

Gleanings

in Rome.

BY

W. LIONEL MAN.

With Illustrations by

GEORGE BAKER.

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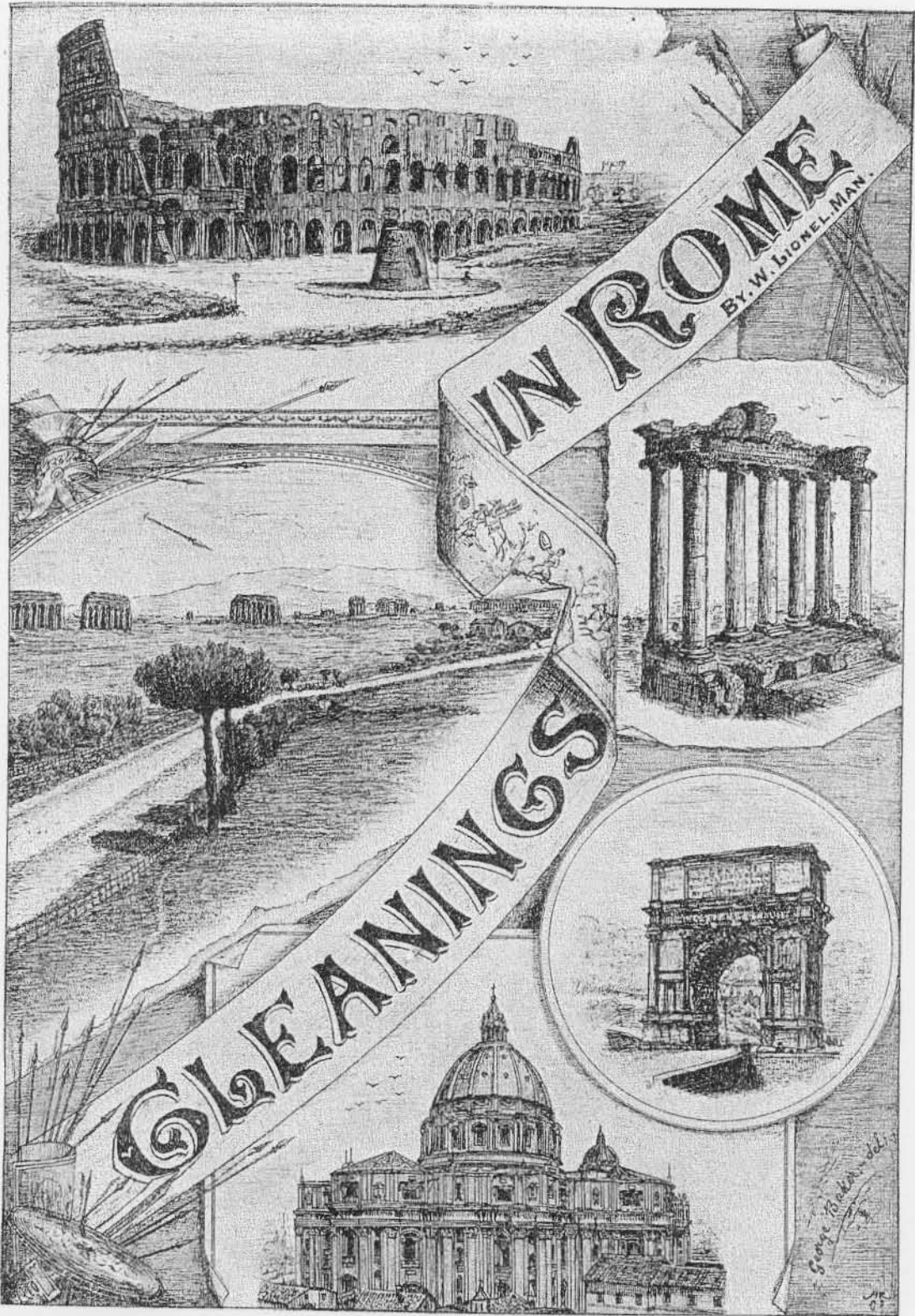
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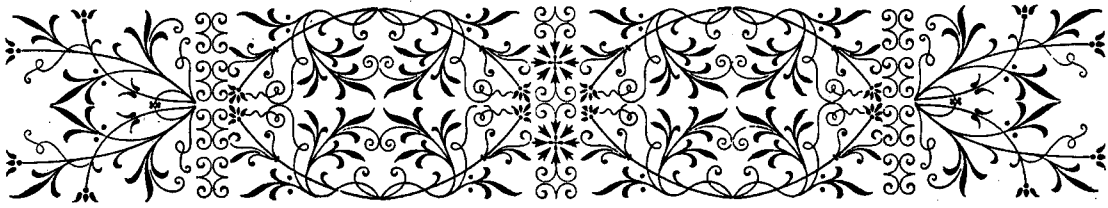
GLEANINGS

George P. ... del.



In Remembrance
OF
OUR TRIP THROUGH ITALY
I DEDICATE
THESE
GLEANINGS IN ROME
WITH FOND AFFECTION
TO
MY WIFE.





GLEANINGS IN ROME.

CHAPTER I.

ROME.

"I AM in Rome! Oft as the morning ray
Visits these eyes, waking at once I cry,
Whence this excess of joy? What has befallen me?
And from within a thrilling voice replies,
Thou art in Rome! A thousand busy thoughts
Rush on my mind, a thousand images;
And I spring up as girt to run a race!
I am in Rome! the City that so long
Reigned absolute, the mistress of the world."—ROGERS.



SHALL never forget the feeling—half surprise, half rapture—which came over me, when, on one glorious Sunday morning towards the latter end of the month of April, I awoke from a radiant sleep, and jumping out of bed, threw open the windows and gazed out with a sort of awe—hard to explain and more difficult to describe—upon the streets of Rome, lying far down beneath me, bathed in the glittering brightness of the fair Italian sunshine.

We had taken up our abode in the grand Hotel Continental, in close proximity to the famous Baths of Diocletian, and as I turned my head to the left I could scan the enormous ruins of this once celebrated meeting place of the fashionable ladies and gentlemen of Rome in ages far anterior to the birth of Christ. We had arrived late the previous evening from Genoa, after a tedious and uncomfortable journey of over twelve hours' duration. We were crowded up with excursionists of all sorts and descriptions, rushing to the Eternal City for the Easter Church festivities; which are now, by the way, much curtailed of their former magnificence, and scarcely worth the trouble of witnessing.

We had fortunately engaged our rooms, and at midnight found ourselves in very comfortable and charming quarters. There was a wonderful feeling came over me as I threw open the windows and looked out upon the scene. It had been the dream and ambition of my life to visit Rome. I had pondered over it many a time in the old days, when sitting round the camp fire in the solitude of the great Australian Bush. I had thought of it as I forded the rushing rivers of New Zealand—to wit the big Waimakariri, the Matura, Waitaki, the Teramakau, and the big and little Tipoe, which in native language means the large and small Devil—on my

gold prospecting expedition from Christchurch to Hokitika on the south coast of the great middle island. I say, I thought unceasingly of a pilgrimage to Rome, and now the hopes and longings of my life are fulfilled, I am indeed in the sacred land of Romulus and Remus.

Looking back to times long past and gone, I call to mind a graceful clump of lofty trees called Knockholt Beeches, beneath whose friendly shade I have often greedily devoured a small school History of Rome and have shed real tears at the pitiful stories of fair Lucretia, and Virginia, and all the heroes and heroines of Roman story. And the scenery that surrounded me in my then youthful studies was of a nature to foster the highest of literary aspirations. On one side, on a fair summer's day I could catch a glimpse of the far distant dome of Saint Paul's Cathedral; and on the other, down in the valley, was Lord Stanhope's park, one of the prettiest of all the parks in the fair and beautiful county of Kent. The trees forming the glades and glens were planted exactly in the same position as Nelson placed his ships at the great battle of Trafalgar. There was a summer-house in this same Chevening Park, where I hid away a small portable library, containing such works as "Robin Hood," "Wat Tyler," "Thaddeus of Warsaw," "William Tell," and an abridgement of "The History of Rome." It was my delight, in company with the Rector's son, now long since gone over to the great majority, to study this Roman history under the beech trees of Knockholt, and devour our lighter literature in the aforesaid summer-house belonging to my Lord of Stanhope.

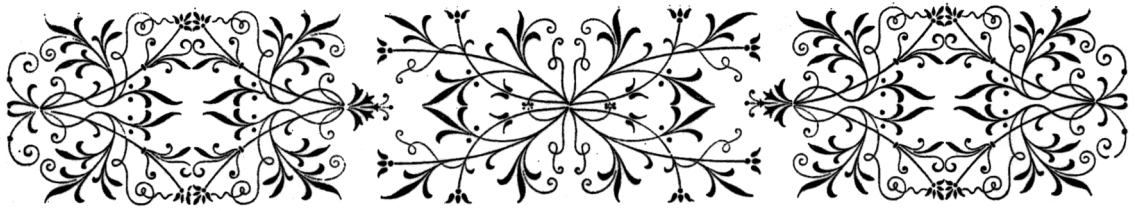
Here it was that my friend and I, following the line of the Alban Kings (whose historical existence, however, is more than doubtful), came to read about the usurper called Amulius, who forcibly excluded his elder brother Numitor from the throne, and devoted the only daughter of that prince to perpetual virginity as a Vestal. But by the God Mars she became mother of the twins Romulus and Remus, and, in accordance with the law which ordained a terrible punishment for all who thus broke their vows, was condemned by Amulius to be buried alive. He likewise ordered—cruel wretch that he was—that the twins should be thrown into the Tiber, which had at that time overflowed its bounds; but the shallow pool into which they happened to fall shrank back, and left them safe and comfortable under a wild fig-tree, where they were first suckled by a lady wolf, and afterwards fed by a woodpecker. When grown to boyhood, they were found by one of the herdsmen of Amulius, who brought them up with his own children in a humble sort of cottage, on Mount Palatine. On the slopes of that hill they watched the flocks committed to their care; but the herdsmen of Amulius were at issue with those of Numitor, and the latter, seizing one day on Remus, carried him before their master. Shortly afterwards Romulus arrived to ransom his brother, and from inquiries set on foot by Numitor, whose suspicions had been aroused by the appearance of the youths, it came out that they were the sons of his daughter, the offending Vestal. Bent on revenging their wrongs, the royal twins attacked Amulius at Alba, killed him, and restored their grandfather to the throne. They did not care, however, to remain in the city of their ancestors, but resolved to build another near the spot where they had been saved from death. Whether this city was to be founded on Mount Palatine, as Romulus wished, or on Mount Aventine, as Remus desired, was a question which divided the brothers, and they prayed the gods for a sign. They were to watch for a whole day on their respective hills, and he who saw a flight of birds at sunrise of the second day should be the founder of the city. Remus was the first to be thus favoured; he saw six vultures on his left. Soon afterwards Romulus beheld twelve vultures hovering over Mount Palatine, and conceived that this was a more significant omen.

The other claimed priority, and a quarrel ensued, which ended in Romulus killing Remus, either by a chance blow, or out of revenge for Remus having contemptuously leapt over the slender furrow which Romulus had marked out for his walls. At any rate, the result of the contention was that Romulus built his city on the Palatine hill, which thus became the nucleus of Rome.

“Here in the Eternal City,” says the author of “Modern Roman Mosaics,” “things have a character of their own. People live and move on a mere crust of nineteenth century, but immediately beneath it lies the solid foundation of some two thousand and odd years ago. And one has but to scratch the soil a very little, to scrape away every vestige of “To-day,” and come to the abiding traces of the ancient Latins. Nay, in many places their works still tower by the head and shoulders above the soil ; although Time toils ceaselessly to heap the earth over them and bury them where they stand.”

I must confess that in these my riper years I put but a small modicum of faith in the existence of Romulus and Remus. I would much rather subscribe to the doctrine of the geese saving the Capitol by their cackling ; it is better much to believe a little, than not to believe at all. For myself, I feel so fresh this glorious morning, so full of life and buoyancy, that I am willing to pin my faith to anything and anybody. In the excess of my feelings I take out my purse and bestow a small silver coin upon a wretched-looking beggar who importunes me eagerly. I very soon have cause to regret my generosity, for I am instantly surrounded by a mob of howling, clamouring mendicants of every degree of loathsome horrors and abominations. Where could they all come from ? They seemed to spring from the ground. I marched on in speechless agony at their greed until I came in sight of my hotel. All at once a happy thought struck me. I had heard of the dread existing among the lower order of Italians of the “evil eye.” I put my tall hat at the back of my head, and squinted a demoniacal squint, at the same time turning round with a deep groan and charging into their midst. It was quite sufficient, the terrible squint and drawn-down mouth acted like magic, they decamped in all directions. From that time whenever I was molested by beggars I squinted at them, and after a little they troubled me no more during my stay in Rome.





CHAPTER II.

THE ROMAN GARDENS.

“The birds in these gardens make sweet music.”—KNOWLES.



We are bound this morning for the ever famous Villa Borghese, so I take my friend the house porter into strict confidence as to the situation, terms of carriage hire for the afternoon, &c., giving him full power to arrange for me all preliminaries. And a splendid fellow is this same porter, monarchical in his appearance, grand and blooming in his well-fitting uniform. His English is faultless, and he can converse with you fluently either in French, Swiss, or German, whichever you may please to call your own. I don't believe there ever was a better looking or a more obliging porter born into this sublunary sphere. He arranges everything for me, and everything he does is done with a smiling readiness which is quite refreshing. Now, he sounds a whistle, and up comes at full gallop a neat little victoria drawn by an ancient shadow of a horse, and driven by a boy who might be between seventeen and twenty years of age. He is explicitly instructed to drive us into the Piazza del Popolo, round the Borghese Park, by the Pincian Hill, and then into the gardens. He grins an asinine grin, the porter touches his hat, and away we go.

Now, it was arranged we should pay the driver by the hour, and noticing the lively way in which he dashed up to the hotel door, I imagined we should at the very least travel four miles an hour. We started beautifully, and for the first five minutes the speed was grand, but no sooner had we got out of sight of the porter than our horse seemed suddenly to lose all power of locomotion. First, we fell into a dreamy amble, and at last subsided into a lazy walk, which continued all the afternoon.

I saw nothing very striking in the park; it was very large, very dusty, and the grass was very brown, and after having made the circuit twice we felt we had had quite enough of it. I asked my wife to tell him to drive into the gardens.

“Nous irons aux jardins,” said she.

But he shook his head sadly and looked as one demented. I gave him a thrust in the back with my walking-stick. He turned round, smiled upon me, and still continued to drive. It is very monotonous work at any time to do nothing but drive round and round a good half-mile span in an uninteresting park, but doubly so when you hear the strains of martial music, and see bright dresses and a merry crowd seated at a comparatively short distance from you. I verily believe that thick-headed foreigner (I beg his pardon, he was evidently a native) would have driven us round and round that horrible circle all the afternoon and far into the night, had I

not suddenly brought him to a standstill by shouting at the very top of my voice a bit of good old Northern Welsh. He had been poked in the ribs by my stick, and my wife's sunshade, without the slightest effect, but no sooner did he hear the mellifluous sounds of the language of the northern inhabitants of "gallant little Wales" than he stopped immediately.

It is by a series of terraced walks adorned with marble statues, and two large columns with prows of ships taken from the ancient temple of Venus and Roma, that we enter the famous Hyde Park of Rome. In the early days it was the site of the famous villa of Lucullus, who squandered his enormous fortune by keeping open house to all his friends and relations. He was celebrated for his big supper parties; Cicero and Pompey used often to take lunch with him, and it is said that a quiet breakfast would often cost him as much as a thousand pounds. I think he died at a comparatively early age of delirium, which, considering his mode of life, is scarcely to be wondered at. To his credit, it is stated, that in his latter days he dedicated his time to studious pursuits and to literary conversation. His house was enriched with a valuable library, which was opened to the service of the curious and the learned.

The walks are beautiful. Fountains of most marvellous construction, throwing up jets of water which dance and sparkle in the sun like silver. There are hundreds of well-kept flower beds, with tropical plants of every description. Look round in whatever direction you will, you glance upon a most enchanting view. I noticed some very fine carriages and horses in the Ring, which at the time we were there—four o'clock—was crowded with the *élite* of Rome. The band was evidently the great attraction, and it discoursed most eloquent music. I was much struck by the great number of pale-faced, pretty little English children playing round the band-stand, while their nurses flirted desperately with any soldier who would give them the opportunity, much after the same fashion as their sisters in our Royal parks of Hyde, Regent's, or St. James'.

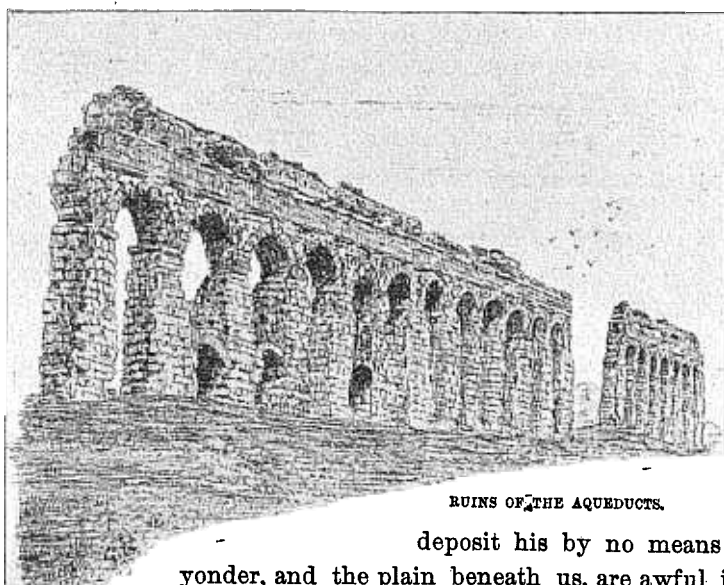
It was hereabouts in a charming marble villa lived that infamous but most lovely woman Messalina, wife of the Emperor Claudius, who disgraced herself by her cruelties and incontinence. Her husband's palace was not the only seat of her lasciviousness. Her lewdness and debaucheries at last coming to the ears of her husband, he commanded her to appear before him to answer the horrible accusations which were brought against her, upon which she attempted to destroy herself, and when her courage failed, one of the tribunes who had been sent to her villa despatched her with his sword, and serve her right.

In another villa not very far away dwelt Statilia: she was descended from a consular family, and married Atticus, whom Nero murdered. She received with great marks of tenderness her husband's murderer, and married him. She had married four husbands before she came to the imperial throne, and after the death of Nero she returned to literary pursuits, and let us hope to peaceful occupations.

As I walk round the grounds of this old villa a subtle odour of violets is in the air. Birds chirp and flutter with a soft whirr of little wings. Above is the bright May sunshine, and an unfathomable depth of stainless blue. Out of the fretted lights and shadows beneath the gnarled old trees, my wife and I step on to an open terrace, and look down on Rome and the Campagna. Oh! the beauty, and the wonder, and the sadness—the ineffable sadness—of all the vanished centuries which seem to linger above the scene, like disembodied spirits which have done with mortal life, and yet hover, earth-bound, round their ancient dwelling-place. And the beauty! Yes, for the varied hills before us are steeped in depths of colour, are rich

with an infinite play of light and shade, are crowned by wreaths of fleecy snow, melting into wreaths of fleecy clouds above them. Southward, the great mountain range sinks softly down and melts into the vast expanse of the Campagna, purple on the distant horizon, and nearer at hand lovely with numberless tints of green, from dark olive to the tender hue of springing wheat, through which old Tiber winds his silent way.*

And for the wonder of the scene, there is Rome at our feet. Rome, with her crumbling grandeurs, among which we know the petulant new life that fills her streets is now coursing



RUINS OF THE AQUEDUCTS.

heedlessly. Past the Forum and the Colosseum, as, under the shadow of St. Peter's dome, carriages flash by with shining panels and a glittering of silver, and a vision of head-gear, and fair foreign faces. The carpenter and the marble-cutter are at work with saw and chisel; and the bricklayer—carrying just such small cubes of baked clay as his remote forefathers built with—mounts his ladder leisurely, and pauses, with Southern nonchalance, where he shall deposit his by no means heavy load. The mountains out yonder, and the plain beneath us, are awful in their enduring beauty, whilst palace, and temple, and Forum crumble slowly into dust. Cæsar, Cassius, and Brutus; soldier and slave; poet, orator, pontiff, and artisan; hordes of human creatures from North, South, East, and West, bringing tribute or terror; victors or vanquished have passed in strange procession within view of yonder blue peak, and marched from eternity to eternity across the purple plain of the Campagna.

* * * * *

I have said that my hotel was a very comfortable one. From the railway station you could get to it in less than five minutes, and that's a great consideration after a long journey. I will state here, that I was never more comfortable in any hotel than I was during my stay at the "Continental." I know well that I am constitutionally fussy, and fusible, but once introduce me to a comfortable bed and sitting-room, let me wash my hands in nice warm water, and put my slippers on, and then find a good *menu* at the *table d'hôte*, and I melt into amiability at a moment's notice.

After dinner on Sunday I walked into the grand reception or withdrawing room, just to have a look at my fellow-travellers. It was an interesting sight, and I only wish my friend George Baker had been with me, to take some sketches for me. I fancy at the very least there must have been some two hundred and fifty people staying in the hotel, and the reception room was crowded. One very aristocratic old lady, of astonishing proportions, very finely

* Roman Mosaics,

developed as regards figure, and tastefully costumed, created a profound sensation as she entered the room. She took her seat at the best table, and monopolised the chair of state. It was a pretty sight to see her throw her richly embroidered Indian shawl over her ample shoulders, and to watch her adjusting her voluminous skirts before she could get into a final and comfortable position. She had a black bag with her richly trimmed with bugles, from which she drew a couple of packs of cards, with which she at once commenced to play that old fashioned and somniferous game called "Patience." I watched this superannuated female patriarch playing this sepulchral game for over two hours. One by one, the guests departed to their rooms. The clock struck two when I turned to follow their example. I went up to her—approaching gently, and said "Good-night." "I only want the deuce of hearts," said she, "and then I'm coming."

I made no reply, but went upstairs to my quiet domicile.





CHAPTER III.

THE COLOSSEUM.

