

against the Jews it is not for anti-semitic reasons. He has attacked the anti-Semites so severely that none of them would feel inclined to claim him as a partisan. He had the merit of putting the Jewish problem back on its true plane, the spiritual, and of announcing this truth to the contemporary world, deep in merely political and literary considerations, at a time when most Christians kept silent. And his voice, stifled at first, takes on, in our age so sorely in need of it, an ever greater resonance.

As a whole, concludes M. Journet, the great passages in Bloy's book cancel his faults and we can only admire it, thankful to have the sure guidance of theology to help us progress towards the dim truths revealed to us by the great French author.

E. ZUM BRUNN.

ROMAN AFTERNOON

WHEN Vespers are over, the afternoon sun and the keen air are themselves an invitation to walk. Today it shall be one of the other six hills of Rome that lie to the north of our convent on the Aventine. As I pass along the road which curves gently down the hillside I see the Palatine; and the heavy ruins of the imperial palaces catch the late sunshine, giving their brickwork a mellowing of gold, in contrast with the dark pines that group themselves along its low hilltop. Away to the right the Alban Hills still carry a covering of snow; and the wind that blows from them has a bite in its breath. The *Circus Maximus* lies below; and on its far side a tram jolts noisily on its iron track, where formerly the chariots drawn by their racing horses sped along the course beneath the watching eyes of Virgil:

*Ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,
Addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens
Pertur equis auriga, neque audit currus habenas.*

As when the chariots have poured out of their starting-pens, they add lap to lap; and the driver, tugging vainly at the bridles, is carried forward by his horses; nor does the team give heed to the reins. *Georgics*, I, 512-514.

The smooth expanse of the old race course is now heaped untidily; for the map has shown me that it recently contained the gasworks, until its retorts and reservoirs were removed by those, who had more reverence for the past, but less time granted them to leave the place clean and level:

*Hinc movet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum;
 Vicinae ruptis inter se legibus urbes
 Arma ferunt: saevit toto Mars impius orbe.*

From this side Euphrates, from that side Germany, set war astir.
 Neighbour cities, breaking their confederate league, shoulder
 their arms.

Unhallowed war rages all the world over. *Ibid.* 509-511.

On the Coelian the sun's rays silver the travertine façade of St Gregory's. Above it stand the campanile, dome and apse of SS John and Paul at the top of the hill. As I climb the path to St Gregory's, its English associations come to mind. In front of the basilica is a gracious seventeenth century *cortile*. There is a tablet on one of the walls recording St Gregory the Great's mission to England; and on it are the names of St Augustine of Canterbury and the first bishops of London and Rochester. Above the door of the church are the arms of our present Cardinal, the Archbishop of Westminster, for this is his church; his title: Cardinal Priest of the Church of SS Andrew and Gregory on the Coelian Hill. The church is closed. Perhaps the monks on the Coelian take their siesta later than the friars on the Aventine, for the monks' night is broken by their long office. As I pass round the colonnade I see on the tablets that line its walls the names of two Catholic Englishmen of the sixteenth century. Sir Edward Carne, who had served Queen Mary but could not in conscience serve her successor, and had then come to Rome to serve the Holy Father. Robert Peckham's epitaph tells of the same conflict that troubled his sad heart and drew him away from the English countryside to die in Rome with the last member of the Hierarchy that St Gregory had founded a thousand years before.

D.O.M.

Roberto Pechamo Anglo
 Equiti Aurato
 Philippo Et Maria
 Anglia Et Hispan. Regibus
 Olim A Consiliis
 Genere Religione Virtute
 Praeclaro
 Qui Cum Patriam Suam
 A Fide Catholica Deficientem Adspicere
 Sine Summo Dolore Non Posset
 Relictis Omnibus Qui In Hac Vita
 Carissima Esse Solent
 In Voluntarium Profectus Exilium

Post Sex Annos
 Pauperibus Christi Heredibus
 Testamento Institutis
 Sanctissime E Vita Migravit
 Idib. Sept. Ann. mdlxix Aetat. Suae liv
 Thomas Goldwellus Episc. Asaphensis
 Et Thomas Kirtonus Angli
 Testamenti Procuratores Pos.

To Robert Peckham, Englishman, Knight, and formerly Councillor, when Philip and Mary were ruling England and Spain, a man renowned for his family, his religion and his virtue, who, when he could not bear without the greatest sorrow to see his own land falling away from the Catholic Faith, left all that men are wont to hold most dear in this life and set forth into voluntary exile: after six years, having left by his Will Christ's poor as his heirs, he departed this life in the most holy dispositions on the thirteenth day of September, 1569, in the fifty-fourth year of his age: Thomas Goldwell, Bishop of St Asaph and Thomas Kirton, Englishmen, as Executors of his Will, set up this Memorial.

