MORNING STAR AND CATHOLIC MESSENGER.

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[From Southern Society.]

## GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO.

BY JOHN COLLINS M'CABE, D.D.

### ON THE MOUNTAIN, 1864.

PART I.

The morning was balmy, and softly the gale,
Perfumed with wild flowers, swept over the vale;
Like a picture the lowlands in loveliness lay,
In the glory and freshness of beautiful May.
On our vision reposing, that scene, oh! how fair,
Of upland and lowland, how lovely, how rare!
Waving fields, rich green pastures, and sleek grazing herd,
The wild mountain blossom, the gay-plumaged bird.

The "Blue Ridge" in grandeur rolled away to the West,
With the sun on their brow, and the mists on their breast;
While between, in the distance, the full, bending grain,
Waved in luscious luxuriance from mountain to plain.
Up those steeps grand and glorious the fresh morning breeze
Kissed our cheeks, *and stole* wantoning out 'mongst the trees,
As there with bared brow, and with up-glancing eye,
We lifted our hearts and our songs to the sky.

We stood on that mountain, aye, manhood in prime,
And woman in beauty, to bless the Spring time;
And rich were our feelings as from its green sod
"Gloria in Excelsis" rose upward to God!
"Gloria in Excelsis!" I had oft heard that strain
Peal from organ and choir in many a fane,
From pinnacled temples with dim-lighted aisles,
When from Oriel *on* transept the setting sun smiles—
It had rung in my ear, that deep, sweet solemn chant,
'Till its tones like a spirit, my night-dreams did haunt;
But oh! on that mountain, that beautiful morn,
It seemed a new song from the blue heavens born!
There were smiles, there were tears, both of rapture and awe—
We felt that "our Father" made all that we saw—
That the Saviour was there, bending down from the skies,
O'er the smiles on our cheeks and the tears in our eyes!

We felt, as we gazed, that the Heavenly Dove—
God's Spirit—was near, holy spirit of love;
To the Triune Eternal our homage was given,
And the song and the shout went up, up into heaven.
"*Gloria* in Excelsis!" Ye mountains, a song—
Ye woodlands, a shout your green bowers among;—
"Gloria in Excelsis!" Ye valleys rejoice;
Ye grain-teeming plains, give the chorus a voice!

Ye wild blossoms, laugh in the gladness of Spring;
Ye mountain streams, leap as His praises ye sing;—
"Gloria in Excelsis!"—earth, heaven and sea,
Aye, Universe, join in the grand jubilee!
As we sing, as we shout, faith's keen, kindling eye,
On the sun-glowing mountains can almost descry,
As away in the distance the vapors roll off,
The "chariots of Israel, the horsemen thereof."

BY THE OCEAN SHORE, 1865.

PART II.

*That* scene lies afar—from that mount I am gone—
And I stand by the wild, solemn ocean alone;
The moon, cold and calm, throws her light on those waves,
In whose depths thrones and empires have sunk to their graves.
The stars, pale and quiet, smile down where I stand,
On the white gleaming shells strewn over the strand.
Not a cloud in the heavens; not a sound on the shore,
Save the deep heaving ocean's mysterious roar.

Oh, say, is that strain that comes up on my ear
A dirge? Is't a sad *miserere* I hear?
Oh, no! for it rises in numbers sublime,
How it steals, how it peals, as my pulses keep time!
'Tis no sad *miserere*, no funeral dirge
Rising up from those depths, finding voice in the surge;
'Tis the ocean in worship! Every wave lifts its voice;
"Deep calls unto deep," and the cry is "Rejoice!"

"Gloria in Excelsis!" For myriads of years,
'Tis the strain that Jehovah has heard, and still hears.
When the sons of God shouted, and morning stars sang,
And from throne to dominion the jubilant rang.
On, on rolled the echoes, trembling out from the sky,
'Till the deep caught the strain, thundering back in reply
"Gloria in Excelsis!" The loud anthem roll
Came surging and sounding from its innermost soul.

And since then, *ever since*, in tempest, in calm,
That unwearied ocean hath chanted that psalm;
What though in its bosom whole navies have sunk,
And myriads its briny death-potions have drunk—
What though in its bosom are mysteries unread,
And its halls are all paved with the bones of the dead—
That strain shall arise in each billow's deep roar,
'Till it heaves its last throb on Time's fire-girt shore.