I HAIL thy desolation, blood-stained pile!
'Tis as it should be! 'Mid the prostrate halls
Of Justice and of Piety,—where senators
Gave peace to nations, or the white-robed choirs
Chanted hosannas to the King of kings,—
There let the stranger ruminatè;—there weep
For Time's insatiate ravages. But here
Where earth is rank with carnage,—blood of man
Wasted in hideous revelry by man;
While coward Wealth and bloated Power looked on,
And congregated myriads yelled applause
In frantic exultation; even the maid,
With lip departed and suspended breath,
Gasping in curious earnestness, surveyed
The writhe of mortal agony;—shall we weep?
Weep—that the tide of Time hath swept them hence,
And left their mansions desolate,—their halls
Of murderous triumph silent, echoless
As their own graves?—that Rapine's felon hand
Hath rent thy ponderous architrave; and dislodged
Thy deep embedded cornice, and unlocked
Thine adamantine vault's gigantic mass?
—Yet thou art beauteous! From thine every part
A thousand dreams of ages passed away
Crowd on the eye of fancy,—from the arch
Tier above tier in long succession piled,
Through which the azure canopy of heaven
Beams in unclouded brilliance, to the vault
Black in its dense profundity of shade:
Whilst o'er thy mould'ring galleries, straggling wild
The tangled foliage, Nature's mantle, veils,
In graceful negligence, the guilty scene.
Be ever thus, proud fabric! With that brow
Of shattered grandeur still to after ages
(More eloquent than all the lore of school's)
Whisper of man's mortality. And thou,
Stranger! if well attuned thy thoughts, receive
The solemn lesson! turn thee from the scene
Of Pagan godliness to Man redeemed—
To Man o'er Death victorious, led from earth
By perfect holiness and Christian love,



WHEN I went down into the breakfast-room the following morning, I found my friend, the venerable female patriarch, busily engaged at a side table all alone in her glory, playing Patience. She gracefully handed me the *Roman Times*, and with her well-shaped finger pointed out to me the following advertisement:—

GRAND ILLUMINATION
OF THE
COLOSSEUM
AND NEIGHBOURING MONUMENTS

Monday, April 18th,
AT 9.15 P.M.

On which occasion there will also be a wonderful display of fireworks representing an ERUPTION OF VESUVIUS, according to the vivid description of such an event, contained in Lord Lytton Bulwer's LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

The programme also comprises many other interesting and remarkable features, and the illumination will be held on a scale of unequalled magnificence.

The proceeds will be devoted to the

HOME FOR ABANDONED CHILDREN
(Circolo della Sacra Famiglia).
Entrance Tickets: 2 Francs each.

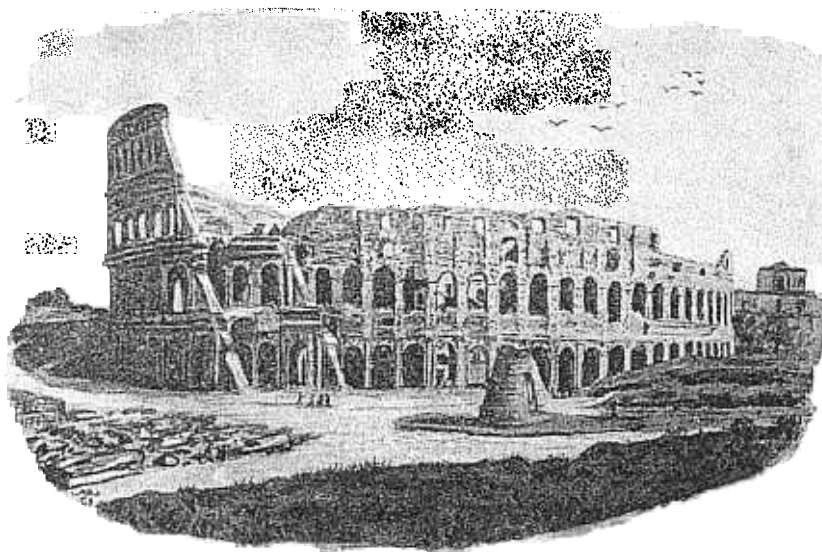
Admission tickets can be obtained at Piale's English and American Library, 1 and 2, Piazza di Spagna, corner of Via Babuino, and from the Portiers of all the Hotels of Rome.

I was afraid to take tickets, for my friend Dr. Hackney, my medical adviser, had charged me on no account to expose myself to the murderous night airs of Rome. So we determined to go and explore this celebrated wonder of the world by daylight, so we at once ordered a carriage and started. No words or form of written language can describe my feelings when I came suddenly upon this stupendous monument of the dim past. I could scarcely believe it possible that such a wondrous building could have been piled together by human hands. But there it was, a living witness of an age when the imperial power was firmly established at Rome, and the sports of the amphitheatre were conducted upon a scale to which the Consuls of the republic had scarcely dared to aspire. Caligula, on his birthday, gave four hundred bears, and as many other wild beasts to be slain; and on the birthday of Drusilla, he exhibited these brutal spectacles, continued to the succeeding day, on a similar scale. Claudius instituted combats between Thessalian horsemen and wild bulls; and he also caused camels to fight for the first time with horses. Invention was racked to devise new combinations of cruelty. Many of the Emperors abandoned themselves to these sports with as passionate an ardour as the uncultivated multitude. Sensuality debases as much as ignorance, under another name. Claudius—the blood-thirsty beast of history—rose at daylight to repair to the circus, and frequently remained, that he might not lose a single pang of the victims, while the people went to their afternoon meal.

“Now good digestion wait on appetite
And health on both.”—*Macbeth*.

Sometimes, during the reigns of Claudius, and that other atrocity of blood and demoniacal cruelty, Nero, an elephant was opposed to a single fencer; and the spectators were delighted by a display of individual skill. Sometimes hundreds, and even thousands, of the more ferocious beasts were slaughtered by guards on horseback; and the pleasure of the multitude was in proportion to the lavishness with which the blood of man and beast was made to flow.

It seems strange to me—and I dare say it does to you—how at any age or time, however far back, women could have been found to take delight in such barbarous amusements, but the fact stands that the fairest of the fair of Roman matrons and maidens, and even those young ladies the sacred Vestal Virgins, clapped their hands, stamped with their sandalled feet, and shouted until the welkin rang again with their wild joy at the piercing, agonising shrieks and screams, as the human victims, male and female, were torn and mangled by the teeth and claws of savage beasts almost as brutal as themselves. The passion for these sports required a more convenient theatre for its gratification than the old circus. Accordingly, in consequence of continued approval and tumultuous applause so liberally shown by the blood-thirsty audience to the demon butcher managers, the Colosseum was commenced by that other imperial butcher Vespasian, and completed by the bloodhound Titus as near as possible in the year of our Lord 79. Now this enormous building occupied only three years in its erection. A gentle-



THE COLOSSEUM.

man named Cassiodorus affirms that this magnificent monument of cruelty and folly cost as much as would have been required for the building of a capital city. We have the means of distinctly ascertaining its dimensions and its accommodations from the great mass of wall that still remains entire; and although the very clamps of iron

and brass that held together the ponderous stones of this wonderful edifice have been removed by various Popes and Gothic plunderers, and succeeding generations have resorted to it as a quarry for their temples and their palaces, yet the "enormous skeleton" still stands to show what prodigious works have been raised by the skill and indomitable perseverance of the old Roman architects.

The Colosseum occupies the space of nearly six acres. It may justly be said to have been the most imposing building, from its apparent magnitude, in the world. The pyramids of Egypt can only be compared with it in the extent of their plan, as they cover nearly the same surface. The outer wall is one hundred and fifty-seven feet high in its whole extent. The exterior wall is divided into four stories, each ornamented with one of the orders of architecture. The cornice of the upper story was perforated for the purpose of inserting wooden masts, which passed also through the architrave and frieze, and descended to a row of corbels immediately above the upper range of windows, on which you can see the holes to receive the masts. These masts were for the purpose of attaching cords to, for sustaining the awning which

defended the spectator from the sun or rain. Two corridors ran all round the building, leading to staircases which ascended to the several stories ; and the seats which descended towards the arena, supported throughout upon eighty arches, occupied so much of the space that the clear opening of the present inner wall next the arena is only two hundred and eighty-seven by one hundred and eighty feet.

Immediately above and around the arena was the podium, elevated about twelve or fifteen feet, on which was seated the Emperor, senators, ambassadors of foreign nations, and other distinguished personages in the city of distinctions. From the podium to the top of the second story were seats of marble for the equestrian order ; above the second story the seats appear to have been constructed of wood. In these various seats eighty thousand spectators might be arranged according to their respective ranks ; and indeed it appears from inscriptions, as well as from expressions of Roman writers, that many of the places in this immense theatre were assigned to particular individuals, so that each might find his seat without confusion. When we consider that Drury Lane Theatre can only seat at the very utmost four thousand spectators, we may imagine the vast dimensions of this same famous amphitheatre, and the sight it must have presented on the occasion of a crowded house. The ground was excavated over the surface of the arena about the year 1813 ; a great number of substructures were then discovered, which by some antiquaries are considered to have formed dens for the various beasts that were exhibited. The descriptions which have been left by historians and other writers of the variety and extent of the shows, would indicate that a vast space and ample conveniences were required beneath the stage, to accomplish the wonders which were doubtless there realised in the presence of assembled Rome.

Gibbon, the famous, but to me most tedious, historian, has given a splendid description in his twelfth book of the exhibitions of the Colosseum ; but he acknowledges his obligations to Montaigne, who, says Gibbon, " gives a very just and lively view of Roman magnificence in these spectacles." It was, without doubt, a fine thing to bring and plant within the theatre a great number of vast trees, with all their branches in their full verdure, representing a great shady forest, disposed in excellent order, and the first day to throw into it a thousand stags, a thousand boars, and a thousand fallow deer, to be killed and disposed of by the people ; the next day to cause a hundred great lions, a hundred leopards, and three hundred bears to be killed in the presence of the Emperor and his blood-thirsty subjects.

It must also have been very fine to see that vast building, all faced with marble without, curiously wrought with figures and statues, and the inside sparkling with rare decorations and barbaric enrichments ; all this vast space filled and environed from the bottom to the top with three or fourscore ranks of seats, all of marble also, where nearly a hundred thousand men, women, and children might sit and witness the blood-curdling performances in the greatest ease and comfort. Fortunately for the real enjoyment of mankind, even under the sway of Roman despots, the novelty and invention had very narrow limits when applied to matters so utterly unworthy and unintellectual as the cruel sports of the amphitheatre. It is a fact that Probus transplanted trees to the arena, so that it had the appearance of a verdant grove ; and cruel Severus introduced four hundred ferocious animals in one ship sailing in the little inland sea formed in the arena. But on ordinary occasions, profusion—tasteless, haughty, and uninventive profusion—the gorgeousness of filthy brute power, the pomp of satiated luxury—these constituted the only claim to the popular admiration. If Titus (the murderer of the Jews)

exhibited five thousand wild beasts at the dedication of the amphitheatre, Trajan bestowed ten thousand on the people on the conclusion of the Dacian war. If the younger Gordian collected together bears, elks, zebras, ostriches, boars, and wild horses, he was an imitator only of the spectacles of Carinus, in which the rarity of the animals was as much considered as their fierceness. While the populace gazed with stupid wonder on the splendid show, the naturalist might indeed observe the figure and properties of so many different species, transported from every part of the ancient world into the great Roman amphitheatre. But this accidental benefit, which science might derive from folly, was surely insufficient to justify such a cruel and wanton abuse of the public riches. This prodigal waste of the public money, however, was not the weightiest evil of the sports of the Colosseum. The public morality was sacrificed upon the same shrine as its wealth.

The wanton destruction of beasts became a fit preparation for the wanton destruction of men. A small number of those unhappy persons who engaged in fight with the wild animals of the arena were trained to these dangerous exercises, as are the matadors of Spain or our English prize fighters of the present day. These men were accustomed to exhaust the courage of the beast by false attacks; to spring on a sudden past him, striking him behind before he could recover his guard; to cast a cloak over his eyes, and then despatch or bind him at this critical moment of his terror; or to throw a cupful of some chemical preparation into his gaping mouth, so as to produce the stupefaction of intense agony. But the greater part of the human beings who were exposed to these combats, perilous even to the most skilful, were disobedient slaves and convicted malefactors of both sexes. The unhappy Christians, during their persecutions, constituted a very large contingent to savage amusements for the people. The Roman power was necessarily intolerant; the assemblies of the new religion became objects of dislike and suspicion; the patience and constancy of the victims increased the fury of their oppressors; and even such a man as the younger Pliny held that their obstinacy alone was deserving of punishment. Thus, then, the imperial edicts against the early Christians furnished more stimulating exhibitions to the popular appetite for blood, than the combat of lion with lion, or gladiator with gladiator! The people were taught to believe that they were assisting at a solemn act of justice; and they came, therefore, to behold the tiger and the leopard tear the quivering limbs of the aged and the young, of the strong and the feeble, without a desire to rescue the helpless or to succour the brave.

Recent excavations have once more laid bare the floor where so many fearful tragedies have been enacted; where the gladiator lay and died ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won; where men and women and even children have faced the onslaught of infuriated wild beasts, and died without a murmur for the sake of Christ, and in the cause of truth. The shrines which once rose in the arena, the cross which stood in its centre, proclaiming that in very truth "the Galilean" had conquered, are now swept away. Gladly as we can spare the former, it would have been better if the latter had been retained; but there is yet the soil on which the martyrs died for their religion; there are yet the noisome dens in which they waited till dragged for a few brief minutes to the glare of day and the sight of pitiless thousands, waited within hearing of the roars of the multitude as each dreadful deed of blood was done, and the screams of the wild beast as it hungered for its prey. No visible symbol, then, is needed for the Colosseum. Its awful desolation itself is a proof that the Cross has triumphed, and that time has brought a bloodless revenge for the death of the noble army of nameless martyrs.

There is not a more gloomy study than the history of the concluding scenes of Roman greatness. Nearly all ages and sexes appeared to contend with each other in the rapidity of their descent down the steep of vice. Under the emperors, tyranny and crime, in all their flagitious and appalling aspects; every suspicion that could embitter existence, and loosen the bonds of society; every hateful sentiment, and every baneful passion, had pervaded the unwieldy empire. The history oppresses our mind like a frightful dream; it is hard not to associate the notion of external gloom with the moral ruin, and clothe the face of nature with the dismal hue, the sullen stillness of a gathering storm; we seem to behold the coming "planetary plague,"

" When Jove
Shall o'er some high-iced city hang his poison
In the sick air."

In the descriptions of their gorgeous splendour, and their baleful revolutions, their joys appear like demoniac wildness; their sobriety, the broodings of conspiracy or fear. To pursue inquiry through such ages would be useless; the manners of a people sinking into ruin from their own corruption, will never be appealed to, either for evidence of what is natural, or authority for what is useful.

* * * * *

The Rev. R. Resker has kindly given me his experiences of the "The Colosseum by Moonlight." He says:—

" There are some events in one's history which stand out sharp and clear in the retrospect, like the snowy peaks of the giants of the Alps as you look back from the train which is bearing you homeward from Switzerland. One of the most vivid of my own personal recollections is that of a visit which I paid to the Colosseum of Rome on the night preceding my return to England. During the month which I had spent in Rome I had several times visited the great building—great even in its ruins, and after it has been the quarry of Rome for centuries, so that only about one-third of what it once was now remains, and had clambered up to its highest tier of seats; but I was anxious to see it by moonlight. It was only on my last night in Rome that the moon was favourable. So, after dinner, having divested myself of my watch and purse, and taking a stout stick, I started on a solitary walk from near the Piazza di Spagna across the city to the Colosseum. It was not by any means an easy task, but a careful study of the map brought me to my destination without any loss of time. It was quite ten o'clock when I passed through the entrance—which I found open—into the arena.

" And now how shall I describe the scene, and the effect which it produced upon me? Some years have passed, but I can recall the scene as vividly as if had been yesterday, however difficult it may be to find words to describe it.

" The moon, not very high in the heavens, was shining brilliantly through the openings in the ruined walls, bathing one side of the edifice in her silver beams, but with dark shadows at intervals; while the other side was in absolute darkness. I advanced into the arena. Clouds began to gather, and presently the wind began to drive these black clouds very rapidly across the face of the moon. Can I ever forget the almost awful impression made upon me as the moonlight fitfully shone through the opening in the ruins, and gave the vast walls around me an exaggerated height? The effect was weird in the extreme, and wrought upon the nervous system most keenly. Its past history crowded into the mind; one could almost fancy one was living in early Christian days.

"I thought I was alone in the building; but presently I heard strange noises, then human voices, and the distant barking of a dog awoke echoes in the building which almost seemed as if the wild beasts were, if not being let loose to 'make a Roman holiday,' at least whetting their teeth in anticipation.

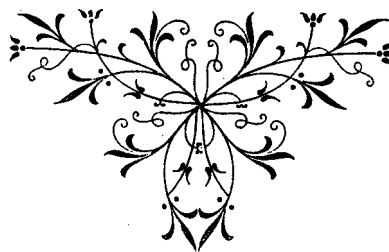
"Never before had I experienced the *genius loci* so intensely. At last the feeling grew so strong, and the awful grandeur of the building so impressive, that I could stand it no longer, and taking to my heels, I did not moderate my pace until I had passed through the portals once more. Certainly I carried away with me a remembrance which will abide with me as long as life shall last.

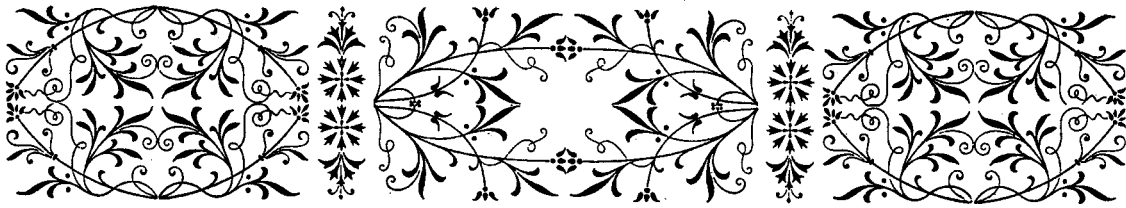
"On my way back I found myself confronting the Fontana di Trevi, into the water of which, in accordance with custom, I threw a five soldi coin, in the hope that I might one day repeat my visit to Rome."

I look upon the Colosseum and Ancient Rome as a long-decaying corpse, but in her death a symbol of the glorious certainty of a future life beyond the grave—

"Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at rest."

How many of those grand emperors, whose names shine so bright and bravely in history, would have gladly given up life and earthly power could they have known that in ages yet near at hand a grander and more lasting empire would spring up, founded upon a rule of love and tenderness—a rule which was to bring all mankind under one great sway of "Peace on earth and good-will to all the world."





CHAPTER IV.

THE CATACOMBS.

“Come with me to the city of the dead.”—CRABBE.



DURING the latter times of the Roman republic, the enlargement of the ancient city, the mistress of the world, led to the formation of quarries in the immediate neighbourhood, from which were obtained the materials necessary for building. These consisted of a volcanic sandy rock, which from its texture was well adapted to the excavation of long galleries. The sand obtained from these subterranean works was much used in making cement, and, the demand for it being large, the whole subsoil on one side of Rome became, in the course of time, perforated by a network of excavations, spreading ultimately to a distance of fifteen miles. But while this was going on, the original quarries, exhausted of their stores, were used as burial places by the lowest orders of the people, who were not able to procure the honours of a funeral pile for burning their dead. There also were thrown the bodies of persons who had perished by their own hands, or by the hands of the executioner.

The persons engaged in procuring sand from these catacombs were of the lowest grade, and, from the nature of their occupation, probably formed a distinct class. There is reason to suppose that Christianity spread very early among them, for in time of persecution the converts employed in the subterranean passages not only took refuge there themselves, but also put the whole Church in possession of these otherwise inaccessible retreats. When the numerous trials are reflected on which awaited the Church, and the combined powers of earth and hell which menaced its earliest years, it is impossible not to recognise the fostering care of a “mighty power,” in thus providing a cradle for the infant community. Perhaps to the protection afforded by the catacombs, as an impregnable fortress from which persecution always failed to dislodge it, the Church of Rome owed much of the rapidity of its triumph; and to the preservation of its earliest sanctuaries, and its ancient superiority in discipline and manners.

It appears from various testimonies that these sand pits or catacombs were places of punishment, as well as of refuge, to the early Christians. We are told that the Emperor Maximian “condemned all the Roman soldiers who were Christians to hard labour; and in various places, set them to work, some to dig for stones, others for sand.” There is also a tradition in Rome that the Baths of Diocletian were built from the materials procured by the Christians. That the catacombs were throughout at that time well known to them is evident, for every part was completely taken possession of by them, and furnished with tombs or chapels. Paintings and inscriptions are to be seen everywhere; and, for close upon three hundred years, the Christian population of Rome found sepulture in these recesses.

The security of the catacombs as an asylum was due to their great extent and intricate windings. The entrances to them were also numerous, and scattered over the Campagna for miles, and the labyrinth below was so occupied by the Christians, and so blocked up in various places by them, that pursuit must have been almost useless. The Acts of the Martyrs relate some attempts made to overwhelm the galleries with mounds of earth, in order to destroy those who were concealed within; but, setting aside all legends, it is certain that not only did the Christians take refuge there, but that they were also occasionally overtaken by their pursuers. The catacombs have become illustrious of hundreds of noble witnesses to the "Grand Truth." Xystus, Bishop of Rome, together with Quartus, one of his clergy, suffered here in the time of Cyprian. Stephen the First, another Bishop of Rome, was traced by heathen soldiers to his subterranean chapel, and on the conclusion of Divine Service he was thrust back into his episcopal chair and beheaded. The letters of Christians then living, refer to such scenes with a simplicity that dispels all idea of exaggeration, while their expectation of sharing the same fate affords a vivid picture of those dreadful times.

The discovery of wells and springs in various parts of the corridors assists in understanding how life could be supported in those dreadful regions; although there is no evidence to prove that the wells were sunk for that purpose. One of them has been named the font of St. Peter; and, however apocryphal may be the tradition which refers it to Apostolic times, the fact of its having been long used for baptism is not to be disputed. Some of the wells are supposed to have been dug with the intention of draining parts of the catacombs.

