

MANY ODD THINGS ARE TO BE SEEN ON THE ROOF OF ST. PETER'S IN ROME BY THOSE WHO CAN MAKE THE ASCENT

THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER

Used Again for Coronation of Pope
—Its Vast Proportions.

With the coronation of Pope Pius X last Sunday in St. Peter's, the world had the opportunity of realizing again how vast is this sanctuary. There is a popular tradition that the great basilica can never be filled, and that even at the highest ceremonies its nave, which is as long as three Fifth-ave. blocks, and its transepts, in which two such blocks could be placed side by side, will always accommodate another thousand. But according to press dispatches, St. Peter's was actually filled last Sunday, and more than sixty thousand persons within its walls acclaimed the new Pope.

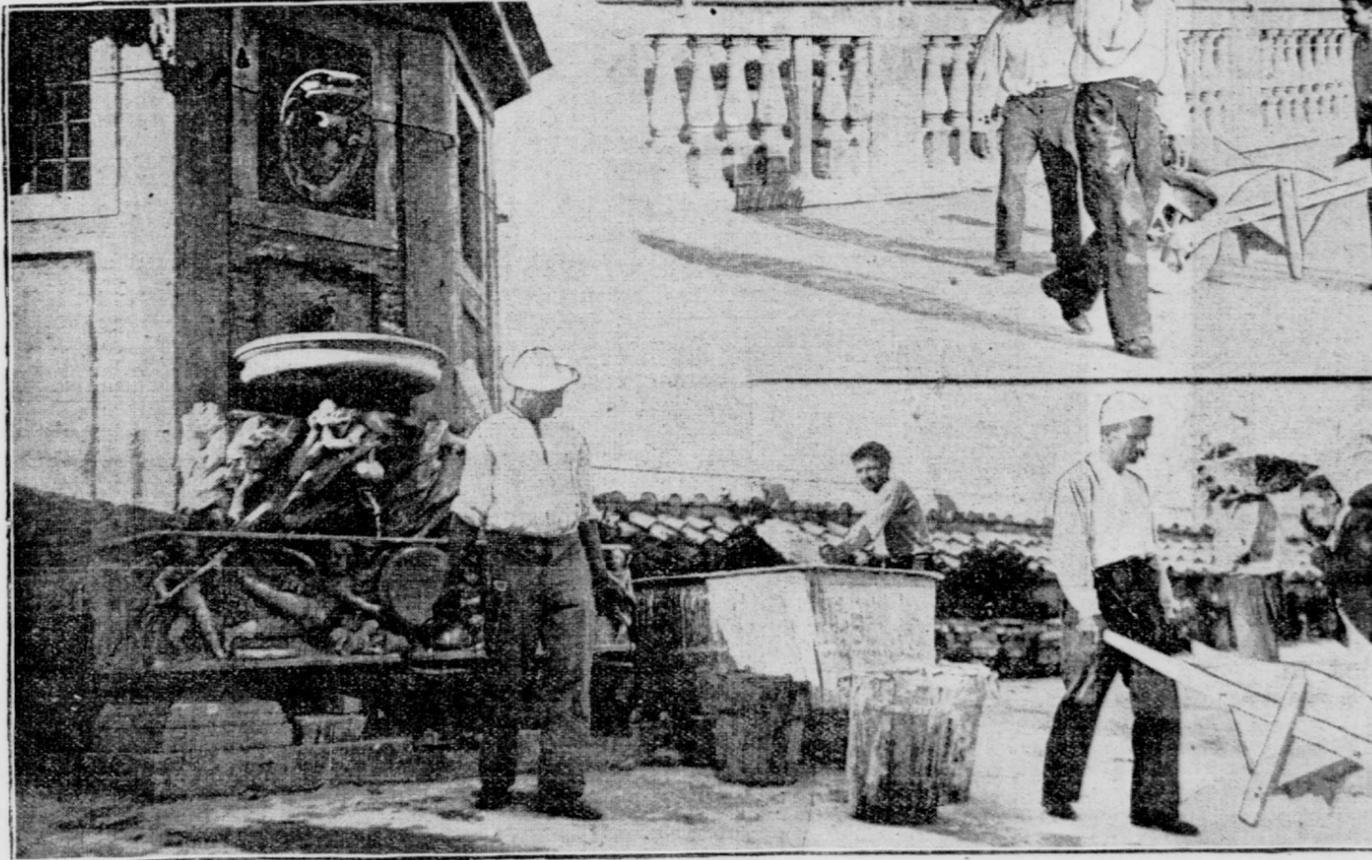
Not since 1846 had a Pope been crowned in

topmost torch was seen to sway back and forth and then dart to the ground like a shooting star. It was only a poor wretch who had lost his hold, and had dashed down to the pavement of the street, some four hundred and fifty feet below.