*Bladensburg, Md., March*, 1868.

## LETTER FROM ST. JAMES.

PARISH OF ST. JAMES, LA., March 9, 1868.

Editor Morning Star and Catholic Messenger:

*Sir*—It is presumable that an item of Catholic news must always be acceptable to a Catholic journal, and to its readers. Therefore there is no need to apologize for volunteering a brief report of the examination and exhibition which we witnessed last week in the spacious hall of St. Mary, Jefferson College, in this parish.

It will probably be no news to you, Mr. Editor, to be informed that for many years past this institution was wholly under secular direction, known then as Jefferson College; and that, notwithstanding a large State endowment, it was characterized but by intervals of precarious success. The grand truth is, in fact, beginning to be understood at last, that State education, like State religion, is fated, sooner or later to perish by the unnatural alliance, for as all experience proves education without moral culture to be an unqualified curse to the individual and to society; and as it is impossible to divorce morality from religion, it is clear that the State, in working the machinery of a Christian education, is entirely out of its sphere. And to this conclusion the popular mind is manifestly tending, in spite of the chicanery opposed from time to time by interested or prejudiced writers, to the inevitable fact.

Since, then, "to this complexion we must come at last," it is a noteworthy circumstance, and one to be proud of, that Catholic educationists have pioneered the way through a multitude of obstacles to the success of a principle whose approaching triumph is already heralded by the first notes of public acclamation; and it is both hopeful and consoling to know that the American mind, in spite of occasional parenthetic deviations, is, in the main, biased toward sound principle.

To this evident tendency, doubtless, we may ascribe the well-known fact that our Catholic colleges are, generally speaking, patronized as much by all denominations of Protestants as by Catholics themselves. Whether this incidental feature of our Catholic institutions is desirable or not, we do not now propose to discuss, although the idea was suggested to us by observing that St. Mary, Jefferson College, is at present limited to an exclusively Catholic patronage. It may be that this is owing, in part, to the social, political, and industrial perplexities in which the country is involved, and partly, also, to the fact that the college is located in the very centre of an exclusively Catholic population. Whatever the cause or causes, there is, to our thinking, one resultant great good achieved in the unmistakable Catholic atmosphere of the place. Here is found no accommodation of Catholic doctrine and practices to circumstance or expediency, no softening down of stern dogmas to make them more congenial to flesh and blood, no word-diluting explanations of eternal and immortal truths to bring them into consonance with that worldly-wise "smartness" of which we hear so much, and of which, when the superlative degree is reached, the "human perfectibility" of the wiseacres will, it would seem, be consummated! No. On the contrary, in the study hall, in the class-rooms, in the dormitories, in the refectories, in the playgrounds, everywhere, Catholicity, undisguised Catholicity, is visible, palpable, as it were; and although, as we have said, we do not enter into a formal discussion of the advantages derived or derivable from these concomitants of the educational facilities of this institution, we may be allowed to suggest to those Catholic parents into whose souls the iron of Protestantism has not yet entered, (for all unbelief and indifferentism are the constituents of good Protestantism,) and who are solicitous to secure to their offspring the faith, unadulterated, of their fathers, that this is a matter well worthy of their serious consideration.

But now, to return to the examination and exhibition, (from which, we fear, we have somewhat digressed,) we must re-introduce the reader by informing him that the establishment of which we write is conducted by the "Marist Fathers," who are bound by the rules of a society similar to that of the Jesuits, to give their whole lives and best exertions to the instruction of youth. And well do they fulfill this onerous obligation, for, to our certain knowledge, the perpetual circle of duties which it imposes is scarcely ever remitted, save to alternate with the still more sacred office of ministering at the altar.

Contrary to what appears to be the established mode, the exhibition preceded the examination. In this arrangement we think the directors of the College demonstrated at once their sagacity and their paternal solicitude for the students; because, on reflection, it must be evident that the amusement of an exhibition is the best preparative for the ordeal of an examination; while the interruption in the studies gives assurance that the answers elicited are the emanation of indwelling knowledge.

The exhibition drew together a large concourse of the *elite* of the parish, and was itself characterized by humorous dialogues, and patriotic speeches, and recitations, the whole climaxed by that laughable comedy from the inimitable Moliere, "Le Medicin Malgre Lui." It is almost unnecessary to add that the audience dispersed highly delighted, in good humor with themselves and *tout le monde*, and quite convinced that three hours might be less profitably employed than in the enjoyment of a "feast of reason," such as they had just witnessed, and which is semi-annually provided for the friends and patrons of the College.