The general habit of taking refuge in the catacombs is proved by individual examples. On the outbreak of a persecution the elders of the Church, heads of families, and others particularly obnoxious to the savage Pagans, would be the first to suffer—perhaps the only individuals whose death or exile was intended by the imperial officers; aware of their danger, and probably well versed in the signs of impending persecution, they might easily betake themselves to the catacombs, where they could be supported by those whose obscure condition left them at liberty. The importance of such a retreat was not unknown to the heathen; every effort was made at the beginning of a persecution to prevent the Christians from escaping by a subterranean flight; and several edicts begin with a prohibition against entering the cemeteries. Death was decreed as a punishment of disobedience. The laws were almost equally severe against the custom of worshipping in them. It is a well-known fact that, before the time of Constantine, there were in Rome many rooms or large halls employed for Divine worship, though, perhaps, no edifices built expressly for that purpose. Besides this, the extreme smallness of the catacomb chapels, and their distance from the usual dwellings of the Christians, oppose serious objections to the supposition that they served for regular meetings. Yet nothing is better attested in history than the fact that throughout the fourth century, the Church met there for the celebration of the Eucharist, for prayer at the grave of the martyrs, and for the love-feasts, or *agapæ*.

Prudentius affirms that he had often prayed before the tomb of Hippolytus, and describes at length the subterranean sepulchre of that saint. After narrating the care of the Church, shown in gathering the mangled remains of the martyr, he proceeds to a minute description of the catacomb in which they were deposited; among the cultivated grounds, not far outside the walls, lies a deep cavern with dark recesses. A descending path, with winding steps, leads through the dim turnings; and the daylight, entering by the mouth of the cavern,

somewhat illumines the first part of the way. But "the darkness grows deeper," says Prudentius, as we advance till we meet with openings, cut in the roof of the passages, admitting light from above. The discovery of chapels, altars, episcopal chairs, and fonts, indicates the existence of a subterranean worship at some time or other, but it is difficult to prove that all the religious ceremonies were performed in the catacombs at a very early period, but I see no reason why they should not have been. The Latin inscription of which the following is a translation, was found over one of the graves in the cemetery of Callistus, and shows that prayers were offered below ground :—

"In Christ. Alexander is not dead, but lives beyond the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. He lived under the Emperor Antonine, who, foreseeing that great benefit would result from his services, returned evil for good; for, while on his knees, and about to sacrifice to the true God, he was led away to execution. O, sad times! in which sacred rites and prayers, even in caverns, afford no protection to us. What can be more wretched than such a life! and what than such a death when they could not be buried by their friends and relations!—at length they sparkle in heaven. He has scarcely lived, who has lived in Christian times."

It is inferred from these words that Alexander was praying in the catacombs when discovered by the emissaries of the second Antonine, the first emperor of that name having been friendly to the Christians. This event belongs to the fifth persecution, which began in the year 161. A number of circumstances in this inscription are worthy of notice. The beginning, in which the first two words—Alexander mortuus—after leading us to expect a lamentation, break out into an assurance of glory and immortality; the description of the temporal insecurity in which all true believers of that time lived; the difficulty of procuring Christian burial for the martyrs; the certainty of their heavenly reward; and lastly, the concluding sentence, forcibly recalling the words of St. Paul, "As dying, yet behold we live"; and again, "I die daily."

In addition to the other galleries, dug for the purpose of extracting sand and puzzolana, the Christians continued to excavate fresh passages for their own convenience. These additions, distinguished by their superior height and regularity, were called *new crypts*. The earth taken out of them was generally thrown into old branches of the galleries, some of them filled with graves, a circumstance which has given rise to many conjectures. Most likely the fugitives cast up these mounds as obstacles to the pursuit of their enemies, since by blocking up the principal passages, and leaving open only those known to themselves, they might render the galleries beyond quite inaccessible to their persecutors.

Some of these new crypts are supposed to belong to more peaceful times, when the custom of burying in the catacombs had become so completely established that, even after it was no longer a necessary precaution, this sort of sepulture was preferred. Vicinity to the tombs of saints and martyrs, so highly valued in that age, was also an inducement to the continuance of the practice. One of the inscriptions runs as follows :—"In the new crypt, behind the saints (*retro sanctos*), Valeria and Sabina bought it for themselves while living. They bought a bisomum for Apro and Viator." If we look back through the history of the world, we find everywhere the disposition to build tombs for the exclusive use of individual families. "He was buried with his fathers" is a common conclusion to the history of a Jewish patriarch. It was reserved for Christianity first to deposit side by side the bodies of persons unconnected with each other—an arrangement which, to my thinking, unfortunately prevails throughout the whole of Christendom, from the catacombs of ancient Rome to the modern churchyards of our own country.

In many of the inscriptions on the tombs of the catacombs occurs the word *cemetery*, which is derived, I believe, from the Greek, and signifies a *sleeping-place*. In this auspicious word, now for the first time applied to the tomb, there is manifest a sense of hope and immortality, the result of a new religion. A star had risen on the borders of the grave, dispelling the horror of darkness which had hitherto reigned there; the prospect beyond was now cleared up, and so dazzling was the view of an eternal city "sculptured in the sky," that numbers upon numbers were found eager to rush through the gates of martyrdom, merely for the hope of entering its starry portals.

The appearance of these catacombs about the middle of the fourth century has been described by St. Jerome. He says:—"When I was at Rome, still a youth, and employed in literary pursuits, I was accustomed, in company with others of my own age, and actuated by the same feelings, to visit, on Sundays, the sepulchres of the apostles and martyrs; and often to go down into the crypts dug in the heart of the earth, where the walls on either side are lined with the dead; and so intense is the darkness, that we almost realise the words of the prophet—'They go down alive into hell' (or Hades); and here and there a scanty aperture, ill deserving the name of window, admits scarcely light enough to mitigate the gloom which reigns below; and, as we advance through the shades with cautious steps, we are forcibly reminded of the words of Virgil—'Horror on all sides; even the silence terrifies the mind.'"

These subterranean galleries were nearly lost sight of during the disorders occasioned by barbarian invasions. As the knowledge of their windings could be preserved only by constant use, the principal entrances alone remained accessible, and even these were gradually neglected, and blocked up by rubbish, with the exception of two or three, which were still resorted to, and decorated afresh from time to time. In the sixteenth century the whole range of catacombs was re-opened, and the entire contents, which had remained absolutely untouched during more than a thousand years, were restored to the world at a time when the recent revival of letters enabled the so-called learned to profit by the discovery.

* * * * *

It is difficult now to realise the impression which must have been made upon the first explorers of this subterranean city of the dead. A vast metropolis, rich—to repletion—in the bones of saints and martyrs; a stupendous testimony to the truth of Christian history, and, consequently, to that of Christianity itself; a faithful record of the trials of a persecuted Church, and the noble and sublime sacrifices made by men, women, and children, who laid down their lives for the principles they so highly prized.

* * * * *

Let me select a few inscriptions in which may be recognised the superlatives of our modern tombstones. The strongest language is weak and poor for the utterance of affection:—"To Adsurtor, our son, dear, sweet, most innocent, and incomparable, who lived seventeen years, six months, and eight days. His father and mother set up this." "To the holy soul, Innocens, who lived three years, more or less. (*Plus Minus.*)" "To Claudius, the well-deserving and affectionate, who loved me. He lived twenty-five years, more or less. In peace." "Cecilius, the husband, to Cecilia Placidina, my wife, of excellent memory, with whom I lived well ten years, without any quarrel. In Christ."

* * * * *

It is a terrible experience, a visit to these catacombs, and the impression of darkness and death on every hand had a most thrilling effect upon me. I don't think I got thoroughly over it for nearly ten days. My esteemed friend, Father Selley, sends me the following—

UNGARNISHED PARTICULARS CONCERNING THE VIRGIN-MARTYR, ST. CECILIA.

“Cecilia was a rich, beautiful, and noble Roman maiden. When still very young she vowed her virginity to God ; yet against her will, as often happened in those days, she was forced into marriage with a Pagan, of the name of Valerian. In the evening of her bridal day she addressed her husband thus :—‘ Know, Valerian, that an angel of God hath charge of me, who also guards my virginity ; wherefore, I beseech thee not to touch me, lest God’s anger should fall upon thee.’ Valerian, startled by such language, feared to touch her. Moreover he added, that if she could show him an angel he would himself believe in Christ. To which Cecilia replied that, ‘ without being baptized, it was impossible for him to see an angel.’ This strange and bold reply so affected Valerian that an extraordinary curiosity was excited in him, and he expressed his willingness to receive Christian baptism. Pope Urban, who on account of the raging persecution was hiding in the catacombs, was thereupon applied to, and he baptized Valerian, who, returning home, found his wife at prayer, *and saw an angel by her side.* Valerian related it to his brother Tiburtius, who in turn sought baptism, and was privileged to see the angel.

“Both brothers were shortly after martyred by the prefect Almachius.

“St. Cecilia then distributed all her riches amongst the poor, and was apprehended herself. To the threats of the prefect she exclaimed, ‘ Do you not know that I am the bride of my Lord Jesus Christ ? ’ She was condemned to be suffocated in a hot-air bath, and, though it was overheated seven times its wont, she remained unaffected by it. Then a lictor was sent to decapitate her ; but with trembling hand he struck the three blows allotted by the law, and still she lived, fully sensible, and joyfully awaiting her crown. During this triduo of her passion the Christians came in crowds to collect relics of her sacred blood, to beg her prayers, &c. And when the Pope’s vicar visited her on the third morning, the dying martyr said to him, ‘ I have prayed not to die till I could recommend to your care the poor, whom I have always nourished, and could make over to you this house to be a church for ever.’ Then turning her face to the ground, and folding her hands like one in sleep, she slept her eternal sleep, and received a double martyr’s crown, and was buried in the cemetery of St. Callistus, A.D. 177.”

This first resting-place affords a strong contrast to the church of St. Cecilia in Trastevere, erected on the spot where her house stood, and to which she was subsequently removed ; and where the exquisite monument by Stephen Maderno portrays, with life-like exactness, the exact position in which her body was found when exhumed in 1597.

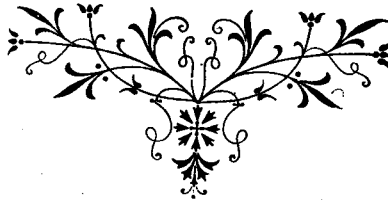
According to Francis Wey, the church of St. Cecilia, which gives a title to a cardinal priest, passes as having been built by Urban I. towards the year 230. They show you, in one of the chapels to the right, the remains of the baths of her house, and on the lower story some fragments of the primitive pavement. Pascal I., who rebuilt the temple, respected, as they had had done in the third century, the remains of the furnace, where we recognise the conduits for heat and water. Clement VII. presented St. Cecilia to the Benedictine Sisters. Clement VIII. opened the sarcophagus of their patron ; the body was perfect, and marked by the folds of a long

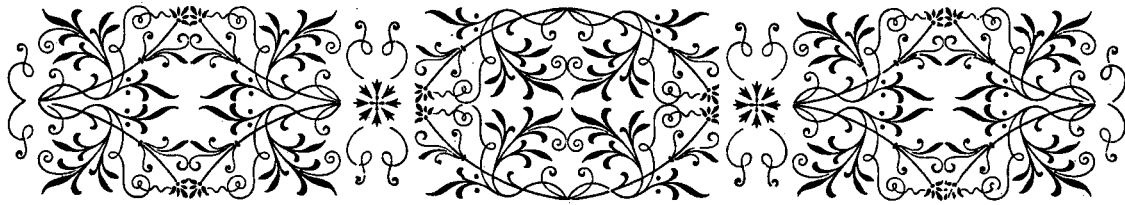
robe, and this exhumation occasioned one of the finest statues that was executed in the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Pope being desirous that it should represent the saint in the vestments and the position in which they were found, the task was confided to Stephen Maderno, and admirably has he carried out his work. It is marvellous in its truth, simplicity, and beauty. The saint wears a white mantle over a tunic of green with a golden border; the robe and the peplum are of golden stuffs, and richly overwrought. To see this tomb is worth all the trouble and anxiety of a trip to Rome.

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I shall never pay another visit to the catacombs. The wretched misery of the Black Hole of Calcutta is the only thing that in imagination I can compare to it. Dark, hot, and pestiferous; a very valley of the shadow of death; the abiding-place of the grim monster; the entrance to Pandemonium.

Oh, the delightful feeling of being free of it! to come out into the bright sunshine, inhale the pure, fresh air, and hear the birds sing their joyful songs once more!





CHAPTER V.

BATHS OF CARACALLA.

“They say there’s room, my Lord, to seat a thousand guests.”—OLD PLAY.



EXT to the Colosseum, no ruin in Rome is so interesting as the Baths of Caracalla. In their secluded site, apart from the many piles of decaying ruins around which the steps of visitors are constantly passing as on a thoroughfare, a luxuriant foliage hanging on the walls, they carry your imagination to far distant and very different scenes—scenes when splendour and wanton voluptuousness reigned in Rome on every hand. Some edifices are, of course, more impressive in their ruin than others in their entireness. When the sunset is thrown on the waving foliage, and falls through many a vast arch and gateway, you are tempted to believe that such may be the case here, as it undoubtedly is. You descend into bath No. 1 down marble steps, and a pavement of fine mosaic.

The ruins of these stupendous baths prove how magnificent in his ideas a coarse ruffian may be. They form the principal ruin on Mount Aventine; there is much more of the ancient building remaining than there is of either the Baths of Diocletian or those of Titus. They present the greatest mass of ancient building in Rome. They are said to be as large as the gardens of the Tuileries: altogether they occupy a surface equal to the sixteenth of a square mile. At each end of the building were two temples, one to Apollo, and the other to Æsculapius, as the tutelary deities of the place, sacred to the improvement of the mind, and the care of the body; the two other temples were dedicated to the two protecting divinities of the Antonine family, Hercules and Bacchus. In the principal building were, in the first place, a grand circular vestibule, with four halls on each side, for cold, tepid, warm, and steam baths; in the centre was an immense square for exercise; beyond it a great hall where sixteen hundred marble seats were placed for the convenience of the bathers; at each end of this hall were libraries. This building terminated on both sides in a court surrounded with porticoes, with a highly polished marble platform for two hundred musicians; in the centre an enormous basin, also of polished marble, for swimming. Round this edifice were walks shaded by rows of trees, and in its front extended a gymnasium for running, wrestling, and other amusements. The whole was bounded by a vast portico opening into enormous marble halls, where the poets declaimed, and philosophers gave lectures to their auditors.

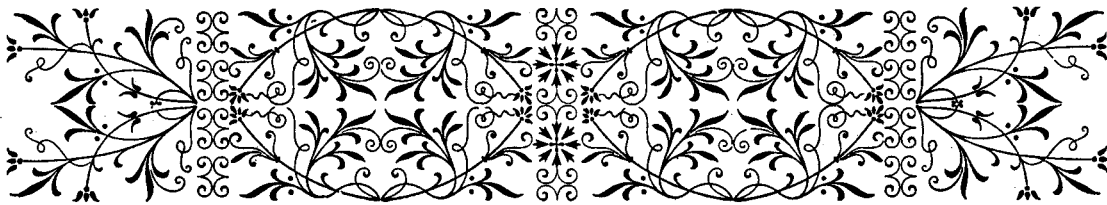
One of the apartments in these baths was famous in very ancient times under the appellation of *Cella Solearis*. Spartian, who lived in the early part of the fourth century, speaking of Caracalla, says:—“At Rome he left some astonishing baths, which bear his name.

There is a room in them called *Cella Solearis*, which architects say could not possibly have been constructed in any other way. Cross bars of brass or copper are said to be placed over it, upon which the whole vaulting rests; and the space is so great, that skilful mechanics say that the same effect could not be produced by any other means." A later writer says that sixteen hundred seats of polished marble were made for the use of the persons bathing.

We passed through a long succession of immense halls, open to the sky, whose pavements of costly marbles and rich mosaics, long since torn away, have been supplied by the soft green turf that forms a carpet more in unison with their deserted state. The wind, sighing mournfully through the branches of the aged trees, that have taken root in them without rivalling their loftiness, was the only sound we heard. These immense halls formed part of the internal division of the *Thermæ*, which was entirely devoted to purposes of amusement. The first of these halls or walled enclosures that you enter, and several of the others, have evidently been open in the centre. They were surrounded with covered porticoes, supported by immense columns of granite, which have long since been carried away; chiefly by the popes and princes of the Farnese family. In consequence of their loss, the roofs fell with a concussion so tremendous that I am told it was felt in Rome, like the distant shock of an earthquake. Some splendid specimens of ancient sculpture have been discovered in these baths. The Farnese Hercules was dug out of these ruins in 1540. At first the legs were wanting; they were found in 1560, when they came into the possession of Prince Borghese, who refused to give them up. They were afterwards joined to the body, but in the meanwhile a fresh pair of legs had been executed by a modern artist, under the direction of Michael Angelo, and these may now be seen in the Farnese Palace. The name of Farnese Hercules was given to this statue, because Paul III., who was the reigning Pope, and whose property it became, was a member of the Farnese family. Another very famous statue, which was dug out of the ruins, is the *Toro Farnese*, or Farnese Bull. A celebrated Flora was also found here the same year the Farnese Hercules was discovered.

Amongst many luxurious habits for which Pliny censures the Roman ladies of his time, is the practice of having their bathing-rooms floored with silver. In the fourth century, Ammianus Marcellinus attempted to convey a notion of the enormous extent of the public baths, by saying, that they were built "in the manner of provinces." This writer reckons sixteen public baths in the city of Rome; of these, the principal were those of Agrippa, Nero, Titus, Domitian, Antoninus, Caracalla, and Diocletian. All these edifices, though differing in size, and many other respects, agreed in the general outline of their plan. They were surrounded by extensive gardens, and oftentimes decorated with a spacious portico. The different halls and apartments of the main building were used for various purposes, some for bathing and swimming, and the usual athletic exercises, others for conversation, and for the recitation of poets and the lectures of philosophers.

We go this afternoon to the ruins of Cæsar's palace.



CHAPTER VI.

RUINS OF THE PALACE OF THE CÆSARS.

"The fiery sun had finished half his race,
Looked back and doubted in the middle space,
When they from far beheld the rising towers,
The tops of sheds, and shepherds' lowly bowers ;
There as they stood, which then of humble clay,
Now rise in marble from the Roman sway.
These cots (Evander's kingdom mean and poor)
The Trojan saw, and turned his ships to shore."—DRYDEN'S *Virgil*.



HIS is one of my favourite haunts. I love to wander through this labyrinth of ruins, almost interminable in their extent, and wonder how those immense masses of brick, stone, and marble could have been raised by human hands.

"Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower, grown
Matted and massed together ; hillocks heaped
On what were chambers, arch crushed, column strown
In fragments, choked-up vaults, and frescoes steeped
In subterranean damp, where the owl peeped,
Deeming it midnight : temples, baths, or halls ?
Pronounce who can ; for all that learning reaped
From her research hath been, that these are walls.
Behold the Imperial Mount ! 'tis thus the mighty falls."

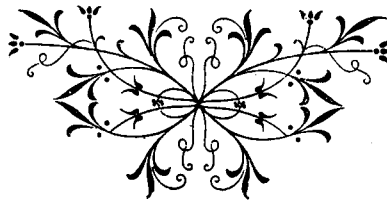
The long vaults, where a partial destruction admits a gleam of daylight in their deep recesses ; the terraces, which seem to bid defiance to time ; the half domes and solid piers attesting the grandeur of their ancient construction ; the walls filled with shrubs, principally evergreen ; the very intricacy of plan and the mixture of kitchen gardens and vineyards, where once the voice of harmony resounded through lofty halls, decorated with the finest productions of art—all impress the mind with the recollection of past glory. But the feeling here is very different from that excited in the Forum. *There* the recollection of lofty virtues and flaming eloquence ; *here* the shapeless masses of ruin, half concealed by vegetation, accord better with the melancholy felt in contemplating the decay of Rome, and the wasteful and destructive luxury which followed or accompanied the erection of these palaces.

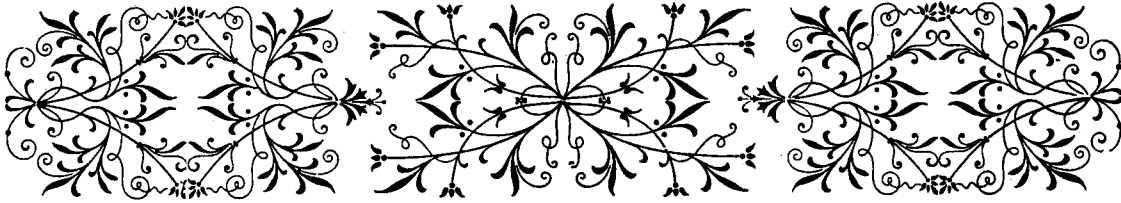
Such is the general effect of these stupendous ruins which are now so thickly strewn over the surface of the Palatine. So confusedly are they jumbled together that it is difficult to trace in them any plan, yet the skill of the antiquaries has been exercised in attempting to arrange them with some attention to regularity. In one part they have fixed the House of Augustus ; in another, the House of Tiberius and Caligula ; and in a third, the House of Nero, also the House of Livia.

Let me state here, with the greatest respect, that I am rather sceptical as to the general run of antiquaries. I confess to having my faith rudely shaken by "Bill Stumps His Mark" and Mr. Samuel Pickwick. All these ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars are involved in the most impenetrable obscurity, nor have the immense masses which remain assisted—to any great degree—though they have stimulated research.

In the very middle of the flat top of the hill is an enormous hall, called the Palatine Library. It was discovered in the year 1720; till then it had lain hidden for centuries under a vast accumulation of rubbish, and owing to that very circumstance was still in a state of good preservation. When opened, I am told, it was richly decorated with statues and other ornaments of marble; but the colossal figure of Apollo, brazen, and fifty feet in height, which is mentioned by Pliny, and is supposed to have stood there, was not found. A range of lofty arches still accessible to the top, and affording an airy but unsafe walk, overlooked on one side a vast extent of fantastic ruins, and on the other side the area of what was once the Circus Maximus, where Olympic charioteers no more urge their panting steeds round the goal, but where cabbages and artichokes flourish remarkably well.