Promises of gold tempted some of these torchholders to risk their lives, but the majority were impelled by a still more potent influence. They were criminals from Italian prisons, who were told that in return for their bravery in facing death for the sake of the Church their crimes would be pardoned and their terms of imprisonment ended. In spite of the many frightful deaths which resulted each Easter, there were always plenty of volunteers, and it was not until a hurricane swept half a hundred torchbearers off the dome one night, and their bodies were found strewn about the plaza, that this feature of the Easter services at Rome was at last abandoned.

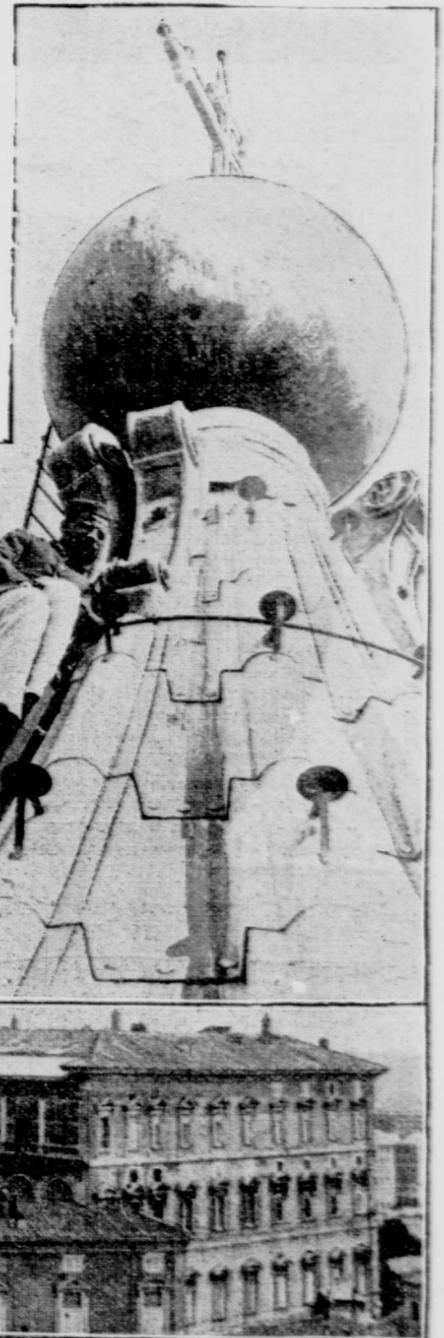
Those who reared the walls and hung the

STATUES OF THE APOSTLES, WHOSE EYES ARE AS BIG AS MEN'S HEADS.



FOUNTAIN ON ROOF TO SUPPLY THE NEEDS OF THE SMALL ARMY OF WORKMEN.

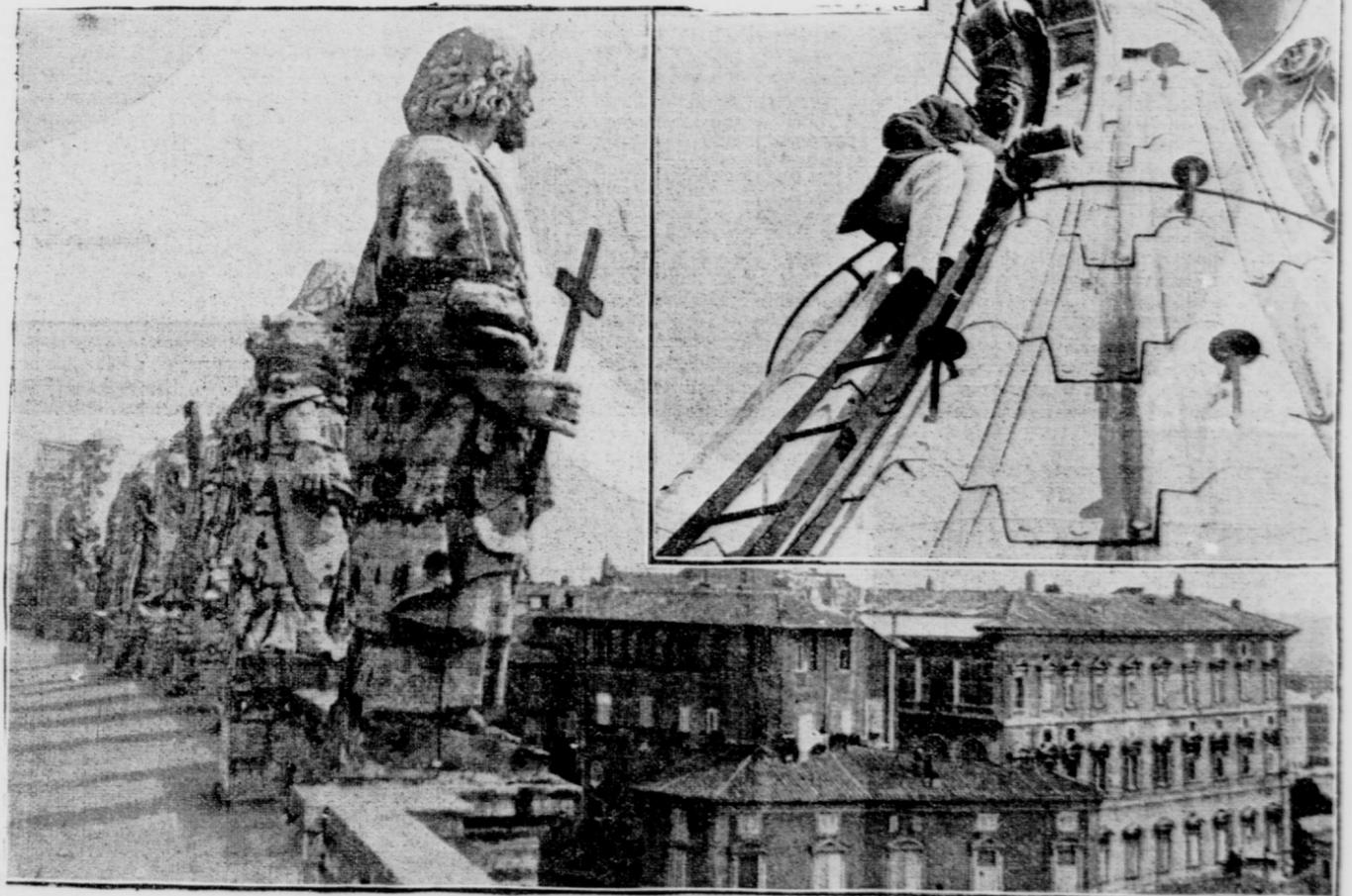
WORKMAN PERCHED AT THE DIZZY HEIGHT WHERE CRIMINALS USED TO HOLD EASTER TORCHES TO WIN PARDON.