St. Mary, Jefferson College, although comparatively an old institution, has, it seems, but recently thrown off the anomalies that obstructed its usefulness and so often threatened it with extinction; so that, in point of fact, it may be said to be young after the manner of that aged philosopher, who, in reply to a question concerning his age, declared that he was only seven years old, since it was within that period of time that he began to live usefully, according to the *conditions* of life.

But now the tenure is changed. Under the auspices of the "Marist Fathers," who are themselves not only the issue of rule, and order, and method, but the very embodiment of those indispensable elements of success, St. Mary, Jefferson College is rapidly developing and perfecting those healthy characteristics which guarantee at once its usefulness and permanency.

To its infancy and immaturity under the new regime, therefore, must be attributed the fact that in the examination the pupils' acquaintance with the classical authors was confined to the rudimental, while their knowledge of French and English, comprising analytical construction and rhetoric, was manifestly more advanced. In the mathematical department the proficiency displayed demonstrated a tendency to utilize that indispensable branch of education to the practical concerns of life, a fact of which, if we had been left in any doubt by the chalk and blackboard operations, we should infer from an inspection of various specimens of practical book-keeping on exhibition. It must not, however, be supposed that commercial calculations alone cover the whole field of mathematical exercises. Far from it; for while mercantile transactions are duly attended to, the main object is evidently to afford to Southern youth the means of pursuing a complete collegiate course. Accordingly, we find that in the second session of the scholastic year, just entered, the higher classes have taken up the study of pure mathematics and physics, for the successful pursuit of which additional facilities have recently been provided, both by increasing the corps of professors and procuring philosophical apparatus of the best manufacture and latest improvements.

The faculty, by the way, though not very numerous, present a selection remarkable for their varied acquirements, and embracing, as it does, professors of several European nationalities, unusual opportunities are thus afforded to the pupil of prosecuting, in conjunction with the ancient languages, the study of all the modern dialects.

It must be evident that the knowledge of a language is best acquired under a professor whose mother tongue it is. *Verbum sap.*

CUSTOS.

## ANARCHY AND AUTHORITY.

Matthew Arnold's name must be familiar to all readers of English literature, particularly that portion of it relating to criticism. Professor of Poetry in one of the English Universities, his trenchant pen has, on many occasions, been engaged in exposing the shams prevalent among his countrymen. John Bull, of course, did not receive this with equanimity, and Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart were set barking at his heels, until finally he resigned his professorship, but continues his excoriating essays. His latest appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, showing that an Englishman's idea of liberty is, that he may do as he pleases, even though that involves an infringement and destruction of the rights of all others. A few extracts are subjoined:

Freedom, I said, was one of those things which we thus worshiped in itself, without enough regarding the ends for which freedom is to be desired. In our common notions and talk about freedom, we eminently show our idolatry of machinery. Our prevalent notion is—and I quoted a number of instances to prove it—that it is a most happy and important thing for a man merely to be able to do as he likes. On what he is to do when he is thus free to do as he likes, we do not lay so much stress. The central idea of English life and politics is the *assertion of personal liberty*. Evidently this is so; but evidently, also, as feudalism, which with its ideas and habits of subordination was for many centuries silently behind the British constitution, dies out, and we are left with nothing but our system of checks, and our notion of its being the great right and happiness of an Englishman to do as far as possible what he likes, we are in danger of drifting toward anarchy. Our leading class is an aristocracy, and no aristocracy likes the notion of a state authority greater than itself, with a stringent administrative machinery superseding the decorative inutilities of lord-lieutenancy, deputy-lieutenancy, and the *posse comitatus*, which are all in its own hands. Our middle class, the great representative of trade and dissent, with its maxim of every man for himself in business, every man for himself in religion, dreads a powerful administration which might somehow interfere with it.

Then as to our working-class. This class, pressed constantly by the hard daily compulsion of material wants, is naturally the very centre and stronghold of our national idea, that it is man's ideal right and felicity to do as he likes.