It had been raining heavily in the early morning, but when we drove away from the hotel the sun was shining brightly. We sauntered about the ruins for a considerable time, and could not help noticing a most disagreeable smell which seemed to steam from the ground as the sun's rays sucked up a light cloudlike mist. I had noticed this peculiar smell in nearly all the ruins, especially after rain, and was at a loss to account for it, until a gentleman staying at the hotel kindly gave me the following particulars. "There, one hundred and twenty thousand men who died in building the aqueducts. Seventy-five thousand, building the walls of Rome, under Titus. Ninety-five thousand ditto, erecting baths and palaces for Nero. One hundred and fifty thousand men, women, and children slaughtered by the Goths in and about Rome. One hundred thousand Jews murdered in Rome in the space of three years." Countless thousands perished during the erection of the Colosseum, and as there was no cremation in Rome in those days, nor in these days either—and more's the pity—they were all buried within the precincts of the city walls, so it is scarcely to be wondered at, that at times the vapours of a deadly malaria settle round her ruins, or that the perfume when you walk abroad is not always odoriferous.





CHAPTER VII.

THE CHURCH "SANTA MARIA."

"Oh! what are these terrors I behold."—*Padlock.*



WE have arranged to drive out this afternoon to the Capuchin Church Santa Maria, to see the cemetery in which are interred for a certain number of years the bodies of all members of the Capuchins who die in connection with the monastery attached to the church. They are buried without coffin in earth brought expressly from Jerusalem for the purpose, and after the expiration of some eight or nine years' quiet repose they are dug up to make room for some other tenant, who takes possession of the vacated grave. They are then rehabilitated in the same garments they wore at the time of their death, their priest's garb, crucifix, rosary, cords, beads, and all the paraphernalia of their office are fixed in some ingenious manner upon their fleshless skeletons, they are placed in nooks and corners in the vaults by the side of altars, as if they were taking part in the office of the Mass. The cells on either side are built of bones, the altars are a mass of joints and human vertebrae, the lamps which shed a fitful gloom upon the ghastly scene are made of the same material. It is a sight once seen to be remembered always, it is a very masquerade of death.*

There are strange and grotesque varieties of expression on these charnel-house physiognomies: one man reclines with upturned face and parted jaws, which show two rows of strong even teeth, and looks as though he were opening his mouth to appeal to, or argue with, some unseen being. Another has his head, to which a few white hairs still adhere, hanging on one side, and the eyes closed as if weighed down by slumber. Sleep on! sleep on! Fortune turns her swift, thundering wheel. Pontiffs and princes "fret and strut their hour upon the stage," but you heed them not! There is one figure which makes your blood freeze to look at. He holds his crucifix in a claw-like hand; his head is partly turned aside, and on the face, overshadowed by the cowl, is a strange derisive sneer; he seems to be in the act of turning from us to conceal the ghastly smile which mocks at death and life. This is a veritable Mephistophelian monk, he is sneering at us from under his cowl. Our gaze returns, fascinated, to his fleshless face, bent down and turned away from the outstretched hand which holds the crucifix, and smiling with a cynical despair which is more tragic than tears, or even death itself.

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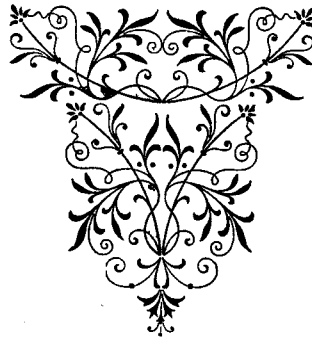
I turn and look back once more on the gloomy building. I am glad to breathe again the free, untainted air of heaven. I look up at the bright cerulean sky, and I hear the merry song

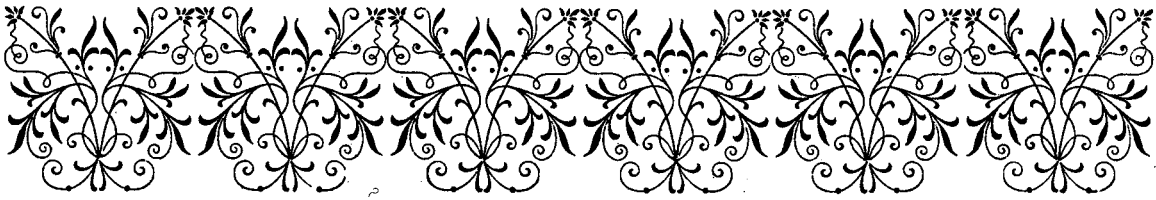
* Roman Mosaics.

of the birds, and the loud laughter of children as they play upon the green grass close by. I notice the monk is standing at the iron wicket gate watching us as we descend the slope. He is locking the door upon us, and he himself will keep watch and ward upon the mouldering bones of generations of old monks, until his turn comes at last, and he is laid to sleep in some vacated grave in sacred earth from the "Holy City of Jerusalem." He is a fine-looking fellow, with a jolly, right honest sparkle in his eye, and I fancy to myself how well he would adorn a fireside, with a pretty little wife and buxom children round him at Christmas-time—or at any other time. I feel miserable when I say good-bye to him. He waves his hand to me, and I do the same to him, and as we drive away I see him still standing at the gate—the only partition he has between the living and the dead.

* * * * *

I feel sorry to leave that good-looking monk in his isolation, his seeming "death in life," his constant surroundings of grim, gloomy, and horrible associations. Very likely he feels the same sort of pity towards me. I only know that I part company from him with regret, and I wish him with all my heart God-speed!





CHAPTER VIII.

OLLA PODRIDA.

"Come to a gossip's feast and go with me."—SHAKESPEARE.



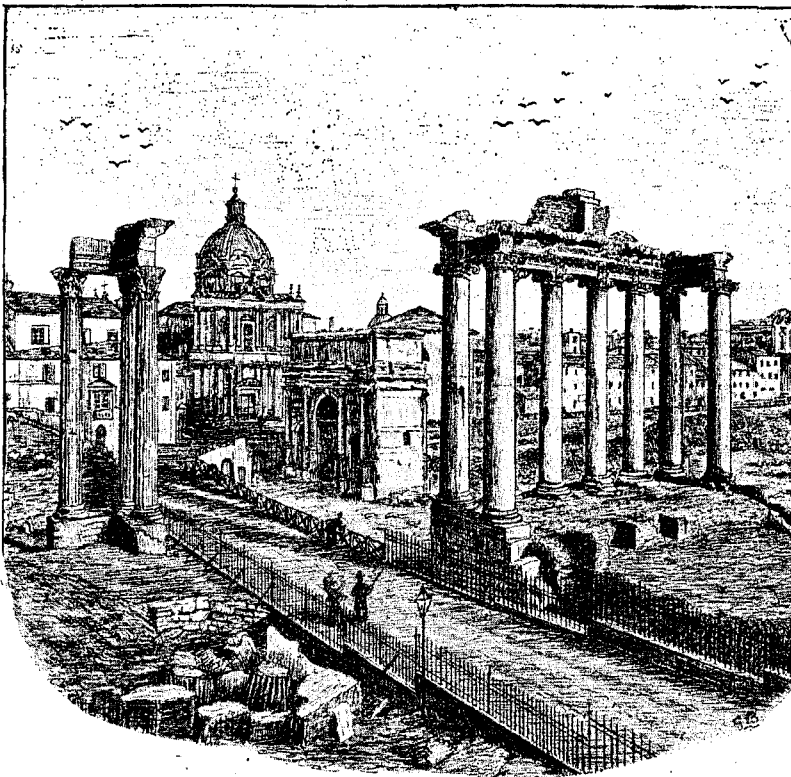
LOVE to wander in the morning round the Forum, for it is from this neighbourhood that the grandest architectural view that old Rome could offer, independently of any local association, must have been obtained. In order to realise this prospect, so far as may now be possible, from the description of ancient authors, and a knowledge of the localities in their present state, let us, says Dyer, suppose ourselves on our way to the Capitol from the further extremity of the Summa Sacra Via, where the Arch of Titus now stands, the Capitol with all its glories suddenly bursts upon our view and bounds the prospect. On the northern summit of the hill, the present site of the church and convent of Ara Celi, stood the vast and magnificent temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and his two associated divinities, Juno and Minerva. The roof of gilded tiles might vie in splendour with the eastern sun that shone upon it, and derived additional lustre from the background of that deep blue Italian sky, upon which its forms were sharply defined. The roof is supported by a forest of huge pillars, perfect specimens of art, brought, it is said, by Sulla from Greece. The pediment and acrotorium are adorned with statuary; near the temple is a colossal statue of Jupiter, the face turned towards us, and even where we stand we may discern its majestic features. Not far off is a statue of Apollo, brought by Lucullus from Apollonia. Around the peculiar temple of the hill, others of smaller but varying size appear to cluster, as if to do homage; while the spaces in front and around them seem animated with statues, which at this distance look like living men.

To the left of this temple-crowned summit follows a depression of short extent. It is the Capitoline *intermontium*, or Area Capitolina. At present the aspect is different, the interval is filled up by the lofty Palazzo del Senatore, surmounted with a tower, and seems as high as the two summits which bound it. On this depression a few monuments of small dimensions are distinguishable from where we stand, such as the Curia Calabra and the Casa Romuli.

At the southern extremity of this depression the hill rises again abruptly into another summit, the citadel, or Arx. This also is crowned with a magnificent temple, that of Juno Moneta, but not of the size and grandeur of her consort's on the opposite summit. Round this are also some smaller temples, as those of Fortune, Marius' temple of Honos et Virtus, Manlius' of Concord, and others. Augustus is soon to increase the number by the erection of a small temple to Jupiter Tonans on the Capitol.

But, to get a distinct view of the Capitoline Hill and the Forum, we must descend from the height on which we have in imagination placed ourselves. We must remember that we are

only at the top of a somewhat narrow street—its breadth may be inferred from the Arch of Titus, which spanned it—and that the ground before us, instead of being an open waste as at present, is covered almost to the verge of the Forum with thickly clustered dwellings, though probably not so high as in the less aristocratic portions of the town; for the ædiles would have taken care that in the line of the sacred and triumphal processions, and under the sumptuous mansions on the Palatine, the view should not have been obstructed and disfigured by lofty buildings. Thus we know, from a passage of Cicero, that Clodius enjoyed from his house on the



THE FORUM.

Palatine an excellent view of the city; and it seems probable that Cicero's also, which stood rather lower, commanded a fine prospect; for it would scarcely have been worth the money he gave for it had all view from it been blocked out by rows of tall houses. Close to the base of the Palatine Hill, and at the back of the Temples of Vesta and Castor, ran the Nova Via, leading from the Porta Mugionis, where it was called Summa Nova Via, down to the Velabrum. Its pavement is now laid bare between the Sacra Via and Clivus Victoriae, at the foot of Caligula's house. At the beginning of the reign of Augustus,

the Nova Via seems to have had no communication with the Forum; though one appears to have been subsequently made. Such at least is the probable inference from Ovid's line:—

“Qua Nova Romano nunc Via juncta Foro est.”

To reach the Forum, therefore, we must descend the Sacra Via. But before we quit its summit let us survey for a moment the ground on which we stand. Close by is the ancient dwelling of the Rex Sacrificulus, which, with the Regia, or house of the Pontifex Maximus, standing at the bottom of the descent and at the corner of the Forum, appears to have given name to the street. For we must recollect that only this part of the street, viz., the descent from the higher point, or Arch of Titus, to the Regia, was ordinarily called “Sacra Via,” or sometimes also “Sacer Clivus,” as in the following line of Martial:—

“Inde sacro veneranda petes Pallatia clivo,”

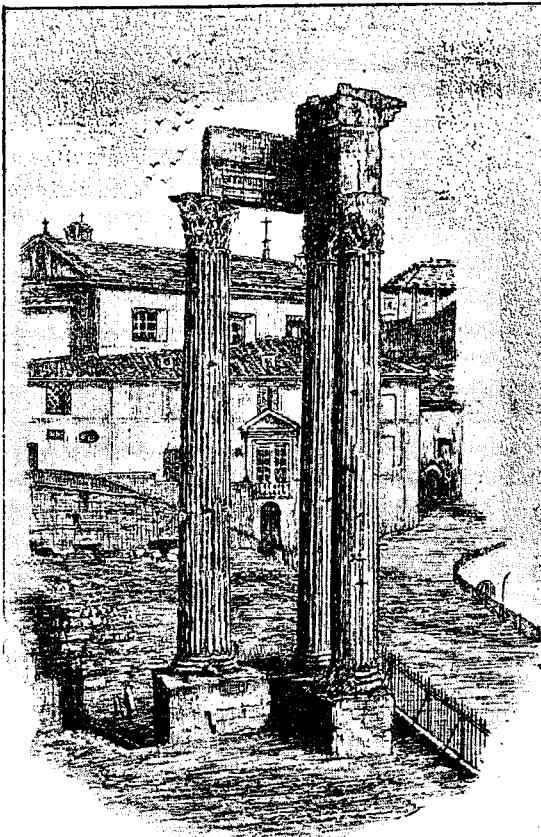
In very early times there was a grove of Strenia, or Strenua—some nymph or goddess, I know not exactly what—and it is said that when Titus Tatius was king, the augurs culled for him here every New Year's Day, bringing some branches of verbena, and carried them to his dwelling on the Arx, as an annual present. Such was the institution of the Roman Christmas-box, a time-hallowed custom, more honoured perhaps in the breach than the observance. It was in very truth only a genteel way of begging. In after times it grew into a regular institution, under the name of "Augurium Salutis." Tiberius, very sensibly, always went out of town before the 1st of January to avoid the thing. But Claudius revived it after an interval of a quarter of a century, and it appears, from the epistles of Symmachus, to have lasted to a very late period of the Empire. Hence it has descended into our modern customs, and our Boxing-day is doubtless an outcome of it. Let us recollect that in the olden time in descending the hill there was a much greater declivity than there is now. The Forum lay nearly thirty feet below the present level, and the distance to it from the Arch of Titus is but short. On reaching its boundary the road was spanned by the Fornix Fabianus, a triumphal arch, perhaps, of mean dimensions, and far inferior to those which were erected in the Imperial times. At a little distance on the right stood the Regia, recalling, in long-gone-by times, the memory of Numa's holy shade, its pious founder, and since of many learned and virtuous pontiffs, but recently somewhat profaned by the residence of Cæsar and the licentious visits of Clodius. We now stand at the eastern extremity of the Forum, where at present its boundary is marked by the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina. Only a few years before our imaginary promenade the body of the first and greatest of the Cæsars was burnt a little further on; in a few more, Augustus will raise a temple to him on the spot, in which he will be worshipped as Divus Julius. The fact that the body could have been consumed here, without causing any damage, shows that this extremity of the Forum must, in spite of its narrowness, have been comparatively free from buildings.

At the upper end of the Forum, and under the Capitoline and Curia was the Comitium, the more distinguished and aristocratic part of it, being in fact a templum, or inaugurated place, and entirely separated from the rest of the Forum by being slightly elevated above it. On it stood the Tribunal of the Prætor Urbanus and a great many statues. Also the sacred fig tree, called Ficus Ruminalis, supposed to have been that under which Romulus and the other historical gentleman Remus were nursed by the wolf.

To the east of the Vicus Tuscus is the splendid Temple of Castor, as we have before remarked, one of the most conspicuous objects in Rome. It is a little further back from the boundary of the Forum than the Basilica Julia, and stood on much more elevated ground, as may be seen from the bases of the three columns still extant. It might have been thought that a root or spur of the Palatine Hill extended at this spot towards the Forum, had not some excavations undertaken early in the present century shown that the temple had been erected on a lofty substruction, or terrace, about twenty-four feet high, formed of cubic masses of tufa, and Alban stone. The temple, therefore, was approached by a lofty flight of steps, which often served the purpose of *rostra* to address the people from. Closely adjoining it was the *Ædes Vestæ*, whose circular substruction is now laid bare. Next lay the Regia, marking the boundary of the Forum on this side.

Rome had, of course, like other large cities its favourite resorts and fashionable promenades. The Forum, as the centre of commercial and legal business, was naturally the

great centre of attraction, and besides those who really had affairs there, must have attracted that crowd of idlers with whom Rome abounded, who came to see what was going on, and to pick up the news of the day. There, no doubt, might still be found the same congregation of braggarts, false swearers, swaggerers, scandal-mongers, gourmands, beggars with an ostentatious air, and rich men with a quiet, retiring one, as might have been seen in the time of Plautus. The narrow thoroughfares which led to the Forum must often have been so thronged as to be scarcely passable. This was the case with the Sacra Via. So great was the crowd, so insufficient the accommodation for it, that Augustus hurried on the construction of his Forum for the



THE TEMPLE OF CASTOR AND POLLUX.

despatch of legal business ; which was thrown open to public use before the Temple of Mars Ultor, to whom it was dedicated, could be completed. The elegant throng of fashionable loungers, however, sought a more distant and retired promenade, such as that afforded by the porticoes near the Circus Flaminius ; while those who wanted a ride or drive seem to have repaired to the Appian Way ; just as the Roman cardinals and nobles may now be met outside the Porta Pia, on the road to Sta. Agnese. It was fortunate that the use of carriages and horses, within the walls at least, was but little known, and we do not find the risk of being run over, which now adds so large an item to the casualties of great cities, enumerated by Roman authors among the drawbacks of a town life. A negative advantage arising hence must also have been the absence of noise ; though Rome no doubt abounded with clamour enough of a different sort. In this respect the street-cries must have enjoyed a bad pre-eminence ; for the ancient Roman was no doubt blessed with as strong a pair of lungs as his modern successor. Martial complains that he could neither sleep nor meditate for these noises. The schoolboys and their masters annoyed him in the morning, the bakers at night, the hammers of the coppersmiths all day long. The cries of the vendors of sulphur and buyers of broken glass, of hoarse cooks with hot sausages, mixed with the vociferous supplications of shipwrecked mariners and other beggars of various sorts, besides a thousand other jarring sounds, were enough to distract a meditative poet. All Rome seemed to be at his door with the set purpose of annoying him. Luckily the barrel-organ, the standing grievance of the poet or philosopher in London, was not yet invented. All the months I was in Italy I never saw or heard the sound of barrel organ, an organ grinder, or a hurdy-gurdy.

It is certain that the aspect of Rome during the reign of Augustus must have become

much more splendid than it was before. The Forum, by the completion of the Curia and the Basilica Julia, the addition of the Chalcidicum to the former, the erection of the temple of Julius, and other minor improvements, had assumed a much more finished and magnificent aspect; while the extension of it by means of the Forum Augusti must have greatly added both to its beauty and convenience. On the other side of it the building of the palace on the Palatine, with the temple of Apollo and other adjoining structures, must have imparted to this hill an air of imperial grandeur, which no private buildings, however magnificent, could have conferred upon it, and have given an entirely new feature to the city. The quarter of the Circus Flaminius and Campus Martius had been rendered much more splendid by the erection of the many temples, porticoes, theatres, and other buildings. As Strabo intimates, it had begun to assume the appearance of a separate and substantive town, and, except with regard to size, a more magnificent one than the ancient city; since most of its buildings were places of public devotion, amusement, or recreation, while the few private houses that existed there seem to have been remarkable for grandeur. When we consider also the numerous restorations of ancient buildings effected by Augustus throughout the city, and the improvements made on the Esquiline in the name of his consort Livia, we may be inclined to allow that his assertion of having converted the city from brick into marble was no idle vaunt. More, in fact, was done for Rome during this single reign than in any other period of equal extent till we come to the time of Nero. But the improvements of that emperor were aided by the circumstance of a tremendous conflagration; without which it would have been impossible to get rid of that labyrinth of narrow, winding, zigzag streets, which continued to disfigure the greater part of Rome, even after the time of Augustus.

Such were the works with which Augustus adorned Rome, and the shows and pastimes with which he entertained its inhabitants. To discuss his political labours and the character of his government belongs not to this work; though it, no doubt, formed part of his policy to keep the Romans in good humour by adding to the splendour of their capital, and amusing them with mock combats and the slaughter of wild beasts. There is, however, one feature of his life and times which, as it is in some respects connected with the history of the city, we cannot pass over in silence. His patronage of literature procured for his reign the title of the Augustan age; and the swarm of men of genius and learning whom his patronage attracted to the capital must have been a peculiar feature of its society. We are, unfortunately, too little acquainted with the history of most of them to be able to recall their city lives. It would seem, however, that the Esquiline had at this time become the chief seat of the Roman muses, as the Aventine had been in the time of Ennius. This, too, like the Aventine, seems to have been a sort of proscribed hill during the Republican times. Fashion appears to have turned her back on it; at least we read not of any distinguished persons who resided here, except in the Carinæ at its western extremity, though the wealthy freedman Vedius Pollio had erected here his enormous mansion. Several of its districts and monuments were of a melancholy and repulsive character; as the Tigillum Sororium and the Vicus Sceleratus, the altars of Mala Fortuna and Febris; the Subura, a low, disagreeable neighbourhood, lay close to it; but, worse than all these, part of it appears to have been occupied by a large pauper burial-ground, the Campus Esquilinus, where the bodies were thrown without much covering of earth: a place offensive to the sight and injurious to the health. It was only the rich and great who could aspire to the honours of the grave: yet slaves and paupers must be buried as well as they; and a tract outside the agger, consequently

just beyond the ancient Servian pomerium, was selected for this purpose. It seems, however, also to have contained tombs of a somewhat pretentious character; those probably of rich, well-to-do burgesses, yet not great enough to command the posthumous honour of a grand mausoleum by the Appian Way.

Mæcenas, the munificent patron of the Roman *literati*, lived upon the Esquiline, and this probably was his motive for abolishing, or at least improving, the Campus Esquilinus, for it seems to have remained a place of burial, though doubtless of a more decent kind, and even a place of execution, as we learn from Suetonius in his life of the Emperor Claudius. His house is supposed to have stood upon the site at present occupied by the ruins of the Baths of Titus, on that part of the hill which overhangs the valley of the Colosseum. It appears from several allusions to have been a very lofty structure. Horace calls it a "molem propinquam nubibus arduis," and Suetonius characterises it by the name of "turris." Hence it afforded Nero a convenient post for beholding the conflagration of Rome. For it had become the property of the imperial family. Mæcenas bequeathed it to Augustus, and it became the residence of Tiberius after his return from Rhodes. This lends a probability to its having been ultimately converted by Titus into a bath.

