth century; Evelyn’s in the seventeenth; and Lady Mary Wortley’s, and Horace Walpole’s in the eighteenth, are all described in terms which seem to exhaust the details of possible danger. “I intend to set out to-morrow,” says the brilliant

¹ This inn is kept by an English family, and, contrary to general custom, afforded greater accommodation, comfort, and civility, than are usually offered by our emigrating countrymen. Good beds and good fare are peculiarly valuable, and valued, in this dreary spot, where the sudden diminution of temperature which necessarily accompanies a rapid ascent, leaves the body more susceptible of disagreeable impressions.

ambassadors to the Ottoman Porte, “and pass those *dreadful* Alps so much talked of. If I come to the bottom, you shall hear of me.”—“We began to ascend Mount Cenis, being carried on little seats of twisted osier fixed upon poles, upon men’s shoulders.”

Horace Walpole’s description is still more formidable. “At the foot of Mount Cenis we were obliged to quit our chaise, which was taken to pieces and loaded on mules; and we were carried on low arm-chairs on poles, swathed in beaver bonnets, beaver gloves, beaver stockings, muffs, and bear-skins.”—“The dexterity and nimbleness of the mountaineers is inconceivable; they run down steep and frozen precipices.”—“We had twelve men and nine mules to carry us.”—“On the top of the highest Alps, by the side of a wood of firs, there darted out a young wolf, seized poor dear Tory by the throat; and before we could possibly prevent it, sprung up the side of the rock, and carried him off.”

To this perilous mode of passing the Alps, Lalande offers an alternative. “*Cela s’appelle se faire ramasser.*” One of the preliminaries of this speedy mode of travelling might be deemed quite sufficient to render it an experiment of rare occurrence; and the whole is sufficiently uninviting, from the first precipitation down the frozen snows of the mountain, till the half-dead traveller is picked up, or “*ramassé,*” at the base of its rapid descent.¹

¹ “This is only practised on the Savoy side, the Piedmontese mountains not being adapted to the process. For the operation, the traveller is seated on a traineau; and a guide is placed before him, (with iron spikes in his shoes, to stop the machine when it goes too fast,) who throws himself back on

When, however, the passage of a Piedmontese princess, on her way to some royal bridegroom of France, was expected, the *Corvée* was exacted in all its terrible rigour, and the whole vassalage of Piedmont and Savoy were put into requisition to clear a path for the traineau of the royal bride.¹ But all under royalty passed, or perished, as it might be.

Impressed with all this perilous imagery, which the last book of travels, looked into over night, had revived in the memory, it was a dreary thing to rise with the dawn, the following morning, and from the window of *Lans-le-bourg* Inn, to behold that "*frozen continent, deep snow and ice, where armies whole have sunk.*" Immediately opposite the door, a black track in the snow was pointed out, as the old line of road over which the shuddering traveller was borne in osier baskets, on the shoulders of those porters of the Novalese and of *Lans-le-bourg*, who were of necessity reduced to the state of beasts of burden; and who frequently were obliged to fortify themselves against the severity of the elements they encountered, by means which sometimes endangered, and sometimes lost the lives of the persons committed to their care.² Beaver swathings! reeling porters! frozen precipices! young wolves! and dis-

the traveller, to prevent the effect of the shock from pitching him out. Thus arranged, the whole are projected down the frozen snow on the side of the mountain, and a quarter of an hour brings them to the foot of Mount Cenis."—Lalande.

¹ This was the case in 1775, on the marriage of the present King of France and his brother the Count d'Artois, to the two Princesses of Savoy.

² "On the very highest precipice of Mount Cenis, the devil of discord, in the similitude of sour wine, had got amongst our Alpine savages, and set them a-fighting with Gray and me in

located carriages on mules' backs, were predominating ideas, when, descending to the inn-yard to begin our journey, we found our carriage undisturbed, four post-horses, and two smart postilions, whose impatient "Allons, Monsieur, allons, Madame," recalled the technical jargon of the first stage from Paris. Their "*vif, vif,*" put the horses into motion; and we ascended in a trot that broad, smooth, magnificent road, which, carried over the mightiest acclivities of the mightiest regions, exceeds the military highways of antiquity, and shames the paved roads of modern France, whose price was the degradation of a nation.¹ The road, indeed, when we passed it, was covered with snow; but the fences on either side marked its breadth; and the facility of its winding ascent, proved the boldness, ingenuity, and perfection of its design. At certain distances arose the safe asylums (*maisons de refuge*) against the *tormenta*, or the avalanche: and the Cantonieri presented themselves with their pick-axes and shovels, giving courage, where aid was not wanted. A post-house, or a barrack, disputed the site with the *bears* and *wolves*; and the rapidity of the whole passage rendered beaver swathings, or any other extraordinary precautions against cold, unnecessary. All that had been danger, difficulty, and suffering, but twenty years back, was now safe, facile, and enjoyable; secure beyond the chance of accident, sublime beyond the reach of thought. Legitimate princes! divine-righted sovereigns! houses of France! Austria

the chairs: they rushed him by me on a crag, where there was scarce room for a cloven foot."—Walpole's Correspondence.