what Catholics call "the vastest temple of Christianity." Leo XIII and Pius IX ascended the throne of Peter before a more exclusive audience in the Sistine Chapel. Not since 1870 had a Pope said mass in the chief auditorium, and those who watched the new Pontiff at the high altar and heard the intonations of his voice even in the most distant corners of the immense basilica called to mind the more glorious days of the Papacy, of which their fathers and grandfathers sometimes spoke. Then St. Peter's was the scene of frequent ceremonies, at which the head of the Church officiated, and where all the pomp and splendor of the Church were to be seen by even the humblest. Then the high festival days were always the occasion of great popular gatherings under the great dome, when the Pope himself would appear in the high altar and intone the mass.

In the reigns of the two predecessors of Pius X, St. Peter's came to be regarded as a sort of gorgeous mausoleum, where lay, together with the bodies of former Pontiffs, dead memories of the times when the Popes were heads of temporal as well as spiritual power. The services were not said from the high altar, but instead they were performed in chapels, or in some corner of the basilica when only a subordinate official of the Church officiated. Even on such holy days as Christmas and Easter a cardinal conducted the mass, and even on St. Peter's day, when supplicants came to kiss the toe of the great bronze image of the fisherman apostle, the Pope's face was never seen. And so an edifice, which two centuries ago cost \$50,000,000, and which nowadays would represent an expenditure of \$200,000,000, had come to answer much the same purpose as an ordinary church.

The new Pope, by reviving something of the glory of this ancient sanctuary, has thus caused the Roman populace to compare the days of the present Church with those of former times. Some have contrasted the days of Leo XIII with those of Urban VIII. When Urban consecrated St. Peter's in 1606, one hundred and twenty years after Julius II laid the first stone of the building, the Easter holiday was celebrated in the great sanctuary with a gorgeousness which had never before been attempted. At night the great dome was illumined by a thousand torches, so that it appeared against the black sky like a mountain of fire. Each torch was held by a climber, who clutched with his other hand some projecting ledge on the almost precipitous surface of the dome. Occasionally a



GIGANTIC FIGURES WHICH LOOK LIKE PIGMIES FROM THE STREET.

dome of St. Peter's meant that it should play a spectacular part. When Bramante drew his first plan, and Michael Angelo and Giacomo della Porta evolved the dome, they sought not only to house the world's greatest gatherings, but also to inspire approaching pilgrims with an awe they had never felt before. Little did they dream of the time when its chief auditorium would fall into disuse, and that finally more than half a century should elapse without a Papal coronation beneath its dome.

One needs to climb to the top of St. Peter's to understand best how its builders sought to overawe its beholders. Then the colossal proportions of every detail become apparent. Then one may discover that the pen in the hand of St. Mark is as long as a six foot grenadier. On approaching the row of apostles which stand along the edge of the roof, and which seem to the bystander in the street below of the size of ordinary human beings, one will find gigantic figures, whose eyes are as big as men's heads,

and whose fingers vie in size with an athlete's forearm. The roof is indeed a city in itself, for here are rows of houses, where the workmen who are constantly employed in repairing the cathedral have their homes. A fountain supplies them with water, and their provisions are brought to them on the backs of donkeys driven up the broad and easy incline of the stairway.

Far above, on the peak of the towering dome, which, although nearly two centuries have passed since its completion, is still the highest