It was natural that the Roman *literati* should cluster round their great patron. Virgil, we are told, dwelt upon the Esquiline, close to the Horti Mæcenatis. Here also was the abode of Propertius, as we learn from himself :—

"I, puer, et citus hæc aliqua propono columna,
Et dominum Exquiliis scribe habitare tuum."

Propertius, as well as Virgil, took a great interest in the antiquities of the city, as appears from the many allusions to the subject in his poems. It seems probable also that Horace dwelt, when in town, upon the Esquiline; but though he has left us so many notices of his life and habits, he nowhere tells us where he lived at Rome. The probability that his abode was not far from that of his friend and patron is strengthened by the description of his stroll down the Sacra Via. He was going to visit a friend who lived on the other side of the Tiber :—

"Trans Tiberim longe cubat is, prope Cæsaris hortos ;"

and from the Esquiline his direct road would have lain along the Sacra Via, which began just under the Esquiline; keeping to the left, towards the Temple of Vesta, when he approached the Forum as we see he did :—

"Ventum erat ad Vestæ," &c.

It need only be further recorded here of the works of Augustus, that he caused to be brought to Rome from Heliopolis the obelisk which now stands on Monte Citorio, one of the most celebrated, though not the largest, in Rome. Originally it served the purpose of a sundial, whence it was called *Solarium Augusti*. It stood in the Campus Martius, on an immense marble floor, on which were delineated the necessary figures, not only to exhibit the hours, but also the increase and decrease of the days. Two obelisks, brought from Egypt by the Emperor Claudius, were also originally placed before the Mausoleum of Augustus. They are those which now stand, one before Sta. Maria Maggiore, and the other on Monte Cavallo.

Augustus died at Nola, A.D. 14. His body, having been brought to Rome, was carried into the Forum on a bier, and placed before the Temple of Divus Julius at its further extremity, where Tiberius read a panegyric over it. The same ceremony was repeated at the old Rostra

by Drusus, the son of Tiberius; after which a number of senators carried the bier on their shoulders through the Porta Triumphalis into the Campus Martius, where the body was burnt; and the ashes having been collected with the usual rites by Livia, who remained on the spot five days, were deposited in the mausoleum.

There must have been a vast amount of humbug about Livia, and, although she remained by the side of the tomb for five days, I don't believe she cared a single iota for Augustus or for any man or woman in the world. She was a selfish, voluptuous woman, proud, revengeful, and ambitious, with not a drop of the milk of human kindness in her composition. She married Tiberius Claudius Nero, by whom she had the Emperor Drusus Germanicus. The attachment of her husband to the cause of Antony was the beginning of her greatness. Augustus saw her as she fled from the danger which threatened her husband, and he resolved to marry her, though she was then pregnant. He divorced his wife Scribonia, and with the approbation of the augurs, he celebrated his nuptials with Livia. She now took advantage of the passion of Augustus, in the share that she enjoyed of his power and imperial dignity. Her children were adopted by the complying emperor; and that she might make the succession of her son Tiberius more easy and undisputed, Livia is accused of secretly involving in one common ruin the heirs and nearest relations of Augustus. Her cruelty and ingratitude are still more strongly marked, when she is charged with having murdered her own husband to hasten the elevation of Tiberius. If she was anxious for the aggrandisement of her son, Tiberius proved ungrateful, and hated a woman to whom he owed his life, his elevation, and his greatness. Livia died in the thirtieth year of her age, A.D. 29. Tiberius showed himself as undutiful after her death as before, for he neglected her funeral, and expressly commanded that no honours, either private or public, should be paid to her memory. I have seen the ruins of the house of Livia. It contains painted on the walls some of the finest and most ancient pictures bequeathed to us from such remote ages.

* * * * *

The most romantic and dramatic of all the numberless domestic stories connected with the Roman Forum is, to my thinking, that of fair Virginia and the Roman centurion, her father Virginius. I can picture to my mind's eye the terrible scene depicted so vividly by James Sheridan Knowles in his "Tragedy of Virginius." There yonder in the corner was the butcher's shop, with the sharp gleaming knife lying on the counter. There, in the centre, sits the arch villain Appius Claudius, surrounded by his lictors, slaves, and creatures, ready to aid and abet their cruel master in his base licentious scheme. There is a silence as hushed as death, as Virginius, holding his daughter lovingly by the hand, comes forward, and stands face to face with Claudius.

APPIUS ascends the tribunal.—Enter, L., NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, LUCIUS, CITIZENS, VIRGINIUS leading his Daughter, SERVIA, and CITIZENS.—A dead silence prevails.—VIRGINIUS and Daughter stand L.

VIR. Does no one speak? I am defendant here?
 Is silence my opponent? Fit opponent
 To plead a cause too foul for speech! What brow
 Shameless, gives front to this most valiant cause,
 That tries its prowess 'gainst the honour of
 A girl, yet lacks the wit to know, that they
 Who cast off shame, should likewise cast off fear!
 "And on the verge o' the combat wants the nerve
 To stammer forth the signal?"

APP. You had better,
Virginius, wear another kind of carriage :
This is not of the fashion that will serve you.

VIR. (C.) [*Having left VIRG. L. with ICILIUS.*]
The fashion, Appius! Appius Claudius, tell me
The fashion it becomes a man to speak in,
Whose property in his own child—the offspring
Of his own body, near to him as is
His hand, his arm—yea, nearer—closer far,
Knit to his heart—I say, who has his property
In such a thing, the very self of himself,
Disputed—and I'll speak so, Appius Claudius :
I'll speak so—Pray you, tutor me!

APP. Stand forth,
Claudius! If you lay claim to any interest
In the question now before us, speak! If not,
Bring on some other cause.

CLAUD. (R.C.) Most noble Appius—

VIR. And are you the man
That claims my daughter for his slave?—Look at me,
And I will give her to thee.

CLAUD. She is mine, then :
Do I not look at you?

VIR. Your eye does, truly,
But not your soul—I see it through your eye,
Shifting and skinking—turning every way
To shun me. “You surprise me, that your eye,
So long the bully of its master, knows not
To put a proper face upon a lie,
But gives the port of impudence to falsehood,
When it would pass it off for truth ;
Your soul dares as soon show its face to me ;
Go on, I had forgot ; the fashion of my speech
May not please Appius Claudius.”

* * * * *

It is many more years ago, than I care to remember, since I saw Creswick in the character of “Virginius” at the old Surrey Theatre. The impression he made upon me that night is never, never to be forgotten. His declamation, faultless elocution, and earnestness so carried me away that I confess for weeks afterwards I could think of nothing else. A thrill as if caused by an electric shock ran through the vast audience when he said—

VIR. Appius, I pray you, wait! If she is not
My child, she hath been like a child to me
For fifteen years. If I am not her father
I have been like a father to her, Appius,
For even such a time. “They that have lived
“So long a time together, in so near
“And dear society, may be allowed
“A little time for parting.” Let me take
The maid aside, I pray you, and confer
A moment with her nurse ; perhaps she'll give me
Some token, will unloose a tie so twined
And knotted round my heart, that if you break it,
My heart breaks with it.

APP. Have your wish. Be brief!
Lictors, look to them.

VIR. Do you go from me!
Do you leave! Father! Father!

VIR. No, my child ;
 No, my Virginia—come along with me.
 VIRG. Will you not leave me ? Will you take me with you ?
 Will you take me home again ? Oh, bless you ! bless you !
 My father ! my dear father ! Art thou not
 My father ? [VIRGINIUS, perfectly at a loss what to do, looks
 anxiously around the Forum ; at length his eye falls on a
 butcher's stall, L., with a knife upon it.
 VIR. This way, my child—No, no ! I am not going
 To leave thee, my Virginia ! I'll not leave thee.
 APP. Keep back the people, soldiers ! Let them not
 Approach Virginius ! Keep the people back !
 [VIRGINIUS secures the knife in the folds of his toga.]
 Well, have you done ?
 VIR. Short time for converse, Appius ;
 But I have.
 APP. I hope you are satisfied.
 VIR. I am—
 I am—that she is my daughter !
 APP. Take her, Lictors ! [Virginia shrieks, and falls half
 dead upon her father's shoulder.
 VIR. Another moment, pray you. Bear with me
 A little—'Tis my last embrace. 'T'wont try
 Your patience beyond bearing, if you're a man !
 Lengthen it as I may, I cannot make it
 Long ! My dear child ! My dear Virginia ! [Kissing her.
 There is one only way to save thine honour—
 'Tis this !— [Stabs her and draws out the knife.—She falls and dies, L.
 Lo ! Appius ; with this innocent blood,
 I do devote thee to th' infernal gods !
 Make way there !
 APP. Stop him ! Seize him !
 VIR. If they dare
 To tempt the desperate weapon that is maddened
 With drinking my daughter's blood, why, let them : thus
 It rushes in amongst them. Way there ! Way !
 [Exit through the Soldiers.

I like to think of this scene, because perchance I am standing on the very spot Virginius and his daughter stood upon, and am looking out upon the same fair scene of forest land and distant mountains as they both gazed upon. It is a great comfort to know that the ruffian Appius Claudius was strangled shortly afterwards in a Roman dungeon.

Apart from the dramatic effect given by Sheridan Knowles to this tragic history, the true version, according to the credited historians of the time, is as follows:—"Among the officers of the army acting against the Æquians was a centurion named Virginius, who had a beautiful daughter, Virginia. Appius Claudius desired to possess this girl, and therefore caused her to be seized on a charge of being a slave, born in the house of one of his clients. Icilius, a former tribune, to whom Virginia was betrothed, procured her temporary liberation on bail, and sent a messenger to the camp to bring Virginius back to Rome. The distance being not more than twenty miles, Virginius appeared in the Forum next morning, leading his daughter by the hand. Appius at once gave judgment against the centurion, and decreed that Virginia should be rendered up to the person making the claim, and who, of course, was simply acting as the creature and agent of the Decemvir. This decision was in direct violation of one of the laws recorded in the Twelve Tables, which said that any person being

free should continue so until it was proved that he or she were a slave. But Appius had force at his command for carrying out whatever he might order; and Virginius, seeing no other way of saving his daughter from the miseries of such a bondage, snatched up a knife from a butcher's stall, and stabbed her to the heart. Then, proclaiming that the blood of the girl was on the head of Appius Claudius, he passed through the crowd, which readily made way for him, and immediately returned to the army. His story excited a feeling of rage among the soldiers, and together with the legions serving against the Sabines, they marched on Rome. Having selected generals of their own, they passed through the city, and encamped on the Aventine Hill, which had shortly before been given to the Plebeians as their quarter, and which was capable of being successfully defended. The Senate then selected ten Tribunes, the first of whom was Virginius. After this his name disappears altogether from Roman history.

* * * * *

All round the different Forums were erected temples to all the virtues who were made deities among the Romans. Marcellus erected two temples, one to Virtue, and the other to Honour. They were built in such a manner that to see the Temple of Honour it was necessary to pass through that of Virtue; a charming poetic allegory worthy of our Shakespeare. The principal virtues were distinguished each by their attire. Prudence was known by her rule, and her pointing to a globe at her feet; Temperance had a bridle; Justice had an equal balance, and Fortitude leant against her sword; Honesty was clad in a transparent vest; Modesty appeared veiled; Clemency wore an olive branch, and Devotion threw incense upon an altar; Tranquillity was seen to lean upon a column; Health was known by her serpent, Liberty by her cap, and Gaiety by her myrtle. I was somewhat surprised never to come across the remains of any public statues to either Lucretia or Virginia, although I saw several of the former in the museums at Florence and Venice.

* * * * *

It has been said that Italy was the cradle of the drama. It was without doubt the birth-place of harlequin and columbine, but I rather incline to the opinion that clown and pantaloon belong to France and Spain. The Romans from the earliest times had their rough masquerades or carnivals—the "Stories of Atella," they were called—the popularity of which may be guessed from the fact that freeborn citizens did not think it beneath their dignity to take part in them, or to adopt the language of the common people. I came across a translation of some of the poems of Ennius, which have often in the early times been dramatised and loudly applauded by enthusiastic audiences.

From Ennius, who wrote indifferent comedies, to Plautus, who was the author of plays which, in their own peculiar line, were almost unsurpassed, the transition is fairly easy. Of the life of Plautus very little is known, and that little is not very interesting. During his life he underwent many vicissitudes; at one time he had earned a competency; at another, he laboured for his daily bread in a corn mill, until, having gained enough by his pen to enable him to take to writing as a profession, he became able to relinquish the pursuit of manual labour. Though the author must have gained a considerable income, he appears throughout his career to have had a taste for humble life, and did not care for the society of the rich or great. No fewer than a hundred and thirty plays are attributable to this industrious writer; but only twenty-one were thought genuine, even in early times, and of these, all save one have been preserved. It may be truly said that the extreme coarseness and *abandon* of Plautus are faults which cannot

be overlooked; but it should be remembered that he sinned with his generation. Nor is the polished immorality of Terence a whit more easy to digest than the Billingsgate of his predecessor. On the other hand, the positive merits of Plautus are many and various; his language is most opulent in its volume; his metre is occasionally loose, but never heavy; his dialogue is always amusing, and often so much more than amusing as to be almost exquisite. But above all things the listener feels as if the author enjoyed the fun, and wished they could all laugh together. He fires off his jokes and puns with no affected zest; he revels in nicknames; he takes delight in coining words. He has fixed his mark on comedy, and it will never be obliterated. To this day, the dramatist, in his most sparkling jests, and in his most ingenious *dénouements*, is often but an imitator—for the most part, no doubt, an unconscious one—of this fine old Italian.

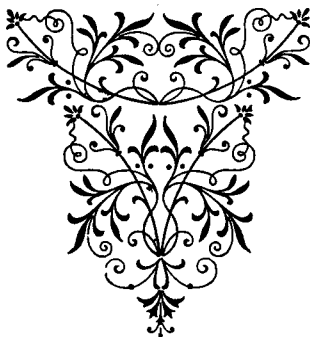
You remember what a compliment our own great poet, the "Sweet Swan of Avon," pays to both Plautus and Seneca in "Hamlet," when he makes old *Polonius* say, "The best actors in the world, my lord, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral comical, historical pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited; Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men." Shakespeare owed a great deal to the early Italian poets. His "Romeo and Juliet" breathes throughout an intoxicating odour of a Southern clime, all that is languishing in the song of the nightingale, or voluptuous in the first opening of the rose, all breathe alike the poetic air of the land of sunshine, melody, and song. *Romeo* is an idealisation to me of an Italian youth, such as I have seen "many a time and oft" on the Rialto at Venice. His love is the very ideal of music; or is it too wild an idea to think that Shakespeare wrote the character of *Juliet* with a vivid recollection of some early attachment of his own, and that *Romeo* utters the intense and extravagant passion which a gifted and affectionate nature, such as Shakespeare, might have given way to before the judgment of maturer years had calmed down his frantic tyranny of love.

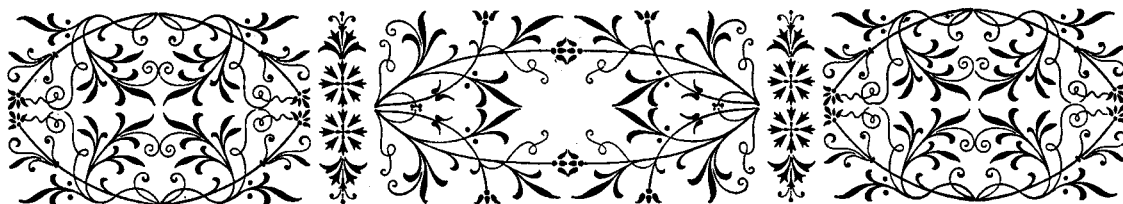
I had heard of Ernesto Rossi, the great Italian actor, the one time rival of Tomasso Salvini" (the greatest *Othello* in the world), the finest elocutionist, and the most popular impersonator of the legitimate drama in Rome. Large bills in the vestibule of the hotel proclaimed his performance for one night only in Lord Lytton's play of "Richelieu," so I went out and obtained tickets, and in due course presented myself at the National Theatre. How bitterly was I disappointed! To my thinking, "Richelieu" is one of Lord Lytton's finest plays, but on the night I saw it in Rome it was most vilely placed upon the stage, and by all the *corps dramatique* cruelly murdered and mutilated. Not one member of the cast had the slightest idea of the great author's intention.

It is true that Ernesto Rossi was supported by nearly as bad a company as Salvini was when he last played at Covent Garden, but the play was so infamously mounted, the scenic effects and properties so abominable and absurd, that I felt it a great relief to get out into the street. As for my wife, I shall never forget her futile attempts to keep from roaring with laughter, when in the scene where *Richelieu* is discovered on a couch supposed to be either dying or dead, the bed gave way in the centre, and sent the mighty Cardinal sprawling. There was another thing that worried me in all the theatres I visited in Italy—the payment made at the doors only allowed an entrance into the vestibule, to see the performance you had to pay. If you wished to sit down you had to pay again, and if you wanted to go out between the acts there is no re-admission. The audience read the papers during the acting, and the whole thing smacked of a ranters'

chapel, and a Puritan home on Sundays, and a charnel house. Of Rossi himself—considering his horrible surroundings—I can only in justice say that he stood out from the rest a very giant among dwarfs.

I notice that in all the towns and cities I pass through in Italy, there seems a great run upon the English legitimate drama. It is a sad thing to know that if you want to hear the text of Shakespeare properly rendered, you must either go abroad or to the colonies. Elocution, as an art, is defunct in England—as dead as the Cæsars. It is a terrible infliction to have to sit out a five act tragedy in London. It is the amateur actors who are murdering the histrionic art both in our great cities and the provinces—and more's the pity.

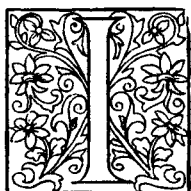




CHAPTER IX.

A CHAT ABOUT ST. PETER'S.

"How vast! how solemn and magnificent!"—AIDER.



It is not when you first cross the threshold of this vast church, that the full majesty of the place bursts upon you; it is only by degrees, and after repeated visits, that you are made sensible of its size and matchless sublimity. All writers on the subject agree in this impression. The various parts of the vast church are so well proportioned to each other, everything being on the same scale of greatness, that the eye is deceived by the harmony which exists, and can only judge of the real size of particular objects, by comparing something in the edifice within reach with something analogous to it in the ordinary work of nature. Thus two figures of cherubs, supporting the vase of holy-water near the door, which are six feet high, do not look bigger than children of five years of age; nor are their dimensions understood, except by referring to some living man or woman who may be standing near them; and again, the figures of the evangelists, which decorate the inside of the cupola, do not appear larger than life, though the pen in St. Mark's hand is six feet long.

Something also may be found to account for this impression in the elegant notion of Madame de Stael, who fancies the objects are not so much diminished as the spectator's faculties are raised and aggrandised when he finds himself for the first time within the sacred precinct; and some weight, moreover, must be given to the remark of the acute Forsyth, who says: "But greatness is ever relative. St. Paul's is greater because everything around it is so little. At Rome the eye is accustomed to nobler dimensions, and measures St. Peter's by a larger scale."

The lateral aisles, and the numerous chapels which break off from the grand whole of the temple, have been made amenable to criticism; but the central nave is infinitely grand and sublime. It is eighty-nine feet in breadth, and one hundred and fifty-two feet high; it is flanked on either side by a noble arcade, the piers of which are decorated with niches and with fluted Corinthian pilasters. A semi-circular vault, highly enriched with sunk panels, sculptures, and gilded ornaments of various kinds, is thrown across from one side to the other, producing a most splendid effect.

Walking up this magnificent avenue, which in itself is one of the grandest works of art, you come to a part of the building incomparably more magnificent still; I mean, of course, the crown of the whole—the great soul of the composition—Michael Angelo's cupola, which is raised over the centre of the plan.

The cupola is glorious ! Viewed in its design, its altitude, or even its decorations—viewed either as a whole or a part, it enchants the eye, it satisfies the taste, it expands the soul. The very air seems to eat up all that is harsh or colossal, and leaves us nothing but the sublime to feast on—a sublime peculiar to the genius of the immortal architect and comprehensible only on the spot.

Standing on the pavement of the church, immediately beneath this vast concave, and gazing upwards through a wide uninterrupted void, to the height of four hundred and twelve feet, the effect is almost overpowering ; there man shrinks, as it were, into nothingness beneath the wondrous works of man ! Architecture can boast of nothing more sublimely impressive than this.

The concave surface of the cupola is divided into compartments, is enriched with majestic figures of saints in mosaic and other grand works of art, and is brilliantly lighted from above and below. In the centre of the cross, where the sea of light pours down from the dome, and ten or twelve feet beneath the pavement of the present church, is the tomb of St. Peter, before which, I believe, a hundred lamps are constantly kept burning.

In a brief sketch like this, I can neither enter on the architectural details, nor describe the wonders of art in sculpture, painting, and mosaic contained within its walls. Either of these subjects indeed would occupy a volume. There are faults to be detected within the church as well as without ; but absolute perfection is not a faculty of man, and besides, this edifice was not the work of one great genius, but of several architects in succession—some of whom had none of the judgment and grand taste of Michael Angelo, and all of whom widely departed from the plans he had laid down for building the whole of the church. As it is, however, a visit to St. Peter's is an exquisite pleasure, and one calculated to elevate and improve the soul of man. It is a spectacle too that never tires ; you may visit it every day, and always find something new to admire. This will be easily conceived if you only reflect on the fact, that for several ages, and through a long succession of Popes, the fine arts have never ceased adding new riches to the temple, on canvas or in mosaic, in marble or in bronze.