¹ The *Corvée*.

and Savoy! "*which of you have done this?*" There is not one among you, descendants of a Clovis, a Barbarossa, or an Amadeus, but may in safe conscience shake his innocent head, and answer, "*Thou canst not say 'twas I did it!*"—Neither does the world accuse you.

Whoever has wandered far and seen much, has learned to distrust the promises of books; and (in respect of the most splendid efforts of human labour) must have often felt how far the unworn expectation starts beyond its possible accomplishment. But *nature* never disappoints. Neither the memory nor the imagination of authorship can go beyond the fact she dictates, or the image she presents. If general feelings can be measured by individual impressions, Italy, with all her treasures of art, and associations of history, has nothing to exhibit, that strikes the traveller like the Alps which meet his view on his ascent to the summit of Mount Cenis, or of the Simplon. That is a moment in which the imagination feels the real poverty of its resources, the narrow limits of its range. An aspect of the material world then presents itself, which genius, even in its highest exaltation, must leave to original creation, as unimitated and inimitable. The sensation it produces is too strong for pleasure, too intense for enjoyment. There, where all is so new, novelty loses its charm; where all is so safe, conscious security is no proof against "*horrible imaginings*;" and those splendid evidences of the science and industry of man, which rise at every step, recede before the terrible possibilities with which they mingle, and which may render the utmost precaution of talent and philanthropy unavailable. It is in vain that the barrier rises and

the arch springs; that the gulf is platformed and the precipice skreened—still the eye closes and the breath is suspended, while danger, painted in the unmastered savagery of remote scenes, creates an ideal and proximate peril. Here experience teaches the falsity of the trite maxim, that the mind becomes elevated by the contemplation of nature in the midst of her grandest works, and engenders thoughts “*that wander through eternity.*” The mind in such scenes is not raised. It is stricken back upon its own insignificance. Masses like these sublime deformities, starting out of the ordinary proportions of nature, in their contemplation reduce man to what he is—an atom. In such regions nothing is in conformity with him, all is at variance with his end and being, all is commemorative of those elementary convulsions, which sweep away whatever lives and breathes, in the general wreck of inanimate matter. Engines and agents of the destructive elements that rage around them, these are regions fitted only to raise the storm and to launch the avalanche; to cherish the whirlwind, and attract the bolt; until some convulsive throe within their mystic womb, awakens fiercer contentions: then they heave and shift, and burst and burn, again to subside, cool down, and settle into awful stillness and permanent desolation; at once the wreck and the monument of changes, which scoff at human record, and trace in characters that admit no controversy the fallacy of calculations and the vanity of systems. Well may the countless races of successive ages have left the mysteries of the Alps unexplored, their snows untracked: but immortal glory be the meed of them, the brave, bo'd spirits, whose unaccommodated natures, in these regions, where

“ cold performs the effect of fire,” braved dangers in countless forms, to oppose the invading enemies of their country’s struggling rights; who climbing where the eagle had not soared, nor the chamois dared to spring, raised the shout of national independence amidst echoes which had never reverberated, save to the howl of the wolf, or the thunder of the avalanche.¹ Gratitude as eternal as the snows of Mount Blanc to them or him, who grappled with obstacles coeval with creation, levelled the pinnacle and blew up the rock, pierced the granite and spanned the torrent, disputing with nature in all her potency her right to separate man from man, and made straight in the desert an highway for progressive civilization!

Than such great works as this, one only greater remained—to facilitate the communion of knowledge, and spread the means of civil liberty from pole to pole by their sole omnipotent agent, A FREE PRUSS. He who did much, did not this—he who levelled mountains and turned aside torrents, and did more than a thousand ages of feudal patrons could effect, of all his possible performances left this “*greater still behind*,” and by that one false calculation, made on the model of examples he derided and of men he had crushed, he fell himself; and now remains “*unrespited, un-pitied, unreprieved*,” the victim of the system he revived and of the policy he cherished.

The art of road-making ranks high in the means of civilization; and its utility, better felt than under-

¹ “ Les pièces d’artillerie et les caissons sont portés à bras : les grenadiers arrivés au sommet du mont, jetèrent en l’air leurs bonnets ornés de plumets rouges. Un cri de joie s’éleva de l’armée. Les Alpes sont franchies.”—Campagne d’Italie, 1796.