

# ROME, "THE CITY OF THE SOUL" By REV. PATRICK TURNER, Pastor Sacred Heart Church

Rome, the capital of modern united Italy, situated on the banks of the "yellow Tiber" is known by many names. To some it will ever be the city of the Caesars. To others it is the City of the Popes. Many love to call it the "Eternal City," but to me its beauty and grandeur are best expressed in a title which many who know and love it bestow upon it, viz: "The City of the Soul."

The lover of the ancient classics or the student of Pagan antiquities and art will find the city of Rome a source of wonder and inspiration. Every period of the kingdom, republic or empire of Rome have left their remains upon the seven hills. From the rude blocks which formed the first wall of Rome to the works of art which belonged to the empire—all those remains are of interest to the student—all arouse at least the curiosity of the visitor.

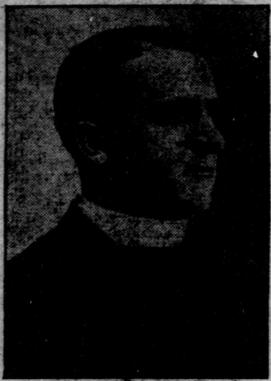
This article can lay no claim to be a detailed account of such objects, hence many of them will not be mentioned. It is simply a slight account of some of the objects which made a deep impression upon the mind of the writer during three years' residence in the city of Rome.

**Scenes of Triumphs.**

My studies of Roman history and literature had taught me that the Roman citizen who sought renown or the favor of his countrymen tried to win it on the battlefield or the forum. Rome's battlefields would take in the whole world. I was therefore anxious to see the remains of the older scenes of so many triumphs. The forum was the great assembly place for the Roman people, and contained the most famous monuments in the city. At the present day we can trace the remains of the Via Sacra, or sacred way, the rostra to which Anthony addressed the head and hand of Cicero; the volcanic where Brutus sat and saw his sons beheaded; and many of the pagan temples. The best preserved monuments of this place are the Arch of Septimius Severus and the arch erected to Titus and Vespasian when they had accomplished the destruction of Jerusalem. Speaking of this spot Hawthorne says "standing beneath the arch of Titus and amid so much ancient dust it is difficult to forbear the commonplaces of enthusiasm." Over the half-worn stones and beneath this arch Roman armies had trodden in their outward march to fight battles a world's width away. On the arch are reliefs of the sacred vessels and seven branch candelstick taken from the destroyed city of Jerusalem afterwards lost, tradition tells us, by being cast into the Tiber.

**Remains of First City.**

Near the Forum is the Palatine Hill where there are some remains of the first city wall built some twenty-five centuries ago. We can trace also the outlines of the palaces of the Caesars and gain some idea of the grandeur



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In which those tyrants lived. There are also some remains of a private house, the walls of which are beautifully decorated, and the ruins of a church called Santa Maria in Antiqua, or old church of St. Mary's, have lately been discovered. This church was one of the oldest in Rome, being in all probability a part of a royal palace, later used as a church.

In the museums which are open and free to all visitors, are to be seen many other objects of interest, such as statues and other works of art which were produced by the greatest artists of Greece and Rome.

**The Grandest Ruin.**

In better preservation than the Forum is the Coliseum, which may well be called the grandest ruin of ancient Rome. It is regarded by the Romans as almost indestructible. Their belief in it is summed up in the lines of the poet:

"While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand; When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall; And when Rome falls, the world."

At present it is an enormous pile, and yet historians tell us that if all the marble which once adorned its walls were replaced, many of Rome's most famous palaces would have to be destroyed.

"A ruin yet what ruin! from its mass Walls, palaces, half cities have been reared.

Yet of the enormous skeleton ye pass, And marvel where the spoli could have appeared."

The Coliseum was the great theatre of the Roman populace. Here the gladiatorial combats were held, and

brave warriors forced to murder each other to make a holiday for a cruel people and their depraved rulers. What a pity that the grandest ruin of ancient Rome, the monument which, above all others, impresses us with the greatness or power of Rome, should also be a lasting proof of the cruelty of the Roman people!

To the student of Christian history this ruin is sacred, for within its walls was waged the fight between Paganism and Christianity. The champions of the former were brutal executioners and wild beasts of the forest; of the latter innocent children, pure maidens, and defenseless matrons. In the physical combat the weak were overcome, but in the moral combat to test the strength and power of principles the weak confounded the strong. When we think of the numbers of martyrs who suffered here we can well realize the justice of the action of a pilgrim who, returning from the Eternal City, brought as a precious relic a little sand from this arena which had been sanctified by the blood of martyrs. The Coliseum was dedicated as a place of worship and religious services were held there in memory of the martyrs till the occupation of Rome by the Italian army.