Maurice Baring, after seeing this memorial, was moved to write, *Robert Peckham*, a novel of sensitive and deep understanding.

The narrow lane with its brick arches climbs the hillside under the Church of SS John and Paul. In the courtyard a notice tells me that Adrian IV, our English Pope, built the tall campanile. The Passionist Fathers keep the shrine of their founder, St Paul of the Cross, beneath the domed chapel; and one thinks of the Venerable Father Dominic Barbieri, who dreamed and prayed here for the conversion of England and was to gather John Henry Newman into the one Fold of Christ on an October night at Littlemore. The association with St Dominic and England still persisted; for during the previous days of persecution the Fathers of our English Province found home and shelter for a time in this house and church of the Roman martyrs. In the church a group of small orphan girls waits and watches me, while the Sister with them is at her prayer.

Communicantes et memoriam venerantes . . . sed et beatorum Apostolorum et martyrum tuorum. . . Joannis et Pauli, Cosmae et Damiani, et omnium sanctorum, quorum meritis prēbusque concedas ut in omnibus protectionis tuae muniamur auxilio.

In our communion with and our veneration for the memory of the blessed Apostles and of thy martyrs . . . John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and all the saints, by whose merits and prayers grant that in all things we may be shielded by the help of thy protection.

(*Canon of the Roman Mass.*)

There is still time to visit the church of SS Cosmas and Damian. This visit is overdue, for it was on their feast day that I was received into the Church; and the days here have passed quickly before this duty of thanks has been fulfilled. As I walk the wide road, the Palatine with its living trees and dead, brick ruins rises to the left; and at my face is the Arch of Constantine framed by the curving mass of the Colosseum. I turn to the left up the old paved way to the Arch of Titus, built as a triumph for the sack of Jerusalem and the scattering of a people, whose temple was finally destroyed three years after their countryman, St Peter, was crucified here for his Master.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit superbos mente cordis sui. Deposuit potentes de sede: et exaltavit humiles.

He hath showed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. (*Magnificat*: Luke I, 51, 52.)

The Emperors are dead: their palaces and temples are in ruins. The scattered people of the Old Covenant still hope to gather the inheritance they once forfeited, still provoke men's patience in order to grasp it before the time is fulfilled and they are gathered with Peter into Christ's flock.

This is the heir; come let us kill him; and the inheritance shall be ours. (Mark xii, 7.)

The high vaulting of a desolated palace echoes with the laughing chatter of boys at football. Here is space enough for them to play on the wide floor; and they bring life and joy with them. Below to the left is the Forum with its grass grown ways and broken columns.

In the empty church a thin ray of the sun meets the head of a saint in the great mosaic over the apse. The notes of the organ behind the high altar fill the air. As I come beneath the apse, the young Franciscan friar leaves the organ; and his hand touches a switch. The sun's narrow beam is absorbed, as the gold and the colours of the great mosaic are flooded with light. Beneath is the Lamb of God, at whose feet spring forth the four rivers of life; and the twelve chosen sheep of his first flock come at either side from Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Above, flanked by Pope St Felix and St Theodore, SS Cosmas and Damian are brought by the two great apostles of Rome to Christ in his glory. At one side is a tree, whose foliage gleams with colour, and on one of its branches is a living Phoenix ringed with lambent rays.

The Brother is so courteous. He leaves his playing and takes me

down to the lower church to see the relics of the martyrs under the altar. We find the work of restoration taking place; and for some reason that I cannot gather the personnel and apparatus of a cinema company are here. Beside the altar are the projectors and the lamps; and small groups of men murmur and smoke together, unknowing or forgetful of the reverence that is due from them in this place. They are but an incident; for here again the new rises from the old, life from death. This was the *Templum sacrae urbis*, the Temple of Romulus, the shrine at the heart of ancient Rome, the end of the *Via sacra*.

*Dii patrii, Indigetes, et Romule Vestaque mater,
quae Tuscum Tiberim et Romana Palatia servas,
hunc saltem everso iuvenem succurrere saeclo ne
prohibite.*

Gods of our fathers, gods of our homeland, Romulus and Mother Vesta, thou that keepest safe Tuscan Tiber and the dwellings of the Roman Palatine, forbid not at least that this young chieftain come to the help of an age that is upturned.—*Georgics*, I, 498-501. Virgil's prayer is answered in the upper church on the glittering tesserae of the fifth century mosaic: here too is the answer to our prayer, as the darkness gathers 'in this twittering world':¹

Christus vivit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.

'Christ lives, Christ reigns, Christ rules.'

I leave the kind Brother, who begs my blessing; and as I start homeward under the Capitol and the *Ara Coeli* the bells of Rome are ringing the *Ave Maria* for the sunset.

AELWIN TINDAL-ATKINSON, O.P.

¹ T. S. Eliot: *Burnt Norton*, III, end of stanza ii.