The modern spirit has now almost entirely dissolved; habits of subordination, and an anarchical tendency of our worship of freedom in and for itself, of our superstitious faith, as I say, *in machinery, is becoming very manifest.* More and more, because of this our blind faith machinery, because of our want of light to enable us to look beyond machinery to the end for which machinery is valuable, this and that man, and this and that body of men, all over the country, are beginning to assert and put in practice an Englishman's right to do what he likes; his right to march where he likes, meet where he likes, enter where he likes, hoot as he likes, threaten as he likes, smash as he likes. All this, I say, tends to anarchy; and though a number of excellent people, and particularly my friends of the liberal or progressive party, as they call themselves, are kind enough to reassure us by saying that these are trifles, that a few transient outbreaks of rowdyism signify nothing, that our system of liberty is one which itself cures all the evils which it works, that the educated and intelligent classes are in overwhelming strength and majestic repose, ready, like our military force in riots, to act at a moment's notice—yet one finds that one's liberal friends generally say this because they have such faith in themselves and their nostrums, when they shall return, as the public welfare requires, to place and power. But this faith of theirs one cannot exactly share, when one has so long had them and their nostrums at work, and sees that they have not prevented our coming to our present embarrassed condition; and one finds, also, that the outbreaks of rowdyism tend to become less and less trifles, to become more frequent rather than less frequent; and that meanwhile our educated and intelligent classes remain in their majestic repose, and that some how or other, whatever happens, their overwhelming strength, like our military force in riots, never does act.

How, indeed, *should* their overwhelming strength act, when the man who gives an inflammatory lecture, or breaks down the Park railings, or invades a secretary of state's office, is only following an Englishman's impulse to do as he likes; and our own conscience tells us that we ourselves have always regarded this impulse as something primary and sacred? Mr. Murphy lectures at Birmingham, and showers on the Catholic population of that town "words," says Mr. Hardy, "only fit to be addressed to thieves or murderers." What then? Mr. Murphy has his own reasons of several kinds. He suspects the Roman Catholic Church of designs upon Mrs. Murphy; and he says, if mayors and magistrates do not care for their wives and daughters, he does. But, above all, he is doing as he likes, or, in worthier language, asserting his personal liberty. "I will carry out my lectures if they walk over my body as a dead corpse; and I say to the mayor of Birmingham that he is my servant while I am in Birmingham, and as my servant he must do his duty and protect me." Touching and beautful words, which find a sympathetic chord in every British bosom! The moment it is plainly put before us that a man is asserting his personal liberty, we are half disarmed; because we are believers in freedom, and not in some dream of a right reason to which the assertion of our freedom is to be subordinated. Accordingly, the secretary of state had to say that although the lecturer's language was "only fit to be addressed to thieves or murderers," yet, "I do not think he is to be deprived—I do not think that anything I have said could justify the inference that he is to be deprived—of the right of protection in a place built by him for the purpose of these lectures; because the language was not language which afforded grounds for a criminal prosecution." No, nor to be silenced by mayor, or home secretary, or any administrative authority on earth, simply on their notion of what is discreet and reasonable. This is in perfect consonance with our public opinion, and with our national love for the assertion of personal liberty.

In quite another department of affairs, Sir William Page Wood relates an incident which is just to the same effect as this of Mr. Murphy. A testator bequeathed £300 a year, to be forever applied as a pension to some person who had been unsuccessful in literature, and whose duty it should be to support and diffuse by his writings, the testator's own views, as enforced in the testator's publications. This bequest was appealed against in the court of chancery, on the ground of its absurdity; but, being only absurd, it was upheld, and the so-called charity was established.

