

OF COUNTRIES AND CITIES

DCCCXXXVIII.

Our Lord God deals with countries and cities, as I do with an old hedge-stick, when it displeases me; I pluck it up and burn it, and stick another in its stead.

DCCCXXXIX.

Tacitus describes German very well. He highly extols the Germans, by reason of their adherence to promises, especially in the state of matrimony, in which particular they excelled all other nations. In former times it stood well with Germany but now the people are fallen from virtue, and become rude, proud, and insolent.

DCCCXL.

The best days were before the deluge, when the people lived long, were moderate in eating and drinking, beheld God's creature with diligence, celestial and terrestrial, without wasting, warring, or debate; then a fresh, cool spring of water was more sweet, acceptable, and better relished, than costly wines.

DCCCXLI.

Germany is like a brave and gallant horse, highly fed, but without a good rider; as the horse runs here and there, astray, unless he have a rider to rule him, so Germany is also a powerful, rich, and brave country, but needs a good head and governor.

DCCCXLII.

This constant change in the fashion of dress will produce also an alteration of government and manners; we attend too much to these things. Emperor Charles frequently says: the Germans learn of the Spaniards to steal, and the Spaniards learn of the Germans to swill.

DCCCXLIII.

Venice is the richest of cities. She has two kingdoms, Cyprus and Candia. Candia once was full of robbers, for six hundred ruined merchants had fled thither. As the island is very hilly, they were not able, by force, to get rid of these robbers, so the Venetians made proclamation that they would receive all the robbers again to favour, upon condition that each should bring to them the head of a fellow robber. By which means, one wretch being snapped by another, the island was cleared of these vipers. It was a good and wise council. Venice respects neither decency nor honour; she seeks only her own profit, is always neutral, hanging the cloak according to the wind. Now they hold with the Turk, ere long they will be for the emperor; what party has victory, has them.

DCCCXLIV.

Bembo, an exceeding learned man, who had thoroughly investigated Rome, said: Rome is a filthy, stinking puddle, full of the wickedest wretches in the world; and he wrote thus: "*Vivere qui sancte vultus, discedite Roma, Omnia hic ecce licent, non licet esse probum.*"

DCCCXLV.

In the time of Leo X., there were in an Augustine convent at Rome, two monks, who revolted at the horrible wickedness of the papists, and, in their sermons, found fault with the pope. In the night, two assassins were introduced into their cells, and next morning they were found dead, their tongues cut out, and stuck on their backs. Whoso in Rome is heard to speak against the pope, either gets a sound strappado or has his throat cut; for the pope's name is *Noti me tangere*.

DCCCXLVI.

When I was at Rome, they showed me, for a precious holy relic, the halter wherewith Judas hanged himself. Let us bear this in mind, and consider in what ignorance our forefathers were.

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