The temperature of the air within its vast enclosure is delightfully mild and genial ; it is cool in summer and comfortably warm in winter ; it is, in fact, almost invariable. Nothing can well be more exquisite than to escape on a hot day from the streets of Rome and the glaring light and oppressive heat, and to seek refuge in the cool atmosphere of St. Peter's. The winter at Rome, too, is sometimes sufficiently severe to enhance the value of its genial temperature at that season. A similar advantage is enjoyed in most of the great churches in the south of Europe, but in none to such an extent as in St. Peter's, where a perpetual spring may be said to reign. Nor is this produced by any actively artificial means ; there are no fires or other modes of warming in winter, and there are no peculiar processes for ventilating or otherwise cooling in summer. It arises solely from the enormous thickness and solidity of the walls throughout ; from the comparatively few and small apertures communicating with the external atmosphere ; and from the immense bulk of the air enclosed within the temple, that neither parts nor receives heat in sufficient quantity to affect in any perceptible degree the equability of its temperature. I may add here that this does not apply to the cathedrals of Milan and Florence, both of which in winter and summer strike chill and cold. The Basilica or Cathedral of St. Peter's does not stand within the limits of the ancient city of Rome, nor is it indeed on the same side of the Tiber as the most renowned parts of that city. It rises

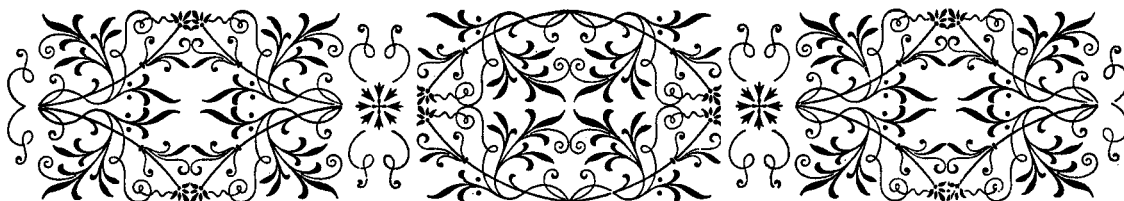
on the side of the Vatican Hill, which may be considered as an extension of the Janiculum, the only one of the seven hills on the right or north bank of the river, the other six being all on the left bank.

"In the most high and palmy state of Rome" it was on the Vatican that the triumphs of conquerors were prepared and the processions marshalled; at a later period, under the Empire, the hill was adorned with temples, palaces, and places of public amusement. Here was said to be the scene of the crucifixion of the Apostle Peter. It was Constantine the Great who first erected a Christian church on the blood-defiled spot, choosing for its site part of the ground that had been occupied by the circus, and the spaces where the temples of Mars and Apollo had stood. As architecture was then in a very degraded state, it may be concluded that the edifice of Constantine could boast no great beauty; its magnitude, however, was considerable, being three hundred feet long and more than one hundred and fifty feet wide. After standing for nearly twelve centuries it threatened ruin, and several Popes endeavoured to avert this by repairs and additions; but at length Julius II., a pontiff of great energy, determined in 1503 to erect an entirely new temple, which should stand over and include the site of the most important part of the old one.

Bramante Lazzari was the architect he preferred, and whose plan was, to build the church in the form of a Greek cross. Shortly after Bramante's death the work fell to the great Michael Angelo Buonarrotti, who gave the edifice the peculiarly sublime character it possesses, still following up the plan of Bramante inasmuch as related to the form of the Greek cross. "There are eighteen whole years of Michael Angelo's life in the church of St. Peter's," says Dupaty; but the great artist could not live to complete so vast a work; and the mantle of his genius fell on none of his successors. The original plan, moreover, was departed from—the lengthy, unequal Latin cross was substituted for the Greek, because it was considered essential *that the new edifice should include the whole of the site of the ancient church of Constantine!* To this last circumstance are mainly attributable the defects in the building.

The first stone of the church was laid by Pope Julius II., in 1506, and the front was completed in 1622, during the pontificate of Paul V., the seventeenth successor of Julius. Although constantly advancing, with all the means that the wealth and extensive influence of the Roman hierarchy could then command, it took the reign of eighteen popes, and the period of one hundred and fifteen years, to see the temple alone finished. The splendid additions and accessories occupied one hundred and fifty more. Up to the year 1622 the building cost the Roman See eight millions sterling, and between that date and 1784, nearly ten millions more were expended, and at the present time it costs the treasury thirty thousand crowns annually to keep the immense edifice in repair.

The masonry of the church, its cupola, and its adjuncts, is of Travertine stone. Whole quarries must have been exhausted in the superstructure, or parts that meet the eye, yet a still vaster quantity of stone remains unseen, the depth of the foundations and the enormous thickness of the substructions being such that there is actually more of the material below than above the surface of the ground.



CHAPTER X.

A SHORT SKETCH OF MICHAEL ANGELO.



HIS wonderful sculptor, painter, and architect was the son of Ludovico Buonaroti Semoni, a gentleman descended from an ancient family. Michael Angelo was born in the year 1474, in the Castle of Chiusi, in the territory of Arezzo, in Tuscany, when his parents then resided, and he was placed at nurse in a village called Settignano, about three miles from Florence.

The inhabitants of Settignano were principally sculptors and stone cutters, so that Michael Angelo used to say that he imbibed the art of sculptor with his sustenance when an infant, for his nurse was the wife of a sculptor.

At the proper age he was sent by his father to Florence to be educated ; but his genius for sculpture and painting soon developed itself, and caused him to neglect every other pursuit, for which he was often chastised by his master, and reprimanded by his father, who considered the vocation of an artist was derogatory to his rank. Michael Angelo continued, however, to seize every opportunity of studying the art which his ardent disposition impelled him to practise ; and, having become acquainted with a young artist, he borrowed models from him, which he copied with indefatigable zeal. At length his father was persuaded to allow him to become a disciple of Dominico Ghirlandaio, a painter who was much esteemed, not only at Florence, but throughout Italy.

Michael Angelo was then only fourteen years of age, and being at liberty to follow the bent of his genius, he applied himself so zealously to his art, that his master was astonished at his rapid progress. In a short time the disciple surpassed his instructor, and on one occasion, having observed some defects in the design of a female figure drawn by Ghirlandaio, he pointed out and corrected them, to the surprise of all who witnessed this proof of the young artist's superior talent.

Nor was his skill confined to drawing and painting ; his prowess was equally remarkable with regard to sculpture. When only sixteen years old he executed figures in marble which called forth the admiration of all who saw them, and caused him to be considered as a prodigy.

Lorenzo de Medici, surnamed the "Magnificent," who was the patron of genius and industry, observing the superior qualities of the youthful Michael Angelo, took him under his protection, and employed him in several noble works, particularly in statuary, by which he gained universal applause. At the death of his generous patron Michael Angelo quitted Florence, and after visiting Venice and Bologna, he repaired to Rome, where his extraordinary talents were highly appreciated and extolled. Being solicited by his friends to return to Florence, he

did so, and there sculptured several statues. It was at this period that his fame became increased, by the production of a figure which is considered to be one of his masterpieces, and even worthy of being compared with the best works of the ancients. This beautiful marble statue represents David with his sling, and it is related that Pietro Soderini, who purchased it, remarked that he thought the nose was too large, which observation proved his want of judgment, for it was in exact and delicate proportion. Michael Angelo, however, being willing to gratify Soderini, appeared to assent to his remark, and taking some marble powder in his hand, with the chisel at the same time, he began apparently to work on the nose, dropping gradually some of the powder as he proceeded. The deception was not discovered by Soderini, who, when the sculptor laid down his chisel, exclaimed with delight that those touches had given life to the statue.

Michael Angelo was also engaged at this period in designing some pictures, which he intended to paint in conjunction with Leonardo da Vinci; but he was summoned back to Rome by Julius II. to erect a magnificent monument which that Pope destined for himself. Michael Angelo was twenty-nine years of age when he commenced this great work, which, however, was soon interrupted. Various reasons have been assigned for this. Some writers have attributed it to the impetuous temper of the sculptor; others to the no less irritable disposition of Julius; but, whatever may have been the cause, it is certain that the mausoleum was never finished, and that, after it was begun, Michael Angelo suddenly quitted Rome, and was absent for some time.

On his return to that city, he was employed by order of the Pope in other works, among which were the frescoes in the Chapel of Sextus IV. in the Vatican. Fresco is a kind of painting performed on fresh plaster, or on a wall covered with mortar not quite dry, and with water colours. The plaster is only to be laid on as the painting proceeds, no more being done at once than the painter can despatch in a day. The colours being prepared with water and applied over plaster quite fresh, become incorporated with it, and retain their beauty for a great length of time. Michael Angelo did not wish to be thus employed, and he was not only willing but anxious to recommend Raphael as his substitute. But Julius was inflexible, and Buonaroti was compelled to abandon the completion of the superb work which he had commenced (which was more in conformity with his genius for sculpture), and to devote his talents to the embellishment of the Sistine chapel.

Having once undertaken this important task, the illustrious artist wrought with his accustomed ardour; and not choosing to be interrupted during his labours, he invariably declined to admit any person into the chapel whilst the frescoes were in progress; but when he had executed about half of his great work, Julius could not resist the desire he felt to see it, and he insisted that the scaffolding should be removed, and the public allowed to view the paintings. This must have been very annoying to Buonaroti, particularly as the Pope was continually urging him to hasten the completion of the frescoes. One day the Pontiff having asked him rather sharply when the work would be finished, Michael Angelo answered, "When I feel satisfied that I have done justice to my noble art!" "And we," retorted Julius, "desire that you should satisfy us, also, by finishing the work promptly;" adding, that if he declined doing so much longer he should be punished.

This threat alarmed the artist, who was well aware of the Pope's violent disposition; accordingly, he painted his figures rapidly, not even retouching many parts after they were dry, which might have imparted more grace and softness to them. Neither did he enrich the vesture

of the personages with gold, and glowing colours, as he might otherwise have done, and which would have corresponded better with the other decorations of the chapel. The Pope remonstrated with him on this account, still pressing him, however, to finish his work; therefore, Michael Angelo, knowing that it would require considerable time to execute these ornamental parts, properly observed to Julius, that the holy men he was painting did not wear golden ornaments, and that they despised riches.

At length, on November 1, 1512, the frescoes were completed. Besides the twelve compartments of the roof, a portion of the side walls of the chapel was painted by Michael Angelo; and although he had no assistance, and even ground his colours himself, the whole work occupied him but one year and eight months.

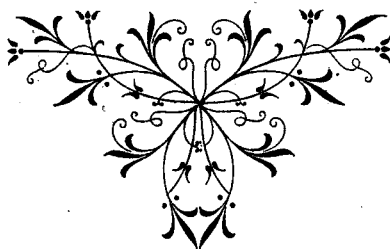
After the death of Julius II., which took place in 1513, his successor, Leo X., sent Michael Angelo to Florence, in order that the pontiff's native city might be embellished by the productions of that superior artist. He was recalled to Rome by Clement VII., in 1523, and it was at his suggestion that Michael Angelo executed the cartoons of his famous picture of "The Last Judgment," which adorns the altar of the Sistine chapel. This fresco was not commenced, however, during the lifetime of Clement; but Paul III., who succeeded him, having seen the cartoons, ordered the picture to be commenced immediately. Michael Angelo worked at this extraordinary composition during eight years, and it was completed at the end of the year 1541. He also painted two large pictures for the Pauline chapel in the Vatican—one representing the conversion of St. Paul, and the other the martyrdom of St. Peter. His picture of the Crucifixion is likewise universally admired. It has been observed that the works of this eminent man always surprise the beholder with the appearance of something unusually grand, though they may not, in every instance, produce a pleasing impression. There is no doubt but that he was the first painter who inspired the Italian artists with the taste for the sublime, and that his example induced them to forsake the dry, stiff manner of Perugino, and others. Michael Angelo's genius was very extensive, and his powers of representing his ideas were bold even to rashness. He possessed extraordinary anatomical knowledge; and although his attitudes are not always beautiful, yet even Raphael himself—as most writers affirm—derived considerable improvement from observing the grand conceptions and noble taste of design of Angelo, though the former was far superior to him in elegant simplicity, in grace, and adherence to nature.

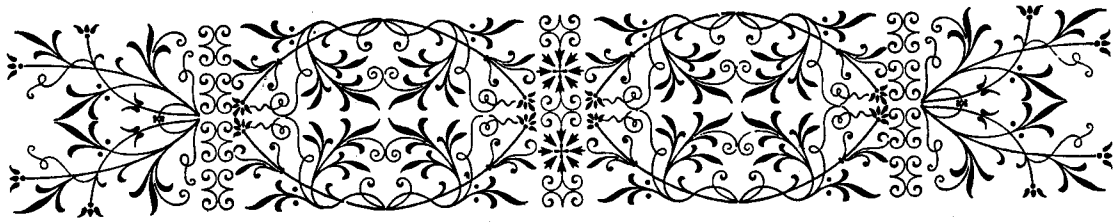
It is said that there is not one undisputed oil painting of Angelo's in existence. Several are exhibited which are ascribed to him, but it is generally admitted that such have no claim to the honour. They may perhaps have been the work of his pupils, and he may have given a few touches to them himself; but it is well known that he despised oils, and thought fresco painting much more meritorious, and consequently more worthy of his superior genius. This predilection is to be regretted, because pictures in oil are so much more durable than those painted on plaster, however skilfully and carefully they may be executed. Among Michael Angelo's most celebrated works in sculpture are the beautiful statues of the Dukes of Florence, which adorn the tombs of Julian and Lorenzo de Medici. The chapel which contains these tombs, and which communicates with the church of St. Lorenzo at Florence, was erected by him. When he had attained the advanced age of seventy-two, Michael Angelo was empowered by Pope Paul III. to superintend the rebuilding of the Cathedral of St. Peter's at Rome, and in the brief by which he received his appointment he was authorised to do, and undo, whatever he pleased, and it is worthy of record that the same document specifies that the architect undertook the work for the

love of God, and without any salary or reward. Michael Angelo insisted on the insertion of this declaration in the brief.

The task he had undertaken was by no means an easy one, for he was constantly impeded in his labours by the jealousy of his brother architects, who endeavoured to injure him in the eyes of the Pope by their unjust complaints. But his wonderful talents and high character triumphed over all their clamours, though he was so disturbed and wearied by them that he would willingly have retired to Florence, and ended his days there in peace. He persevered, however, for many years ; and, though St. Peter's was still in an unfinished state when he died, it will ever be a memento of his enterprising genius. After a glorious career of eighty-nine years and eleven months, beloved and honoured by the sovereigns and great men of the age in which he lived, Michael Angelo expired at Rome, on February 17, 1564. His remains were eventually conveyed to Florence, and deposited with great funeral pomp in a magnificent tomb, in the church of Santa Croce. The tomb is embellished by a bust, which is said to be a correct resemblance of the eminent man whose history has been here briefly related. Three marble statues, representing Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, also adorn the mausoleum.

It is interesting to connect in the mind the contemporaries of remarkable characters, and among those of Michael Angelo were the following celebrated individuals : Henry VIII., King of England ; the Emperor Charles V. ; Francis I., King of France ; Pope Leo X. ; Luther and Calvin ; the Italian poet, Ariosto ; the admired painters Raphael, Titian, and Leonardo da Vinci ; Christopher Columbus ; Fernando Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico ; and Pizarro, the conqueror of Peru.





CHAPTER XI.

ABOUT SOME WELL-KNOWN STATUES : "THE DYING GLADIATOR."



HIS celebrated statue is very popular with all critics, real or amateur, but it is very doubtful whether it bears its right name. It represents a man of toil, who has lived a laborious life, as you may see from one of the hands, which is genuine, and from the soles of the feet. He has a cord round his neck, which is knotted under the chin ; he is lying on an oval buckler, on which may be seen a kind of broken horn. Pliny, in a long chapter of his thirty-fourth book, wherein he enumerates the most famous statuaries who worked in metal, mentions one called Ctesilaus, who appears to have lived near, or shortly after the time of Phidias. "He made," says Pliny, "a wounded man expiring (or fainting), and he succeeded in expressing exactly how much vitality remained." It is possible that this bronze or metal figure may be the original of the marble figure now in Rome, to which is given the name of "The Dying Gladiator." As far as can be judged from the attitude, the armour, the general character of the figure, and the deep expression of pain and intense agony, the whole composition may very possibly be intended to represent the death of one of those wretched beings who were compelled to slaughter each other for the amusement of the Roman capital. The broken horn is, however, considered by some critics as an objection to this statue being a representation of a gladiator ; the signal for the combat, they say, might be given with a horn, but what had the fighter to do with one ? This seems to me a very small objection. The presence of the horn does not necessarily imply that it belonged to the gladiator ; it is a symbol, a kind of shorthand, which brings to recollection the crowded amphitheatre, the eager populace, the devoted victims, the signal for attack ; and the sad contrast to all this is exhibited in the figure of the dying man. As to any difficulty that may be raised about the kind of armour, or the cord round the neck, this may be removed by considering that the Romans had gladiators from all countries, and that these men often fought with their native weapons, and after the fashion of their own country. The savage directors of these spectacles knew full well the feelings of animosity with which uncivilised nations are apt to regard one another, and they found no way so ready for exhibiting to the populace all the cruel and bloody circumstances of a real battle, as to match together people of different nations.

Whether this figure be that of a dying gladiator or not, it is pretty certain it will long

retain the name, at least in the popular opinion in this country, as it has furnished the subject for some of the noblest lines that one of our first of poets ever penned :—

“ I see before me the gladiator lie.
 He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,
 And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—
 And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
 Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
 The arena swims around him—he is gone,
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

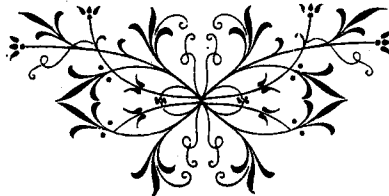
“ He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
 Were with his heart, and that was far away;
 He reck'd not of the life he lost, nor prize,
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
 There were his young barbarians all at play,
 There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
 Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—
 All this rush'd with his blood.—Shall he expire,
 And unavenged?—Arise, ye Goths, and glut your ire ! ”

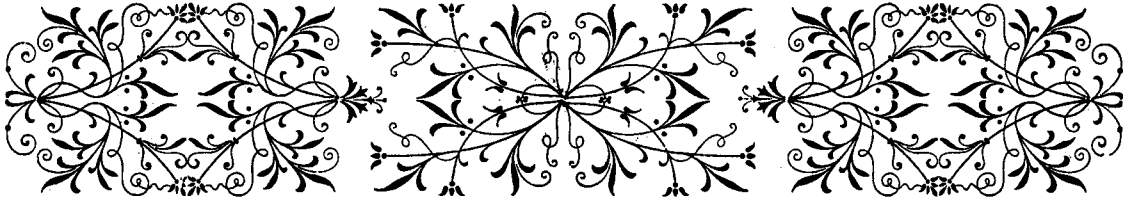
What must have been the state of degradation in which the Roman people were sunk, when the sight of human blood was necessary to gratify their passion for novelty, and to preserve to their rulers a temporary popularity? Cruelty, ferocity, cowardice, and laziness were the vices necessarily cherished by such revolting sights. With the extension of the Roman empire by conquest, and the increase of private wealth obtained from the plunder of provinces, and by every species of extortion that could by any possibility be devised, the practice of giving public exhibitions on a splendid scale became one of the duties of a great man who wished to attain or secure popularity. But under the emperors the games of the amphitheatre were carried to a pitch of extravagant expenditure that far surpassed anything that had been witnessed in the latter days of the Republic. From every part of the then known world, from the forests of Germany, the mountains and deserts of Africa and Asia, was brought, at enormous expense, every animal that could minister to the sports of the arena; and the Roman populace beheld, without knowing how to appreciate, the wondrous camelopard and the two-horned rhinoceros, which, half a century ago, our English naturalists were unable to imagine, much less describe.

About fifty miles due east of Rome, in a wide valley enclosed by lofty mountains, lies the broad expanse of the Lake Celano (formerly called Fucinus), its greatest length is about fifteen miles, and its breadth from four to six and eight miles. The Emperor, at immense cost, had made a tunnel through a mountain which bordered on the west bank of the lake, and to celebrate the opening of the tunnel with due splendour he exhibited a naval battle on the waters. “About this time, after the mountain which separated the Fucine lake from the river Liris had been cut through, a sea fight was got up on the lake itself for the purpose of attracting a crowd to witness the magnificent work just completed.”* The Emperor Augustus once made an exhibition of this kind near the banks of the Tiber by constructing an artificial pond; but his ships were of inferior size, and but few in number. Claudius equipped a hundred *triremes* and *quadriremes*, and nineteen thousand men; he also placed floats or rafts

* Tacitus, Annals, xii. 86.

in such a position as to enclose a large part of the lake, so that the combatants might not have any chance of escape. He allowed space enough, however, for the full working of the oars, the skill of the helmsman, the driving of the ships against one another, and other manœuvres usual to a sea fight. On the rafts were stationed companies and the bands of the prætorian cohorts, with breastworks before them, from which they could manage the engines for discharging missiles. The rest of the lake was occupied by the adverse fleets, all provided with decks. The shores of the lake, the hills around it, and the tops of the mountains, were like a vast amphitheatre crowded with a countless multitude attracted by the novelty of the sight, or out of compliment to the Emperor. The Emperor himself, in magnificent armour and toga, and his wife Agrippina at a short distance from him, dressed in a robe embroidered with silver and gold, presided also at the spectacle. The combatants, though criminals condemned to death, fought with all the courage of brave men. After many had been wounded they were excused from completing the work of destruction on one another. At the close of the games the passage for the waters was opened ; but the incompleteness of the work was soon evident, for the canal, so far from being deep enough to drain the lake to the bottom, did not carry off the waters to half their depth. The traces of this subterranean canal or tunnel are still visible.





CHAPTER XII.

THE LAOCOON.



THE story of the Laocoon is told with wonderful power by Virgil. The terrible fate of the unfortunate man and his children was brought upon them, according to the poet, by the father's disobedience to the will of Minerva.

“Laocoon, Neptune's priest by lot that year,
With solemn pomp then sacrific'd a steer :
When, dreadful to behold, from sea we spied
Two serpents rank'd abreast the seas divide,
And smoothly sweep along the swelling tide.
Their flaming crests above the waves they show,
Their bellies seem to burn the seas below :
Their speckled tails advance to steer their course,
And on the sounding shore the flying billows force.
And now the strand, and now the plain they held,
Their ardent eyes with bloody streaks were fill'd :
Their nimble tongues they brandish'd as they came,
And lick'd their hissing jaws that sputter'd flame.
We fled amaz'd ; their destin'd way they take,
And to Laocoon and his children make :
And first around the tender boys they wind,
Then with their sharpen'd fangs their limbs and bodies grind.
The wretched father, running to their aid
With pious haste, but vain, they next invade :
Twice round his waist their winding volumes roll'd,
And twice about his gasping throat they fold.
The priest, thus doubly chok'd, their crests divide,
And tow'ring o'er his head in triumph ride.”