It is very easy to mistake or to exaggerate the sort of anarchy from which we are in danger through them. We are not in danger from Fenianism, fierce and turbulent as it may show itself; for against this our conscience is free enough to let us act resolutely and put forth our overwhelming strength the moment there is any real need for it. In the first place, it never was any part of our creed that the great right and blessedness of an Irishman, or, indeed, of anybody on earth except an Englishman, is to do as he likes; and we can have no scruple at all about abridging, if necessary, a non-Englishman's assertion of personal liberty. The British constitution, its checks, and its prime virtues, are for Englishmen. We may extend them to others out of love and kindness; but we find no real divine law written on our hearts constraining us so to extend them. And then the difference between an Irish Fenian and an English rough is so immense, and the case, in dealing with the Fenian, so much more clear! He is so evidently desperate and dangerous, a man of a conquered race, a Papist, with centuries of ill-usage to inflame him against us, with an alien religion established in his country by us at his expense, with no admiration of our institutions, no love of our virtues, no talents for our business, no turn for our comfort! Show him our symbolical truss manufactory on the finest site in Europe, and tell him that British industrialism and individualism can bring a man to that, and he remains cold. But with the Hyde Park rioter how different! He is our own flesh and blood; he is a Protestant; he is framed by nature to do as we do, hate what we hate, love what we love; he is capable of feeling the symbolical force of the truss manufactory; the question of questions for him, is a wages' question. That beautiful sentence Sir Daniel Gooch quoted to the Swindon workmen, and which I treasure as Mrs. Gooch's golden rule—or the Divine injunction, "Be ye perfect," done into British—the sentence Sir Daniel Gooch's mother repeated to him every morning when he was a boy going to work: "Ever remember, my dear Dan, that you should look forward to being some day manager of that concern." The rioter is just asserting his personal liberty a little. He does not break many laws, or not many at one time; and, as our laws were made for very different circumstances from our present, (but always with an eye to Englishmen doing as they like,) and as the clear letter of the law must be against our Englishman who does as he likes, and not only the spirit of the law and public policy, and as government must neither have any discretionary power nor act resolutely, on its own interpretation of the law if any one disputes it, it is evident our laws give our playful giant, in doing as he likes, considerable advantage. Besides, even if he can be clearly proved to commit an illegality in doing as he likes, there is always the resource of not putting the law in force, or of abolishing it. So he has his way, and if he has his way, he is soon satisfied for the time; however, he falls into the habit of taking it oftener and oftener, and at last begins to create by his operations a confusion of which mischievous people may take advantage, and which at any rate, by troubling the common course of business throughout the country, tends to cause distress, and so to increase the sort of anarchy and social disintegration which had previously commenced. And thus that profound sense of settled order and security, without which a society like ours can not live and grow at all, is beginning to threaten us with taking its departure.

I have often wondered whether upon the whole earth there is any thing so unintelligent, so unapt to perceive how the world is really going on, as an ordinary Englishman. And all this while we are in an epoch of expansion.

Of the excesses of the day no better representative can possibly be imagined than the Rev. W. Cassel, a Dissenting minister from Walsall, who came before the public in connection with the proceedings at Birmingham of Mr. Murphy, already mentioned. Speaking in the midst of an irritated population of Catholics, the Rev. Mr. Cassel exclaimed: "I say, then, away with the mass! It is from the bottomless pit; and in the bottomless pit shall all liars have their part, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." And again: "When all the praties were black in Ireland, why did'nt the priests say the hocus-pocus over them, and make them all good again?" He shared, too, Mr. Murphy's fears of some invasion of his domestic happiness: "What I wish to say to you as Protestant husbands is—*Take care of your wives!*" And, finally, in the true vein of an Englishman doing as he likes, a vein of which I have at some length pointed out the present dangers, he recommended for imitation the example of some churchwardens at Dublin, among whom, said he, "there was a Luther and also a Melanchthon," who had made very short work with some ritualist or other, handed him down from his pulpit, and kicked him out. Now it is manifest, as was the case of Sir Thomas Bateson, if we let this excess of the sturdy English middle-class, this conscientious Protestant Dissenter, so strong, so self-reliant, so fully persuaded in his own mind, have his way, he would be capable, with his want of light—or, to use the language of the religious world, with his zeal without knowledge—of kindling a fire which neither he nor any one else could easily quench.

And then comes in, as it did also with the aristocracy, the honesty of our race. Every one remembers how virtuous Alderman-Colonel, or Colonel-Alderman Wilson led his militia through the London streets; how the bystanders gathered to see him pass; how London roughs, asserting an Englishman's best and most blissful right of doing what he likes, robbed and beat the bystanders; and how the blameless warrior-magistrate refused to let his troops interfere. "The crowd," he touchingly said afterwards, "was mostly composed of fine healthy, strong men, bent on mischief; if he had allowed his soldiers to interfere they might have been overpowered, their rifles taken from them and used against them by the mob; a riot, in fact, might have ensued, and been attended with bloodshed, compared with which the assaults and loss of property that actually occurred, would have been as nothing." Honest and affecting testimony of an Englishman!—"What light have we," he says, "beyond a free-born Englishman's impulse to do as he likes, which could justify us in preventing, at the cost of bloodshed, other free-born Englishmen from doing as they like, and robbing and beating us as much as they please?"

