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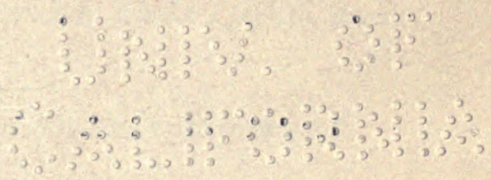
ITALICS.

BRIEF NOTES

ON POLITICS, PEOPLE, AND
PLACES IN ITALY,
IN 1864.

BY

FRANCES POWER COBBE.



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LONDON:

TRÜBNER AND CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

1864.

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TO
HER EXCELLENCY
THE COUNTESS USEDOM,

This Book,

PARTLY WRITTEN UNDER HER ROOF,

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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NOTE.

SINCE the earlier sheets of this work have passed through the press, an important change has taken place in Italian affairs. The engagement of Napoleon III to recall his troops from Rome in two years' time will, *if fulfilled*, lead to a position of Pope and King in the highest degree favourable to the great hope of Italy—the annexation of Rome. It remains, however, to be seen, how far such an engagement will be found binding on the Imperial contracting party at the end of a period amply sufficient for the intervention of complications annulling the stipulations of twenty modern State-Treaties. The old project of an Italian Confédération under French influence can hardly be deemed abandoned nor the game played out, so long as a single French regiment remains at Civita Vecchia.

The transference of the capital of Italy from Turin to Florence is, in any case, a material result of the new combination. Whether such a change be worth its cost just now, is a point on which opinions may reasonably vary. Perhaps, after all, it would be fortunate for Italy if her seat of government remained fixed,—not for a few years only, but for ever, within the storied walls of the beautiful old city which four years ago so nobly set the example of self-abnegation to aid the great cause of national unity—a city whose atmosphere, physical and moral, is untainted by the *Malaria* of Rome.

Sept. 1864.

NOTE

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suit, adding to unusual gifts scarcely less unusual resolution and perseverance.

If Miss Hosmer were not a great artist, only an American young lady residing in Rome, and travelling about Europe every summer, she would have the social reputation of being, in the first place, a most skilful and courageous horsewoman (her steeds are the admiration and envy of Rome) ; and, further, of being the possessor of a gift second to none in value to the owner and in charm to the spectator ; an inexhaustible flow of wit, drollery, and genial joyous humour. Coleridge's "happy elf" of a child, always singing and playing, and a woman creating majestic works of art—a massive forehead, with large clear eyes, and a mouth all rippling over with laughter and glee—a man's courage and steadfastness of purpose, and a young girl's fulness of fresh life—such are the elements out of which Harriet Hosmer has been made. It must be owned, it was when Nature was in a rare kindly mood.

Here are two of Miss Hosmer's friends, with whom she has lived for some years back in the happy way women club together in Italy. Miss Charlotte Cushman, the celebrated American

actress, and Miss Stebbins, another admirable sculpturess and most accomplished lady. Of the society often gathered in that bright house in the *Via Gregoriana*, the merry feasts where Campagna wild-boars and American oysters were despatched together amid many a jest; the evenings with large assemblies and fine music; or, better far, those with two or three friends only, and Miss Cushman's magnificent readings of Mrs. Browning—of all these pleasant hours, whoso has been admitted to share them, is sure to retain a lively recollection. Among all the circles into which the chances of a wandering life may throw us, few, I think, are nearly so charming as that of the great American artists in Rome. Yet they are none of them so thoroughly expatriated from America and rooted in Italy, or so engrossed by their pursuit of art, as to be indifferent to the great struggles of their country. It would be impossible to respect them equally could it be so. Last summer, Miss Cushman (who has long retired from the stage) returned for three months to America, and learning there the need of vast sums for the relief of the sufferers by the war, resumed her profession, realised some fifteen

thousand dollars, and offered them as her subscription to the national cause. The "dolce far niente", which is supposed to affect all sojourners under southern skies, does not seem to have gained much upon this lady!

Mrs. Beecher Stowe was, a few years ago, one of the "People to be met in Italy." The published photographs of her are simply abominable, and the accounts of her given by many who have casually met her, seem to me little more just. She struck me as a woman who had been completely stared out of countenance. The quiet Puritan New Englander, to whom Fame was presented in a more tangible and visible shape than probably to any woman since the world began, was doubtless very little prepared by nature for playing the part of princess in that famous triumphal progress through England and Scotland after the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It would have taken different blood, or at the least different breeding, to meet quite unconcernedly in royal style the gaze of all those crowds. Accordingly, Mrs. Stowe, as I have said, seems to have been looked at, till she could no longer venture to open her eyelids quite com-

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