The Laocoon was found behind the baths of Titus, on the old Esquiline hill, and not in a chamber belonging to the edifice, as is commonly asserted. It happens that there is no doubt at all about the period when this work of art was executed. Pliny, in his Natural History (Book xxxvi. 5), speaks of a group which he calls the Laocoon. It was in the palace of the Emperor Titus ; and, in the judgment of Pliny, superior to every other effort either of the sculptors or the painter. “Three most excellent sculptors,” he adds, “united to produce this work, which was made of a single stone, both the principal figure, the children, and the snakes.” The only objection to admitting the Laocoon now in Rome to be the Laocoon which Pliny saw in the palace of Titus, is the fact that the group is *not* formed of a single piece of marble. But this difficulty

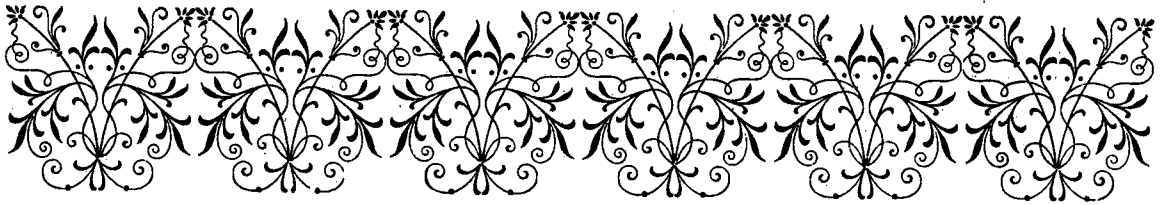
may be readily removed by considering that it is next to impossible that such a combination of figures as Pliny describes could be formed of a single block, and we therefore conclude that the writer may have been deceived by the accuracy with which the parts were united, or, what is quite as likely, he was as careless in writing of this as he has been about many other things.

As a specimen of skill in sculpture, most connoisseurs allow the very highest rank to the Laocoon. At one time it was generally supposed that such a specimen of art could only belong to what is called the best age of Greek sculpture, that is, to some period before the death of Alexander (B.C. 323). Winkelmann assigned it to Lysippus, contemporary of the Macedonian king; but his countryman Lessing opposed this high authority, and we must now fairly allow the Laocoon to be a work executed for the Emperor Titus by Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus. Instead, then, of believing that the age of perfect Greek sculpture was limited to the short period of Phidias, and the times immediately following him, we find that, in the first and second centuries of the Christian era, the excellence of Grecian art remained still unimpaired under the patronage of the emperors and the wealthy citizens of Rome.

To judge of the truth with which a statue represents the human form either in action or repose, it requires a knowledge of the external anatomy of the body, and such a careful study of the naked human form, as very few have the opportunity of obtaining; and comparatively few, even if they had the opportunity of seeing, are gifted with the necessary power of comparing the whole proportions of the real and the imitated figure. It is not so difficult to form a more accurate estimate of the execution of a single part, such as a nose, a hand, or a foot.

The figure of the Laocoon belongs to the highest class of robust manliness and apparent strength, or rather, it seems something above the ordinary standard of human power. The appearance of suffering and agony is intense, nor could these feelings, perhaps, have been more successfully portrayed. That the sculptors have not represented with accuracy the mode in which such enormous serpents attack their prey, may, perhaps, be considered a weak objection; but it must be maintained that the mode in which serpents of the boa class encircle their victims would have been more in harmony with the total abandonment exhibited by Laocoon while he still seems to have so much strength to resist. It is another objection to this group that the father is so absorbed in his own sufferings as to pay no regard to those of his sons. The one on the left has not yet felt the deadly bite, by which the artists probably supposed the father's strength to be at once paralysed; he turns an imploring look towards his agonising parent, but in vain. The other son is already feeling the fatal wound: in his anguish he raises one arm, and with the other tries in vain to arrest his deadly enemy.

As the subject of this and many other works of Grecian art does not belong to the events of ordinary life, it is not right to judge of such a group as the Laocoon merely as a specimen of *imitative art*. All the parts of which it is composed are indeed objects existing in nature, but the union of the whole belongs to the imagination, and if the contemplation of it deeply excites those feelings which the artist intended to move, so far he has succeeded, and so far we admire. In witnessing the efforts of a great actor, few men can view unmoved the various passions of anger, remorse, or deep felt agony, which are exhibited in the living picture before us. Sculpture, in its cold forms of marble, can hardly hope to attain to such excellence in representing the deep passions and sufferings of humanity; and, beautiful as some specimens of this description are, I prefer to see the skill of the sculptor displayed in more tranquil scenes, and in the creation of forms of ideal beauty.



CHAPTER XIII.

APOLLO BELVEDERE.

"A very god to look upon."—SHELLEY.



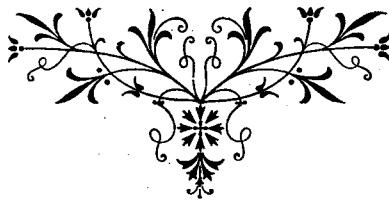
THE names of few works of art are so familiar to our ears as those of the Apollo Belvedere and the Venus de Medici; the first, one of the innumerable wonders of Rome, the second, one of the greatest treasures of Florence.

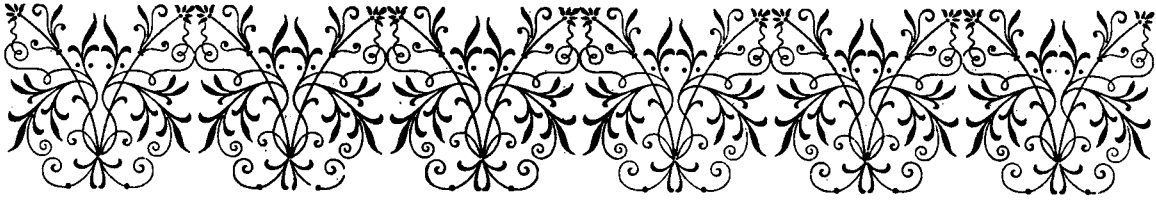
The Apollo was found at Antium, now Anzio, which was the birthplace of Nero, and one of his favourite places of residence. As in the case of the Laocoon, this statue was for some time supposed to be a work belonging to what we are accustomed to call the best age of Greek sculpture, by which is generally understood the period of Phidias. Some French critics first observed the fact of the Apollo being carved in Carrara marble, which Pliny speaks of as being newly worked in his time, under the name of marble of Luna. If this is undisputed, we cannot assign the Apollo to any other epoch but that of the earliest Roman Emperors, and it seems the most probable hypothesis that it was carved for Nero to adorn his sea villa at Antrium. This man, whom history has rightly represented as a cruel tyrant, an unnatural son, and the murderer of his wife, was still a lover of the Arts, and perhaps no mean judge of them. We all know the old saying that the Devil is not quite so black as he is painted, so let Nero be allowed one fair quality in his brutish nature, and let me record here that he was not only a patron of art, but a critical adept, and well knew the money value of a statue. The noble figure of the Apollo, perhaps one of the finest and the last efforts of Grecian art to perfect the ideal form of the archer god, stood at Nero's bidding in all its beauty before the grim master of the Roman world. And can anyone doubt that he felt and admired that perfection which never yet was embodied in a living form? To attempt to express by words, or with the pen, the impressions which are produced by the highest productions of nature or art is a vain attempt; with those who do not feel, it results in mere words that have no definite meaning, while those who do, it can only result in a complete conviction of the inability of words to express the images of thought. No such difficulty would be felt in treating of the Venus of the Capitol, which is enchantingly beautiful in its embodiment of female loveliness, and faultless in execution. It is Thiersch's opinion that this grand and majestic figure of the Apollo Belvedere has a reference to the god shooting with his arrows the great serpent Python, and that the artist had at the same time in his thoughts the passage of the first book of the "Iliad," where Apollo descends in anger from the heights of Olympus with his bow and quiver on his shoulders,

hastening to deal forth death amidst the army of the Greeks. But the story of the Python, and the passage in Homer's Hymn to Apollo, seem to have suggested the ideas which the artist has embodied in this noble and glorious work.

"Apollo's bow unerring sped the dart,
And the fierce monster groaned beneath the smart.
Tortured with pain, hard-breathing, on the ground
The serpent writhed beneath the fatal wound.
Now here, now there, he winds amidst the wood,
And vomits forth his life in streams of blood.
Rot where thou liest, the exulting archer said,
No more shall man thy vengeful fury dread,
But every hand that tills earth's spacious field,
Her grateful offerings to my shrine shall yield.
Not Typho's strength nor fell Chimæra's breath,
Can now protect thee from the grasp of death.
There on the damp, black earth, in foul decay,
Rot, rot to dust, beneath the sun's bright ray."

These words seem to hang on the lips of the indignant god. Already has he turned himself from the left side, in which direction the arrow has sped, and is moving off towards the right, while his head is still directed towards his vanquished enemy on the left, to whom, while in his flight and uttering the words of vengeance, he gives his last look of manly indignation and contempt.





CHAPTER XIII.

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The whole consists of only thirty-three blocks of marble, of which eight compose the base, twenty-three the shaft, one the capital, and another the pedestal supporting the statue. It is ascended by a spiral staircase in the interior, which is entirely cut out of the same stones. There are forty-three loopholes or apertures for the admission of the light.

But the most curious part of the column is the sculpture in bas-relief, by which the whole of the shaft is covered. The series of delineations runs round the pillar in an ascending spiral riband, which makes in all twenty-two revolutions before reaching the top. On this is represented, in chiselling of exquisite delicacy, the succession of Trajan's Dacian victories, together with the two triumphal processions by which they were celebrated. The figures, which are designed with great spirit, are not fewer than between two and three thousand in number, that of Trajan occurring about fifty times. In the lower part of the shaft they are each about two feet in height; but as they ascend and are removed further from the eye their dimensions are enlarged, till, at the top, they become nearly double the size of those below.

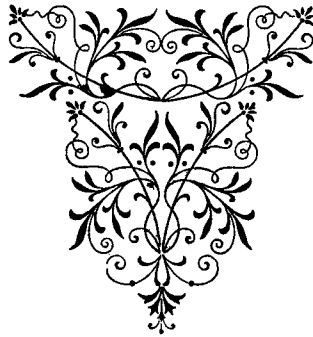


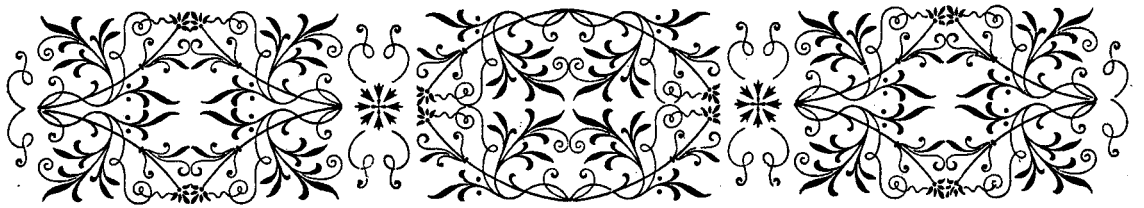
TRAJAN'S COLUMN.

These sculptures are extremely interesting in another point of view, as well as for their merit as works of art. "The Roman dress and manners," says Burton, in his "Description of the Antiquities of Rome," "may receive considerable light from these bas-reliefs. We find the soldiers constantly carrying their swords on the right side. On a march they are generally bareheaded; some have no helmet at all; others have them suspended to their right shoulder. Some of them have lions' heads by way of a cap, with a mane hanging down behind. Each of them carries a stick over the left shoulder, which seems to have been for the purpose of conveying their provisions. Their shields are represented as oblong, with different devices upon them. The standards are of various kinds—such as a hand within a wreath of laurel,

which was considered a sign of concord. Pictures also were used, which were portraits of gods or heroes. The soldiers wear upon their legs a kind of light pantaloons, reaching a little below the knee and not buttoned. The Dacians have loose pantaloons reaching to the ankles and shoes; they also carry curved swords. The Sarmatian cavalry, allies of Decebalus, wear plate armour, covering the men and horses. These were called *cataphracti* or *clibanarii*; and the words of Ammianus exactly answer the representations on the column. Their armour was a covering of thin circular plates, which were adapted to the movements of the body, and drawn over all their limbs, so that in whatever direction they wished to move, their armour allowed them free play, by the close fitting of its joints. Some Roman soldiers have also plate armour, but they

are archers. The horses have saddles, or rather cloths, which are fastened by cords round the breast and under the tail. The Dacian horses are without this covering ; and the Germans, or some other allies, have neither saddles nor bridles to their horses. I might tell you here of some other particulars, such as a bridge of boats over a river, and that the boats everywhere are without a rudder, but are guided by an oar fastened with a thong on one side of the stern. The wall of the camp has battlements, and the heads of the Dacians are stuck upon it. The Dacian women are represented burning the Roman prisoners.





CHAPTER XV.

A GOSSIP ABOUT JULIUS CÆSAR.



OF all the Romans the great Julius Cæsar is to my mind far and away the first and noblest of them all. I love to think of him as sole master of the world. I can see him with his legions returning to Rome after his war with the Pompeian party, in the year before Christ 46. As he approached the city the greatest apprehension prevailed lest, notwithstanding his former clemency, he might imitate the examples of those fiends incarnate, Marius and Sulla. But these fears were perfectly groundless, for revenge and cruelty formed no part of Cæsar's character; with a magnanimity rarely to be met with in conquerors, and least of all in civil wars (how can any war be civil as I understand the meaning of the word?), he not only proclaimed a general amnesty, but declared that he should make no difference between Pompeians and Cæsarians, his object being to allay all animosities, and to secure the lives and property of all honest citizens—I have an eye to Mr. Gladstone in writing this. Before he arrived at Rome, the Senate, on receiving intelligence of his African victories, hastened to decree a public thanksgiving for forty days; and to confer upon him the Dictatorship for ten years. Having now overcome all his enemies, he availed himself of the general peace to celebrate his four triumphs—one over Gaul, the second over Egypt, the third over Pontus, and the fourth over Juba. In order that their feelings might not be hurt, those Romans whom he had conquered in the civil wars were not mentioned among the subjects of his triumphs. These triumphs were followed by most liberal largesses of corn and money to the people and soldiers, by public banquets and all kinds of entertainments, amid which the thoughtless multitude easily forgot the loss of liberty; all they cared for was to be well fed and amused. Cæsar's next care was directed towards the improvement of the law. By some severe enactments against indulgence in luxuries, he endeavoured to restrain the reckless extravagance which pervaded all classes of society. As he himself knew too well the consequences to which a prolonged administration of a province might lead, he issued a law ordaining that no Prætor should have the administration of a province longer than one year, and no Consul longer than two. But the most important of all his regulations was the reformation of the Roman Calendar, for this was a benefit not only to his own country, but to the whole civilised world. He undertook this task in his character of Pontifex Maximus, and was assisted in it by the Greek mathematician Sosigenes of Alexandria. Julius Cæsar added ninety days to the year before Christ 46, which was thus made to consist of 445 days; he provided at the same time against the recurrence of such confusion, and made regulations that in future the duration of the year should be strictly adapted to the course of the sun. I look

upon Cæsar as by far the best sovereign of the Roman world; he had to maintain not only his ascendancy, but to establish his right to govern, and his qualification to do so. The state of Italy and the provinces was such, that he could not possibly introduce any material improvement, a fact of which—if I read history correctly—he seems to have been well aware, for among all his regulations and reforms there is no attempt to remedy the evils of the constitution; he appears at least to have been convinced that he must first place his sovereign power on a sure basis, before he could venture upon any great constitutional reform. But what he actually did was, on the whole, for the advantage of the community; and there certainly was no man living who had more good will, energy, and ability to benefit the State than Cæsar. His usurpation, moreover, differs from that of other usurpers in this—that the Republic was, in reality, gone long before he set himself up as a ruler; he did not upset the Republic, but found it already a wreck—of which he endeavoured to save as much as possible.

The time which intervened between Cæsar's victory over the brutal sons of Pompey and his assassination was too short to allow him to exhibit all his powers and qualifications; but, from the little he affected, you may form some idea of what he would have accomplished if his life had been spared. He still continued to pursue his merciful course, and no proscriptions or executions were ever resorted to by him. He formed vast plans of improvement in which he might occupy himself, for he had been accustomed for many years to the most restless activity, and could not have existed without it. He intended to frame a complete code of laws, to establish public libraries, to drain the Pontine marshes, to enlarge the harbour of Ostia, to cut a canal through the Isthmus of Corinth, and to execute a variety of other undertakings which would have been of the greatest utility. Amidst preparations for these comprehensive schemes, he entered his fifth consulship in B.C. 44, Mark Antony being his colleague, and Lepidus his master of the horse. Cæsar had for some time past been maturing a plan for preserving the sovereignty in his own family; and, as he had no legitimate children, he fixed upon his nephew Octavius (afterwards the emperor Augustus) to be his successor, whom he accordingly adopted as his son. He was further anxious to add to his own regal authority the title of king, as an outward indication of his power, and a plan was accordingly formed with Antony, who was to offer him the diadem during the celebration of the Lupercalia, on the 15th of February. When the day came Antony's proposal was not received so favourably as had been anticipated, wherefore Cæsar declined the honour for the present, hoping that another more favourable opportunity would not be long in presenting itself:—

" You all did see, that on the Lupercal,
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man."

In the meantime a conspiracy had been formed against the life of Cæsar from the very beginning of the year B.C. 44. It was headed by Cassius and Brutus, and upwards of sixty persons were privy to it. Brutus was a nephew of Cato, from whom he had imbibed his republican sentiments; he had received an excellent education, and possessed very great talent, which gained the esteem and friendship of both Cicero and Cæsar. In the Battle of Pharsalus, Brutus fought in the ranks of Pompey, but, immediately after his victory, Cæsar nobly pardoned him, and afterwards placed the greatest confidence in him,* and continued to distinguish

* Dr. Schmitz.

him on every occasion. But with Brutus a fancied dream of freedom outweighed every other consideration, and he seems to have really fanatically believed that by the death of Cæsar a service would be done to a good cause, and that the republic could even be revived. The other conspirators were mostly actuated by mere personal hatred and animosity; republican liberty with them was only a name, under the cover of which they hoped to take revenge for wounded pride and disappointment. A striking example of this class among the conspirators was Cassius. He too had belonged to the Pompeian party, and had been pardoned by Cæsar. He had been a candidate for a prætorship for the year B.C. 44, and had hoped to obtain the city prætorship; but Cæsar having given that office to Brutus, Cassius became indignant against Brutus as well as against Cæsar, and resolved to take vengeance. It was Cassius that contrived to gain over Brutus to join the conspirators. Cæsar was cautioned in time, and advised to take a body-guard, but he magnanimously declined it, saying that he would rather not live at all than be ever in fear of losing his life. It was proposed that Mark Antony likewise should be assassinated, and much misery would have been prevented if he had actually been sacrificed; but Brutus thought that the death of Cæsar would be sufficient, and Antony was accordingly spared. Shakespeare has given a grand and vivid description of Calphurnia's dream of her husband's (Cæsar) death in his play of "Julius Cæsar." In act ii. scene 2, Cæsar enters, amid a terrific storm of thunder and lightning:—

CÆS. Nor heaven, nor earth, have been at peace to-night:
Thrice hath Calphurnia in her sleep cried out,
"Help, ho! They murder Cæsar!" Who's within?

Enter a Servant.

SERV. My Lord?

CÆS. Go bid the priests do present sacrifice,
And bring me their opinions of success.

Enter CALPHURNIA.

CAL. What mean you, Cæsar? Think you walk forth?
You shall not stir out of your house to-day.

CÆS. Cæsar shall forth: the things that threaten'd me,
Ne'er looked but on my back; when they shall see
The face of Cæsar, they are vanished.

CAL. Cæsar, I never stood on ceremonies,
Yet now they fright me. There is one within,
Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
A lioness hath whelped in the streets:
And graves have yawn'd and yielded up their dead:
Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,
In ranks, and squadrons, and right form of war,
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol:
The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan;
And ghosts did shriek, and squeal about the streets.
Oh, Cæsar! these things are beyond all use,
And I do fear them.

CÆS. What can be avoided
Whose end is purpos'd by the mighty gods?
Yet Cæsar shall go forth: for these predictions
Are to the world in general, as to Cæsar.

CAL. When beggars die, there are no comets seen;
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

CÆS. Cowards die many times before their deaths ;
 The valiant never taste of death but once :
 Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
 It seems to me most strange that men should fear ;
 Seeing that death, a necessary end,
 Will come, when it will come.

The republicans, for thus they would be assassins styled themselves, were resolved to take the first opportunity of despatching Cæsar ; and, as it usually happens under such circumstances, they were so bent upon destroying the object of their antipathy that they did not consider what was to take its place, so that the execution of their design was immediately followed by the utmost confusion and perplexity. Some of the troops that were to serve in the Parthian war had already been sent to Brundisium, but when the Sibylline books were consulted, it was found that the Parthians could be conquered only by a king. A meeting of the Senate was therefore announced for March 15, at which a proposal was to be made to appoint Cæsar king out of Italy. That day was fixed upon by the conspirators as a most favourable opportunity of carrying out their design. Cæsar had been advised to be on his guard on the 15th, and on the very morning of that day Calphurnia—as we have seen—entreated him to remain at home. But he disregarded all warnings, and went to the curia, where the conspirators were waiting for his arrival. On his way thither, some one handed him a letter in which the plot was revealed, but Cæsar did not stop to read it.

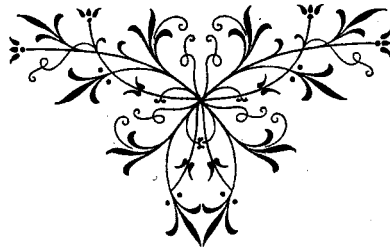
The missive according to Shakespeare was as follows :—

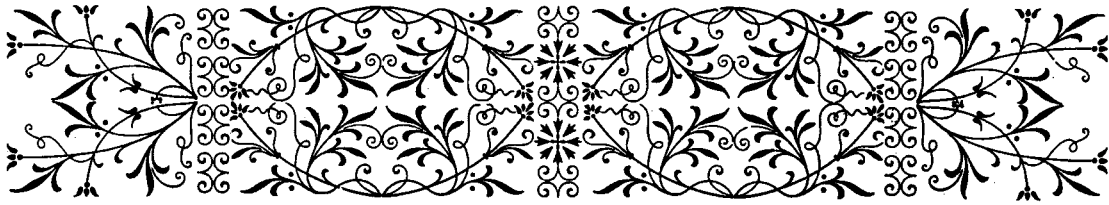
Cæsar, beware of Brutus ; take heed of Cassius ; come not near Casca ; have an eye to Cinna ; trust not Trebonius ; mark well Metellus Cimber ; Decius Brutus loves thee not ; thou hast wronged Caius Ligarius. There is but one mind in all these men, and it is bent against Cæsar. If thou be'st not immortal, look about you : Security gives way to conspiracy. The mighty gods defend thee ! Thy lover.