There are two excellent rules for a man's guidance: "Firstly, never go against the best light you have; secondly, take care that your light be not darkness." We English have followed with praiseworthy zeal the first rule, but we have not given so much heed to the second. We have gone manfully, the Rev. W. Cassell and the rest of us, according to the best light we have; but we have not taken enough care that this should be really the best light possible for us—that it should not be darkness.

## LETTERS OF ST. JEROME.

The following remarks are from the *Contemporary Review*. Of course, it will be understood that there are some few things which savor of their origin. With this preliminary caution, we think they will be found readable:

The letters of the great Church Fathers, from Cyprian to Gregory the Great, extending over more than four centuries, are, to an ordinary reader, the most instructive portion of their writings. They are, for the most part, the letters of men of ability and great devotion, and, in the dearth of anything like a good Church historian, they form by far the truest and most lively record of Christian history. They are often written with a spirit and freedom, with an unreserved simplicity, and, at the same time, an unrestrained fire, which are a marked contrast to the more formal works of the same authors, and still more to the productions of Eusebius, Sozomen, and Socrates. Thus in Cyprian we see the great Roman, the founder of the high Episcopal spirit of the Church, dealing with those who resisted his authority at once as the kindly Christian Bishop, and yet with something of the tone of a Roman Imperator, deciding with practical Roman wisdom the case of the readmission of the *Lapsed*, and denouncing with Roman scorn the arrogant schism of the Novatians. In Athanasius, we have a description far more lively than we find elsewhere, both of the orthodox devotion of his monkish supporters, and of what he held to be the judgment of God in the death of his great opponent. The early history of Basil and Gregory at the school of Athens, as it is described in these letters, their romantic friendship and singular quarrels, are a pleasing episode in the midst of the stern struggles and bitter polemics of the Eastern Church; while it is far more in the letters of Basil than in his other writings that we trace the versatile genius, the courage, the gifts of command and administration, which gained for him both the emnity and respect of his schoolfellow, Julian, and made him, after Athanasius, the one practical man whom the East produced, "the great Basil." In the letters, again, of the chief *Latin* Fathers, those of Ambrose contain our only record of some of the greatest scenes of Church history, in which he was himself the actor; and if those of Augustine are of inferior interest, it is because, like almost all great orators, except Cicero, he too often sinks the letter-writer in the rhetorician. Finally, two centuries later, it is in the touching letters of the first of the great Gregories that we see the man who guided Christendom from his bed of suffering—at one time controlling the barbarian Franks and Lombards by the force of his character, at another entering into the minutest details for the direction of the converted Anglo-Saxons, with a gentle wisdom which has made even Gibbon acknowledge that "the Pontificate of Gregory the Great is one of the most edifying periods in the history of the Church."

And yet the letters of the Dalmatian priest, Eusebius Hieronymus, who retained through life many traces of his origin, must be placed far above any about we have mentioned, both for their vigor, and still more for their historical interest. He was the most eminent supporter of the early monastic system; but this feature in his character, though it marked his whole life, is far from being the only aspect in which the most learned of all the Fathers deserves to be regarded. Far inferior both in genius and in feeling to Origen and Augustine, Jerome had certain qualities which have made him the most readable, the most modern, and (if such a word may be applied to a Father and a Saint) by far the more amusing, of Church writers. He was the first specimen among them of a thorough *literary* man, not a *professor*, like Origen, or an *orator*, like Augustine, but a man to whom reading and study were the great delight of his life. His translation of the Scriptures is a model of terse and vigorous Latin, almost a language by itself. But his *letters* are the best record both of his noble life and his varied ability. Erasmus did not hesitate to place him above Cicero as a letter-writer; and certainly it would be difficult to match from Cicero his bursts of natural eloquence or his condensed and epigrammatic invective.

