

## CURRENT TOPICS IN EUROPE.

The Italians have often been called superstitious; and the number of reputed holy places which the traveler finds in the city of Rome rather tends to prove this assertion. Yet now and then we see an incident which leads us to ask if it is not true that Americans do not err in the opposite direction. As is well known, that strange medley of cowboys and Indians, known as Buffalo Bill's "Wild West" show has, during the winter, been exhibiting the fantastic side of Rocky Mountain life to the inhabitants of Southern Italy. In the gay city of Naples the "Wild West" has been a great attraction; and the Indians themselves, it is said, felt an unusual interest in the picturesque and gay-colored costume of the half-Moorish inhabitants of Naples. Now as the spring is approaching, it is proposed to exhibit the "Wild West" for a few weeks in the city of Rome. In connection with this idea Mr. Cody, better known as "Buffalo Bill," has made application for the privilege of exhibiting in the ruins of the Coliseum. To this proposal the Italian Government object. It is not that the exhibition would in any way damage the hoary old ruin that stands as a silent reminder of the grandeur, the wealth, and the cruelty of ancient Imperial Rome. It is not that the war dance of North American savages, or the rude yells of the cowboys, would be any harsher than the plaudits of the Roman multitude, when the blood of such gladiators as Spartacus, dampened the Coliseum's arena in days of old. It is not that the scene is too tame when the "Wild West" show represents an overland stage attacked by Indians. There are other considerations that have, doubtless, prompted the Italians to decline Mr. Cody's application. It was this same Coliseum's arena that was dampened by the blood of Christian martyrs. These same old walls resounded with the shouts of the frenzied pagan multitude when thousands of Christian men, women and children were torn in pieces by famished Numidian lions. Here it was that "Mystery, Babylon, the mother of harlots," was drunk with the blood of the Saints, till at length the Apostolic Church vanished from the earth, and another church—a hideous hybrid of heathenism and superstition—had risen in its stead. Yes, it is well that the hoary old ruin should remain in solitude, not desecrated by the frivolities of the "Wild West" show. Better far that sentinels should guard this old ruin—the gravestone, as it were, of early Christianity.

By the way, isn't it strange that British and Americans are the most addicted of all people to the vice of relic-stealing? French, Germans and Italians have generally a passion for scribbling their names on every old monument they come to, but they seldom carry anything away as a relic. On the other hand, the sentinels of Italy have to keep a sharp eye on Anglo-Saxon tourists. Only the other day an Ameri-

can lady (?) was invited by the American consul at Naples to view some recent excavations at Pompeii, and while there was caught in the act of taking and secreting a little bronze cupid that had just been excavated. Scarcely two months ago an Englishman at Verona was viewing what was said to be the tomb of Shakespeare's Juliet. It so happened that this English traveler was the only person except the guide, so after viewing the grotto and its contents for some time, he offered the guide a ten franc (\$2) bill from which to take his fee. The guide was thus compelled to go away to get change and while he was away this vandal drew out a little hammer, and quickly broke off a fragment of rock weighing nearly three kilograms (6 pounds). Luckily the custodian was a little too sharp and compelled the return of the coveted spoil. Numbers of Anglo-Saxon travelers carry little hammers with them, for obvious reasons.

The late convention of railroad magnates in Rome, to arrange the rates of travel during the coming season, has revealed the fact that more than four million dollars were paid to Italian railways for round trip tickets, and more than one hundred thousand tourists visited Rome during 1889.

During last week Antonio Salviati died at Venice. Though educated for an advocate, Salviati will be best remembered as the promoter of Venetian art, especially the manufacture of Venetian glass. Venice, as every schoolboy will remember, has long been noted for her manufactures in glass, but it was not till about 1453, when the Turks captured Constantinople, that Venice profiting by the Greek refugees arose to eminence as the fabricator of ornamental glass.

An ancient times Byzantium, afterwards called Constantinople, exported vast quantities of enamels, mock pearls and glass gems to Egypt, Abyssinia and Persia; but it was not till after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks that Venetian glass-workers were able to produce in perfection the vases, ewers, chandeliers, lusters, goblets, flower-stands, tables and even bedsteads of fantastic forms and varied hues which take especial rank as "Venetian glass," specimens of which may be seen at the Salviati emporium in St. James Street, London. In the sixteenth century the various glass works of Venice were gradually all removed to or collected on the island of Murano, and about this time was invented that beautiful filigree work, a device by which the white or transparent glass was covered with a network of glass of divers colors. This invention brought both fame and envy to Venice. To encourage her inventors the Venetian government caused a book to be made, with leaves of real gold, in which the names of all master workers were inscribed and are still carefully preserved, provided always that they were ever true to their country and never carried the art to other lands. In 1573 King

Henry III. of France visited Venice and granted French titles of nobility to the leading artists in glass. The French minister, Colbert, induced some Venetian glass workers to leave their country and go to France. They were granted patents of nobility and only received as apprentices the sons of noble families. In French history the title of *Gentilhomme Verrier* (gentleman glass-blower) is as respectable as that of Count. The great poet Moliere, the Lord Byron of France, belonged to this class of nobility. Those who have stood in Venice, on the Place St. Marc and looked down the long perspective towards the sevenfold gates and glowing domes of the cathedral, the mosaics glittering in the sunshine, with glorious prismatic hues, will ever forget that scene. Under Austrian rule Venetian art dwindled. It was to restore it to its former excellence that Salviati lived and toiled.

Prince Bismarck's resignation as Minister of Commerce, and its possible consequences, are still the almost exclusive theme of discussion in Berlin and indeed in many parts of the continent. To suppose that Prince Bismarck's retirement from the Ministry of Commerce involves no modification of policy is a mistake; for the contrary is the case. The semi-official papers are unquestionably correct in stating that there is entire harmony between the Emperor and the Chancellor in reference to the latter's resignation. The Chancellor has only chosen the most favorable moment for resigning. The fact is public opinion has undergone a great change in Germany during the last few years, and the Emperor, in his journeyings through the Empire, must have seen that many of the leading minds of Germany were in opposition to Prince Bismarck's commercial policy. It was noticed a few months ago that the Emperor's speeches had changed in tone. The downright rebuff that Prince Bismarck's policy received from the Reichstag on the anti-socialist bill has no doubt had its influence. The Prince manifests his displeasure by resigning the lesser office while he still retains the portfolio of Minister of State.

No doubt the German Reichstag in its rejection of the anti-socialist bill has shown a wise consideration for the principles of constitutional liberty, and a remarkable courage and freedom from prejudice in vindicating those principles. The circumstances were not favorable to this denuement. The Reichstag has registered its verdict. Meanwhile each member must have felt that he was taking his fate in his own hands. On the eve of a general election it has been called upon to decide a question supported by Prince Bismarck and endorsed by the chief men of the nation. It was impossible, however, not to recognize that the bill aimed a serious blow at the liberty of the subject, and would place in the hands of Prince Bismarck and his successors an immense persecuting power. The Reichstag saw this, and to its honor,