When Cæsar arrived at the Senate, one Tillius Cimber made his way up to him, feigning to approach him as a suppliant, and took hold of his toga. At that moment Casca gave him the first stroke with his sword, the other conspirators followed the example, and wounded him in the face, the side, the loins, and the neck. Cæsar, who had sprung from his seat, at first defended himself with utmost determination. But when Brutus also struck him, he wrapped his toga about his person and sank down weltering in his blood, his body being covered with twenty-three wounds. At the time of his death Cæsar was only in his fifty-sixth year. The senators dispersed in dismay, without listening to the call of Brutus to pronounce judgment on the deed at once. The conspirators left the body lying in the senate house, and with bloody swords in their hands hastened out into the streets to proclaim the destruction of the tyrant and the restoration of liberty.

The death of Cæsar was an irreparable loss not only to the Roman people, but to the whole civilised world, for the republic was utterly ruined, and no earthly power could restore it. Cæsar's death involved the state in fresh struggles, and civil wars for many a year, until in the end it fell again—and this was the best that, under such circumstances, could have happened to it—under the supremacy of Augustus, who had neither the talent, nor the will, nor the power to carry out all the beneficial plans which his great uncle had formed. It has been truly said that the murder of Cæsar was the most senseless act the Romans ever committed. Had it been possible at all to restore the republic, it would unavoidably have fallen into the hands of a most profligate aristocracy, who would have demoralised the people still more, and would have

established their own greatness upon the ruins of their country. It is only necessary to recollect the latter years of the republic, the depravity and corruption of the ruling class, the scenes of violence and bloodshed which constantly occurred in the streets of Rome, to render it evident to every one that peace and security could not be restored, except by the strong hand of a sovereign ; and the Roman world would have been fortunate indeed if it had submitted to the mild and beneficent sway of Cæsar.





CHAPTER XVI.

OUR LAST DRIVE IN ROME.



WE are now taking our last drive this afternoon, and I tell the coachman to make for the English burying ground. As we pass along we notice a long row of tall cypress trees, and on the right hand a pyramid which the driver tells us is a monument erected to a great general, and which, on closer inspection, proves to be a pyramid of "Cestius," one of the tribunes of the people, who used to provide the sacrificial feasts of the gods. He died about thirty years before Christ. It stands partly within and partly without the circuit of the city. The form of the base is a square, each of whose sides is ninety-six feet in length, and its height is a hundred and twenty-one feet. It is the only monument of the kind in Rome. The material of the structure is brick, cased with flags of marble a foot thick, which once was white, but has been blackened by age, and rests on a base of Travertine about three feet in height. A door cut in one of the sides leads to a chamber within, eighteen feet in length, twelve in breadth, and thirteen in height. The ceiling and walls are stuccoed, and on the stucco are some paintings, still in tolerable good preservation. They consist of a group of female figures, with vases and candelabra, and are supposed to indicate the sacred office of the deceased. The date of the erection of this pyramid is conjectured to be prior to the time of Augustus, though not much. An inscription informs the curious that it was finished, in pursuance of the will of the deceased, in three hundred and thirty days.

The structure was repaired in 1663, by order of Pope Alexander VII., having become greatly dilapidated; by that time no less than fifteen feet of rubbish had accumulated above the base. It is curious to see how Nature, disappointed of her usual means of destruction by the pyramidal shape, goes to work another way. That very shape affording a better hold for plants, their roots have penetrated between the stones, and, acting like wedges, have lifted and thrown aside large blocks in such a manner as to threaten the disjointed assemblage with entire destruction. In Egypt the extreme heat and want of moisture during a certain part of the year hinder the growth of plants in such situations, and in Africa alone are pyramids eternal.

It was a beautiful idea of Samuel Rogers when he said, "Whenever I wish to be serious, I love to wander up and down before the tomb of Caius Cestius." The Protestant burial-ground is there, and most of the little monuments are erected to the young. Young men of promise, cut off when on their travels, full of enthusiasm, full of enjoyment; brides, in the bloom of their beauty, on their first journey; or children borne from home in search of health. This particular stone was placed by his fellow travellers, young as himself. That one over there, by a husband or a father, now in his native country. His heart is buried in that grave.

It is a quiet and a sheltered nook, covered in the winter with violets; and the pyramid that overshadows it gives it a classical and singularly solemn air. You feel an interest there, a sympathy you were not prepared for. You are yourself in a strange land, and all those quiet sleepers are for the most part your own countrymen and countrywomen. They call upon you in your mother tongue—in English—in words unknown to a native, known only to yourself. And the tomb of Cestius, that old majestic pile, has this also in common with them—it is itself a stranger, among strangers. It has stood there till the language spoken round about it has changed, and the shepherd born at its foot can read its inscription no longer.

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St. Paul was led to execution beyond the city walls, upon the road to Ostia. As he issued forth from the gate his eyes, says Conybeare, must have rested for a moment on that sepulchral pyramid, which stood beside the road, and still stands unshattered amid the wreck of so many centuries upon the same spot. That spot was then only the burial-place of a single Roman; it is now the burial-place of many Britons. The mausoleum of Caius Cestius rises conspicuously amongst humble graves, and marks the site where Papal Rome suffers her Protestant-sojourners to bury their dead. In England and in Germany, in Scandinavia and in America, there are hearts which turn to that lofty cenotaph as the sacred point of their whole horizon, even as the English villager turns to the grey church tower which overlooks the gravestones of his kindred. Among the works of men that pyramid is the only surviving witness of the martyrdom of St. Paul, and we may thus regard it as a monument, unconsciously erected by a pagan to the memory of a martyr. Nor let us think those who lie beneath its shadow are indeed resting in unconsecrated ground. Rather let us say that a spot where the disciples of Paul's faith now sleep in Christ, so near the soil once watered by his blood, is doubly hallowed; and that their resting-place is most fitly identified with the last earthly journey, and the dying glance of their own patron saint, the Apostle of the Gentiles.

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As you enter the cemetery through the massive iron gates you come upon a scene both solemn and picturesque. It is a garden of beauty, exquisitely kept, and those sleeping peacefully their last long sleep are lovingly tended, in winter and in summer time, by a noble army of willing English hands, resident in Rome. It is a very pretty place. The grand old Roman wall comes close up to it. Flowers of all sorts and descriptions blossom and bloom to perfection. To me it was a beautiful sight to see the climbing roses clinging in seemingly loving fashion to the tombstones, and caressing the tall green mounds that cover all that is mortal of the sleepers beneath. One of the brightest, prettiest, merriest of all the Italian girls I have yet seen upon my travels, was the custodian *pro tem.* of this solemn sleeping place. She pointed out to me the tomb I most wished to see—that of Percy Bysshe Shelley, whose ashes only are interred here, for he was cremated, and his ashes afterwards placed in an ancient urn, and conveyed to Rome, where they were buried near the remains of his friend and fellow-poet Keats, who had died in Rome two years previously. Within four years the three poets and friends, Shelley, Byron, and Keats, had all joined the majority. There is the following inscription on Shelley's headstone:—

"Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange."

At first I couldn't make rhyme or reason out of the above, but at last I remembered it was from Shakespeare's "Tempest," and that *Ariel* sings :—

"Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands."
"Full fathom five thy father lies ;
Of his bones are coral made ;
Those are pearls that were his eyes ;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell :
Hark ! now I hear them, ding-dong, bell."

Poor Shelley was drowned in a tempest between Leghorn and Genoa. Some time after his body was washed ashore and his remains were consumed by fire—not because, as it is sometimes erroneously supposed, Shelley had expressed any admiration for cremation, but in accordance with the then quarantine laws of Genoa. The funeral pyre was attended by three of Shelley's dearest friends—Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Mr. Trelawney, a Cornish gentleman, and the familiar of Byron : by whose bedside, only little more than a year later, this same Trelawney watched. The next grave of interest to me was that of John Gibson, sculptor, who resided forty-eight years in Rome. I read upon his memorial stone that—"His character as a man was noble in dignity and elevation of purpose." Then comes a very pretty and poetic idea :—

"I think
To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die."

And again on the grave of an English painter close by :—

"Where is my grave ?
Neath some foreign sky,
Shall I lay down my
Wearied limbs and die.
Where is my grave ?
It matters not where.
But my home beyond
It is there, it is there !
Where God wipes tears from every eye,
And the Lamb is the light
Of a sunless sky."

* * * * *

We roamed about this English city of the dead far into the afternoon : it was a sort of sacred pilgrimage to the resting-places of our English brothers and sisters, who had been left behind in life's uncertain journey, to sleep their last great sleep in the Eternal City. My companion, the charming custodian, kept me company in all my rambles, and watched me with her big dark lovely eyes as she saw me jotting down the epitaphs in my note-book. I wonder,—looking back as I write these lines—if the spirits of the dead ever wander about the grounds at night, when the bright moon casts long shadows on the graves from the gigantic cypress trees, and the night birds whoop and scream ? If they do, it must be a comfort to them to know that they have sweet Irene to hover round and attend their sleeping-places. A glorious being of health and strength, full to the very brim of female life and beauty, the very antithesis of ugly

Death and all his ghastly crew. When we got to the gate I really felt sorry to say farewell to my little Italian guide, with her beautiful black curls, which the rude wind had disarranged, throwing a slight shadow over her delicate brow. She gave me a buttonhole of violets, daisies, and rosebuds, and I pressed my hand in hers and we parted company.

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We drive onwards till we get upon the old level of the Appian Way—that grand old road along which conquerors marched in triumph from their scenes of murder, robbery, mutilation, confiscation, cruelty and wrong—and which now lies before us, running straight as an arrow across the Campagna, thickly bordered on either side by tombs. What a doleful approach, says a writer in “Picturesque Europe,” to a city these ancient roads must have been! What a perpetual *memento mori*, a death’s-head among the flowers, to damp the joy of the traveller’s arrival, or of the citizen’s return! Fancy Kensal Green set on end along the Epsom road! However, the Roman seems to have generally taken his pleasure at home, and gone abroad when on business bent. Of these tombs, as a rule, only shapeless ruins now remain—massive fragments of brick or peperino rubble; but here and there a scrap of white marble is left, still bearing an inscription, or some bas-relief or figure which has escaped the spoiler’s hand. When many of these tombs were new, when the pavement of lava blocks, which may still be seen, was well preserved, the great missionary to the Gentiles came first as a prisoner along this road to preach the Gospel at Rome. To the left hand is a grand view over the Campagna; that grey, gaunt, ruin-strewn, fever-stricken, yet marvellously fascinating plain, which sweeps away in mile after mile of coarse herbage, interrupted here and there by some row or cluster of stone-pines, with their spreading dark heads and bare ruddy trunks, by the shattered ruins of past prosperity, and the poor cottages of the present age, by hills and the loftier masses of Monte Gennaro and the adjoining Apennines. Looking back, the towers and domes of Rome rise over the city wall, and beyond them the bold ridge of Soracte, conspicuous above the lines of distant mountains. Nothing can well be more impressive than that long stretch of grey plain, those long lines of giant arches, and that long straight road with its border of ruins.

As the sun sinks low a broad arch of glowing orange forms in the western sky, melting into a cool purple pool in the vault above. A glimmering light as from a window in heaven, shoots athwart the Campagna; it creeps along the slopes of the Alban Hills, and kindles with a new fire the lavas of Rocca di Papa and the craters of the Monte Cavo. It steals upwards on the Apennines, as the lower dells darken into purple shadows, till the whole chain is flushed with a ruby light, and the snows are transmuted into molten gold. Then comes the change as of death. The glory departs from the summits, though it hovers yet, like an ascending spirit, in the cloudland of the upper sky; the snow turns pale and corpse-like, the east is violet with the coming night, the thin mists gather over the plain, the evening star shines out in the clear sky; but still, as we return to Rome, the glow yet lingers in the west over the distant sea, and the big Cyprus trees stand out, living obelisks, dark against the bright lurid light.

We get out of the carriage and walk across a vineyard into some walled-up ruins, the date of which no man knoweth. There are great columns standing of polished marble which evidently once supported some massive roof, long since crumbled away. The ground is strewn with blocks of broken arms and legs of marble statues. As we move quietly along amid all this decay and ruin, legions of lizards with their bright diamond-like eyes dart about us in all directions. We pause to rest a little, and look out upon this the *once* great road to Rome. It

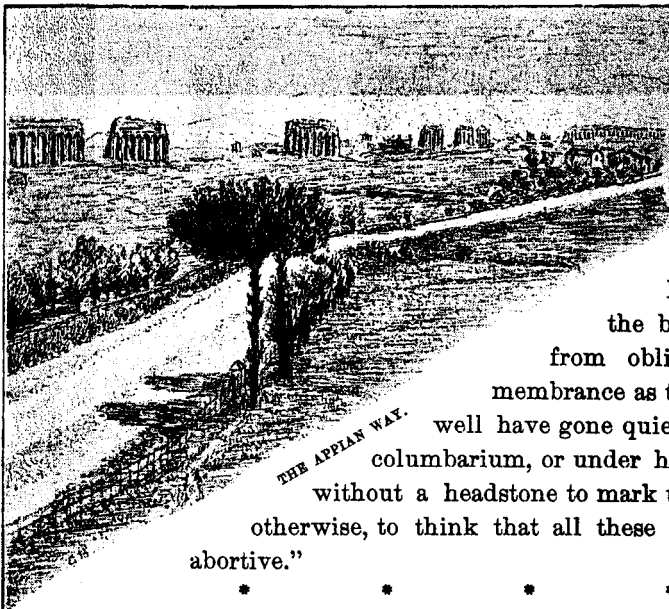
was laid down by Appius Claudius, 312 B.C., as far as Capua. Julius Cæsar carried it farther, and Augustus completed it. The whole length is three hundred and fifty miles. Horace made his well-known journey along it, and Statius describes it. As we gaze, we picture in imagination the sad crowds that have tramped that road, as well as the Via Sacra, chained to the conquerors' chariots. Hither came in golden chains the fair and beautiful Zenobia, whose history is more romantic than that of any other woman that I know of. After the death of her husband, which, according to some authors, she is said to have hastened, Zenobia reigned in the East as regent of her infant children, who were honoured with the title of Cæsars. She assumed the name of Augusta, and she appeared in imperial robes, and ordered herself to be styled the Queen of the East.

The troubles which at that time agitated the western parts of the Empire, prevented the Emperor from checking the insolence and ambition of this princess, who boasted to be sprung from the Ptolemies of Egypt. Aurelian was no sooner invested with the imperial purple than he marched into the East, determined to punish the pride of Zenobia. He well knew her valour, and he was not ignorant that in her wars against the Persians she had distinguished herself no less than Odenatus. She was the mistress of the East; Egypt acknowledged her power, and all the provinces of Asia Minor were subject to her command. When Aurelian approached the plains of Syria, the Palmyrean queen appeared at the head of seven hundred thousand men (where did she get them all from?). She bore the labours of the field like the meanest of her soldiers, and walked on foot fearless of danger. Two battles were fought; the courage of the Queen gained the superiority, but an imprudent evolution of the Palmyrean cavalry ruined her cause; and while they pursued with spirit the flying enemy, the Roman infantry suddenly fell upon the main body of Zenobia's army, and the defeat was inevitable. The Queen fled to Palmyra, determined to support a siege. Aurelian followed her, and after he had almost exhausted his stores, he proposed terms of accommodation, which were rejected with disdain by the warlike princess. Her hopes of victory, however, soon vanished, and though she harassed the Romans night and day by continual sallies from her walls, and the working of her military engines, she despaired of success when she heard that the armies, which were marching to her relief from Armenia, Persia, and the East, had partly been defeated and partly bribed from her allegiance. She fled from Palmyra in the night, but Aurelian, who was apprised of her escape, pursued her, and she was caught as she was crossing the river Euphrates. She was brought into the presence of Aurelian, and though the soldiers were clamorous for her death, she was reserved to adorn the triumph of the conqueror. She was treated with great kindness, and Aurelian gave her large possessions near Tivoli, where she was permitted to live the rest of her days in peace, with all the grandeur and majesty which became a queen of the East and a warlike princess.

Along this road and by the Via Sacra, both leading to the Forum, came, staff in hand, that great Apostle to the Gentiles, St. Paul, who was to plant the great garden and vineyard to his Master's service, from which should bloom and blossom the grand truths and precious fruits of Christianity. A little before his time good old Sicinius Dentatus, with a thousand of the picked cohorts, followed by Lucius and that grand soldier Virginius, came hurrying along this road to plead fair Virginia's cause and defend her honour against Appius Claudius in the Forum. On they all came, a never-ending host, all pushing and crowding forward to the Capitol.

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This same Appian Way presents to the imagination more thrilling memories and a wider extent of historical associations than any other highway in the world. Hawthorne, in his "Transformation," says:—"Even the Pyramids form hardly a stranger spectacle than the tombs of the Appian Way, with their gigantic height, breadth, and solidity, defying time and the elements, and far too mighty to be demolished by an ordinary earthquake. Here you may see a modern dwelling, and a garden with its vines and olive trees, perched on the lofty dilapidation of a tomb, which forms a precipice of fifty feet in depth on each of the four sides. There is a home on that funereal mound, where generations of children have been born, and successive lives been spent, undisturbed by the ghost of the stern Roman whose ashes were so preposterously burdened. Other sepulchres wear a crown of grass, shrubbery, and forest trees, which throw out a broad sweep of branches, having had twice over plenty of time to be more than a thousand years of age. On one of them stands a tower, which, though immemorially more modern than the tomb, was itself built by immemorial hands, and is now rifted quite from top



to bottom by a vast fissure of decay; the tomb hillock, its foundation, being still as firm as ever, and likely to endure until the last trump shall rend it wide asunder, and summon forth its unknown dead. Yes, its unknown dead! For, except in one or two doubtful instances, these mountainous sepulchral edifices

have not availed to keep so much as the bare name of an individual or a family from oblivion. Ambitious of everlasting remembrance as they were, the slumberers might just as well have gone quietly to rest each in his pigeon-hole of a columbarium, or under his little green hillock in a graveyard, without a headstone to mark the spot. It is rather satisfactory than otherwise, to think that all these idle pains have turned out so utterly abortive."

"Unspeakable," says the writer of "Modern Roman Mosaics," "is the beauty of this scene as the sun begins to go down, unspeakable the melancholy of the mountains, and the poetic plain, and the ineffable lights and shadows. Rome hums and stirs, lives and suffers in the midst. The soul feels strange yearnings, a strange sadness that is not all pain, an ecstasy of admiration that is not all pleasure. Down in the streets of her city she will presently thrill at the contact of humanity. She, too, will feel the influence of the vivid though transient present, and live her fragment of mortal life in Rome, and awake to its wonders, to its greatness, its squalor, wealth, beauty, and decay. But here, and now, she longs with a vague longing as for the wings of a dove. She melts with a vague pity for the myriads who have played out their brief part upon this stately theatre of the world, and whose place knows them no longer.

"Chirp! chirp! sings a little bird in the branches. The leaves of the ilex tremble a little in

the breeze, and the cypress sways slowly, bending its taper summit with a graceful motion. A dark-eyed child steals up and thrusts a bunch of odorous violets into my hand. The soft wind ruffles them too, and carries their delicious breath away upon its wings. Fainter and fainter the sound of music seems to flicker in the distance like a dying flame, now high, now low. The sun is sinking westward, glorious in cloudless effulgence. Soon the brief Southern twilight fills the sky; a sea of melted pearl, with a pale crescent moon, and one attendant star sailing silverly through its depths. Tiny wings flutter restlessly, and then are still among the dense dark foliage. The great mountains grow sombre, and the plain glimmers ghostly and grey. Yonder glides something that looks like the phantom of some classic Roman, shrouded in voluminous white drapery. No; it is a wreath of mist, the fatal breath of the Campagna, the deadly malaria in a visible form, crawling and creeping stealthily towards the streets of Rome."

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We have been here now nearly six weeks, and during that time we have been on a constant move from early morning until late at night—seeing all "the wonders that are to be seen," but, in fact, have seen comparatively very little. It would take me twelve months at least to properly study the three hundred and odd churches of Rome, to say nothing of the other eighty dedicated solely to the Holy Virgin. Without a glimpse of these palaces of worship, it is impossible to imagine the magnificence of the religion that reared them. Many of them shine with burnished gold. They glow with pictures. Their walls, columns, and arches seem a quarry of precious stones, so beautiful and costly are the marbles with which they are inlaid. Their pavements are often a mosaic of rare workmanship. Around their lofty cornices hover flights of sculptured angels, and within the vault of the ceiling and the swelling interior of the dome there are frescoes of such brilliancy, and wrought with so artful a perspective, that the sky, peopled with sainted forms, appears to be opened only a little way above your head. Then there are chapels opening from the side-aisles and transepts, decorated by popes and princes for their own burial-places and as shrines for their especial saints. In these the splendour of the entire edifice is intensified and gathered to a focus. Unless words were gems that would flame with many-coloured light upon the page, and throw thence a tremulous glimmer into the reader's eyes, it were vain to attempt a description of a princely chapel.

If to attend church with a real sacred love for artistic beauty is to be religious, then may I lay claim to being the most devout among Art's worshippers.

I never felt more sorry than I did just now, when I saw the hotel porters packing our luggage on the omnibus to take us to the railway station, for I should like to have lingered yet a little in this wonderful city, and have lounged once more amid the ruins of the "palace of the Cæsars," and spent a week or ten days at Hadrian's Villa at the fairy glen of Tivoli; but there is a satisfaction in the thought that it will not be very long (God willing) before we are in Rome again.

To-morrow we shall be in the City of Flowers, the ever beautiful Florence.