**The Catacombs.**

No visitor will leave Rome without a visit to the Catacombs. As new parts are ever being excavated, if we remain in Rome for years we can always find matter to interest us at those monuments. The Catacombs are a series of underground passages several miles outside the walls of Rome. The total length of all Catacombs is several hundred miles. They were cut into the soft tufa or sandstone and today we can see on the ceilings the signs of the pick with which the work was done. They were, in all probability of Pagan origin, but during the persecutions were used as hiding places and cemeteries by the Christians. The graves were cut into the side walls of the corridors or passageways and look like a number of shelves, one placed above the other. The body being in place, the opening was closed by a marble slab or closed in with bricks and mortar. The name of the deceased person was placed on the tomb frequently with a request to pray for his or her soul. If the person buried were a martyr on one corner of the tomb was placed a small oil lamp, on the other a small phial of the martyr's blood. The bishops and popes were buried in the chapels, and if martyrs, an altar was raised over their tombs. On these altars the mysteries were celebrated, the officiating priest or bishop and his ministers being at the altar, the congregation being disposed along the passageways which opened into the chapel and gave a view of the altar. During all religious ceremonies guards kept watch. At the approach of the Pagans the corridor

was filled with sand kept in readiness for the purpose and the congregation disappeared into the secret parts of the Catacombs. Some of the chapels are in a good state of preservation, and were all beautifully decorated with scriptural or allegorical subjects or paintings of Christ, the Virgin and the Apostles. To the theological student the Catacombs are perhaps the most interesting part of ancient Rome. They are invaluable in the study of church history and Christian dogma.

**Not a City of Ruins.**

But Rome is not all a city of ruins. Towering above the remains of Pagan Rome is Christian Rome, Catholic Rome, the Rome of today. Its public buildings, palaces and churches are masterpieces of architecture. Its art treasures are unsurpassed and will never be equalled. To me, however, there was but one object which was sufficient of itself to make any city famous and that was the Basilica of St. Peter. As I entered the city of Rome for the first time I caught a glimpse of that magnificent dome and my desire to visit the church was even greater from that moment. On the first opportunity I hastened across the city in the direction of St. Peter's. With the Vatican palace it is situated on the right bank of the Tiber, near the Janiculum.

It is approached through a piazza, the buildings, along which are concealed by a superb colonnade designed by Bernini and consisting of 284 immense giant columns, with an entablature on which 192 statues of saints each eleven feet high stand sentinel. In the center of the piazza is an Egyptian obelisk, seventy-seven feet high and weighing 322 tons. It is the largest wrought stone in Europe. It was erected in Egypt, brought to Rome by emperor Caligula, and placed in its present position by Sixtus V. On either side of the obelisk is a beautiful fountain after the design of Maderno.

As I stood on this piazza for the first time I easily recognized it as a fitting approach of the greatest temple ever raised to God by the hands of man. Eagerly did my gaze seek the opposite side of the piazza to feast on the beauty of Peter's dome. I must admit that I was greatly disappointed. I had expected to see the dome stand out in bold relief, describing its whole cycloid in the air. Unfortunately, it is half hidden by the front of the church. The building is so large that it can all be viewed at once only at a distance. So eager was I to see the interior of the Basilica that I scarcely noticed the magnificent proportions of the vestibule, equal in size to many a cathedral and the beauties of the old bronze doors were lost on me for the time. The great leatheren portiere was drawn aside and one of the dearest wishes of my heart was realized: I stood within St. Peter's Basilica. What a

magnificent spectacle! It surpassed the wildest dreams of my imagination. I visited the Basilica once or twice every week for three years and at every visit saw something new to admire.

"Rich marbles, richer paintings, shrines where flame through their fame The lamps of gold and haughty dome which vies In air with earth's chief structures, though their fame Sits on the firm set ground—and this the clouds must claim."

**The Interior View.**

The interior seems at first sight smaller than it really is, which fact has been explained by the just proportions of the building which is neither too long, or too broad, or too high. "The proportions," says Addison, "are so well observed that no part appears to an advantage or distinguishes itself above the rest." It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that a person must live in Rome for some time to really know and fully appreciate St. Peter's. I remember how surprised I was after very many visits to discover that all the famous paintings had been removed from St. Peter's and replaced by mosaics. The change has been made will not recognize them as mosaics without careful examination. Then those wonderful tombs of the Popes and statues of saints—What masterpieces of the sculptor's art! How interesting for a student of church history to go from tomb to tomb, examining the faces of the figures and trying to see in the countenances some trace of character history has bestowed upon each one!