The period at which St. Jerome's letters were written is indeed one of singular interest, for it was the age of the final struggle between Christianity and Paganism; and it may also be called the golden age of Christian theology. We find him at Rome about the year 382 A. C.; and although he had hitherto published nothing, and chiefly owed his reputation to some graphic accounts of monastic life which had been read in the meetings of the literary Christian ladies at Rome, his fame for learning, especially as a Hebrew scholar, was already higher than that of any man of his time, and he soon became secretary to the reigning Pope Damasus, and held the scarcely less important post of a sort of professor to what may be called a ladies' college on the Aventine, which was under the direction of the high-minded and enthusiastic Marcella. The commencement of his letters dates from the year 370 A. C., about fifteen years prior to the period we are now speaking of; and some of the early ones, written in the desert, are amongst the most interesting of the collection. The most interesting point in a collection of letters is always the character of the correspondents, and those of Jerome were themselves the best epitome the spirit of his time. Marcella, Fabiola, Melania, with Paula and her three daughters, and her son, Toxotius, form one of those groups with whom the writings of Roman Catholics still make us familiar. Marcella, in particular, was perhaps one of the most striking characters to be found in religious history; while Fabiola and the fiery young Spaniard Melania supplied an element of romance to which there was a good deal akin to Jerome himself. The Spanish Christians, indeed, including the great Theodosius and Hosius of Cordova, played a great part in those days; and there was the national union of hardness and enthusiasm in Melania, in which Jerome particularly delighted; for he tells us that when she lost her husband and her two children, she never shed a tear, but exclaimed, "I shall serve thee, O Lord, more freely now that I am relieved from my burdens." The central figures of the group, however, were the heads of the great Æmilian family, Paula and her three daughters, Eustochium, Blæsilla, and Paulina, with the husband of the last, Pammachius.

During the life of Paula's husband, Toxotius, they had all "served the fashions of the world" (*sæculo servierant;*) and Pammachius was, apparently, the only man of the family who was a zealous Christian; after his wife's death, he was the first Roman senator who became a monk, and Jerome describes, in his lively style, the strange spectacle "of the descendants of consuls, the glory of the Tuscan race, who was not ashamed to walk in his rough black dress among the scarlet robes of the senators, and who could meet with jests of his own the ridicule of his old companions." (Ep. 66.)

The whole party gathered around Marcella in her convent-palace on the Aventine. Of this lady he says: "I will mention another of her achievements which will seem wonderful to those who have made the same attempt. She wished to learn Hebrew—which, for my own part, I have studied diligently from childhood, and still continued to study lest she should leave me behind—and she so completely mastered it as to sing the Psalms in Hebrew, and without the slightest Latin accent. The same was the case with her holy child Eustochium, who was so devoted to her mother's every wish, that she would scarcely leave her for a moment, never could eat or sleep apart from her, and rejoiced when she saw her mother distributing her whole property to the poor, believing that her own love for her mother was her best wealth and inheritance. Nor must I forget to mention how deep was her joy when she heard that her little grand-daughter Paula, the child of Læta and Toxotius, who was born, as it were, in answer to the vows and prayers of her parents for her virginity, had begun in her very cradle, and while she still played with her rattles, to sing the Allelnia, and to utter the names of her aunt and grandmother in her broken words. This was the only longing which she retained to the last for her country, that she might know that her son and his wife and their daughter had left the world, and become servants of Christ. In part she had her wish. For her grand-daughter is reserved to be the bride of Christ, her daughter-in-law has now devoted herself to a single life (apart from her husband,) her mother-in-law is following her at Rome in those works of faith and charity which she herself has ended at Jerusalem."

The monastic spirit is strong in all this, as it is in every letter of St. Jerome's; but the monastic spirit was needed at the time, and, indeed, for many an age, to keep alive the fire of Christianity; and it would only be but a narrow bigotry which could shut its eyes to the elevation of feeling, and the high sense of duty which has inspired such characters as those of Paula and Marcella.

As became the greatest commentator of his age, his chief interest lies in doctrine and in the exposition of Scripture; and it is in these respects that his statements are most valuable, in throwing light on the religious feelings and temper of his time in a way which would surprise those who look for nothing but "blind bigotry" in a "Father."

THE SHADOWS OF LIFE.—The shadows of the mind are like those of the body. In the morning of life they all lie behind us; at noon, we trample them under foot, and in the evening they stretch long, broad and deepening before us. Are not, then, the sorrows of childhood as dark as those of age? Are not the morning shadows of life as deep and broad as those of its evening? Yes, but morning shadows soon fade away, while those of evening reach forward into the night, and mingle with the coming darkness.

One ward in Boston is taxed for more property than the whole city of St. Louis.