But who can stand beneath that lofty dome and not breathe a prayer to God in whose honor it was raised? Yes, a prayer of thanksgiving to the Creator who bestowed upon man the genius which could produce such a temple. And this is the work of man, what must be the grandeur and the power and the beauty of the masterpiece of God's work, the intellect and soul of man! Standing beneath this dome and realizing the beauty and the lofty majesty which surround ed me, I could not but recall to mind the words of Byron:

"Enter, its grandeur overwhelms thee not; And why? It is not lessened; but thy mind Expanded by the genius of the spot, Has grown colossal, and can only find A fit abode wherein appear enshrined Thy hopes of immortality!"

**At Best Advantage.**

This great Basilica is seen to best

advantage on the occasion of some great papal function. I had the happiness of being present on March 4th, 1902, when Pope Leo XIII celebrated the silver jubilee of his Pontificate. In the early morning hours the crowds began to gather in the piazza of St. Peter's. By nine o'clock when the doors were opened there were fully fifty thousand persons present. This multitude was kept back from the doors by a couple of thousand Italian Carabinieri and soldiers. Admission was by ticket and over seventy thousand tickets were taken up at the doors. About ten-thirty a detachment of Swiss guards, clothed in the uniforms designed by Michael Angelo, and bearing their ancient pikes, entered, took their places along the barricades placed to keep a clear passage way from the Vatican entrance to the high altar. They were followed by a company of Palatine guards and noble guards of the Vatican, clothed in their richest uniforms. The members of this military body are all sons of the Italian and Roman nobility. Then came the clergy of St. Peter's church, followed by several hundred bishops and archbishops from every part of the world. The archbishops and heads of religious orders were followed by the cardinals in their full pontifical robes. As the last of the cardinals entered the church there was a peal of silver trumpets from the loggia over the central door, followed by the choir of the Sistine choir singing the "Ecce Sacerdos Magnus."

**Deep Hush Fell.**

A deep hush fell upon the great multitude as all eyes were turned towards the door. For a moment no sound was heard save the sweet strains of the music. Then as the people saw the Holy Father seated on the Sede Gestatoria which was borne on the shoulders of the attendants, a low murmuring sound of wonder or admiration could be heard. The Pope rose to his feet, steadying himself by leaning on one arm of the chair he raised in blessing a waxlike hand. His face was that of a father looking lovingly on his children. His great lustrous eyes held the multitude spell bound. For a moment—which seemed an age—it was thus, then, with a mighty shout the multitude cried out: "Eviva! Eviva! Leone!" At that moment St. Peter's assumed its real character. It was no longer the Vatican Basilica! It lost its local or national character and became what its builders meant it to be, the cathedral of the Catholic world.

**None So Sublime.**

There were many solemn moments during the ceremonies which followed but none so sublime as that first moment. It was my good fortune to witness many notable scenes in St. Peter's. I saw the same Leo laid to rest, was present when the Urna was placed for the first time on the brow of Pius X, but never can I forget the emotions

of that moment when my eyes rested for the first time on the face and form of Leo XIII.

There are many other notable churches in the city of Rome and not only pages but volumes could be written on its treasures of art. I have tried to select those things which would interest my readers and assure them that if this article has not been found interesting it is not the fault of the theme, for no subject could be more inspiring than the city of the seven hills, Rome, venerable, ancient, but ever young. Many happy days were spent within its walls and it will be ever dear to me as "The Beautiful City of the Soul."

**He Changed His Mind.**

A New York pastor received a call in his study one morning not long ago from a man with whom he had a pleasant, but not intimate, acquaintance. And the visitor told him, with much ado, that he had called on a peculiar errand, says World's Work.

"Some time ago," he said, "as you know, I lost my wife. I have no children. I have no kinsfolk, and I am very lonely in the world. Last week, by an unlucky speculation, I lost my whole fortune. I am, therefore, without companionship, without an occupation, without money. I am too old to start again, and I have no joy in life as it is. I have deliberately decided, therefore, to commit suicide. I called to tell you of my purpose and to ask the favor of you that when my body is found you will make such an explanation as your good judgment and kindly feeling toward me may suggest. I have come simply to ask this favor, and not to argue the question which I have settled for myself. I shall be very grateful."

The preacher said little, and was far too wise to undertake to dissuade him; but he permitted the man to say all that he had to say without interruption. Then, as he was going away, the preacher called to him and said: "I have not seen you on the golf links for some time. You used to enjoy the game."

"Yes," said the other, "well, go out and play one more game today before you carry out your purpose."

The man smiled for the first time, and went to the golf course, and—he is living yet.

**Business Improving.**

Hoax—I suppose business is improving since election.

Joax—Yes; I am told that even the clockmakers are putting on more hands.—Philadelphia Record.

Belgium has placed the ban on the importation of American cattle until the foot and mouth disease is effectually checked.

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