

A LETTER FROM ROME.

BY GEORGE C. BARTLETT.

WE have, at last, reached Christian Rome, "Queen of Land and Sea," and the capital of Italy. I hesitate to write of this city because every detail and every emotion of its prolonged life have



ST. PETER'S.

been told in prose and poetry, on canvas and in marble. Fearing I have made no new discoveries, I realize

"How much a dunce that has been sent to roam
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home."

During the different ages the city has varied much in population; at the present time it has about 300,000, while under Augustus

its numbers were 1,300,000 and under Vespasian 2,000,000. Rome was an aged city when the Apostle Paul occupied apartments in the Jewish quarter. I was permitted, this day, to step into his former bedroom, and look from the same window from whence he so often



ST. PAUL'S RESIDENCE.

gazed; and I thought, did he look from out that window into the starlit heavens for a sign of the second coming of Jesus, and did he close it night after night, saying, with a heart full of faith, "It will surely be given me to-morrow, to-morrow."



FOUNTAIN OF ATLAS.

We are too early in the season to view the city in her most attractive features, for Rome particularly needs sunshine and balmy



THE FOUNTAIN OF MOSES.

weather, as she is naturally cold and rocky, barren of color, and thickly built of stone and marble; even the numerous fountains

which adorn the city have scarcely a green shrub about them, or a patch of grass; many of these fountains are beautiful works of art, especially the one where Moses is sculptured in gigantic proportions



ARCH OF TITUS.

and represented as having struck the rock, in response to which the water comes gushing forth improvising its own music and dancing fantastically in its white cloud of spray.

That deserted part of the city, sacred to the elderly ruins, no doubt looks cheerless enough at all times, but viewing it as we did through the cold mist and rain, it appeared dreary indeed. That portion of the city is called Old Rome, having narrow streets, some of them without sidewalks, while others have a narrow walk on one side only. New Rome presents a more attractive appearance with wider streets and fit pavements; the buildings average well, and the shops display a great variety of attractive merchandise. Fine jewelry, precious stones, superior photography, painting and statuary, attract the eye and pleasantly tax the brain from morning until



TEMPLE OF VESTA.

night. For ages numerous sculptors here have devoted their lives to the perfection of mythological subjects; each ambitious to create a perfect Venus—Venus as beautiful as when she came dripping from the sea; consequently we find Venuses of every age and proportion; some colored by time, others fresh from the chisel pink and white, and as fair as the morning, the hair waving over their graceful bodies, questioning eyes, fleshlike arms, dimpled hands, and looking as though Galatea-like, they were about to move,—to speak. Others have passed by their young life and days of beauty and perfect form, and are no longer attractive, save to savants, or

students of antique sculpture. Time, who never rests, has been at work changing the delicate tints of their bodies, until they have become sootish-gray, ravished and mutilated; one having lost a hand, or arm, or leg, or nose, another with thigh broken; lifeless all, remnants of petrified Venuses.

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Many private galleries are thrown open to the public on certain days in the week. Yesterday we visited the Villa Borghese, open to strangers on Saturdays only. It is situated a short distance from



THE VENUS OF CANOVA.

the city in a large green park, surrounded by noble trees. We were charmed with the collection, room after room being filled with the best works of the most celebrated artists; it was there that I found the one perfect woman, the work of Canova, greatest of all sculptors living or dead. His model, formerly an occupant of this villa, was Pauline, wife of Camillo Borghese and sister of Napoleon. She was a modest and beautiful woman, and report says that when some society ladies expressed their holy horror that she should have posed without clothing, she innocently replied, "Why, the room was warm."

Probably no other city is so frequented by tourists and travelers. We daily meet Americans and Europeans who are enthusiastic over what they have seen and eagerly expectant of the future.

It would require a lifetime to familiarize oneself with the Vatican, the palace of the Pope; it is the great storehouse of knowledge and of art. It is said to contain thousands of apartments, some of which are of great beauty, such as the Sistine Chapel, which is decorated by Raphael, Giulio, Romano and their scholars. The library is large and one of the finest in the world, and the space it occupies exquisite in design.

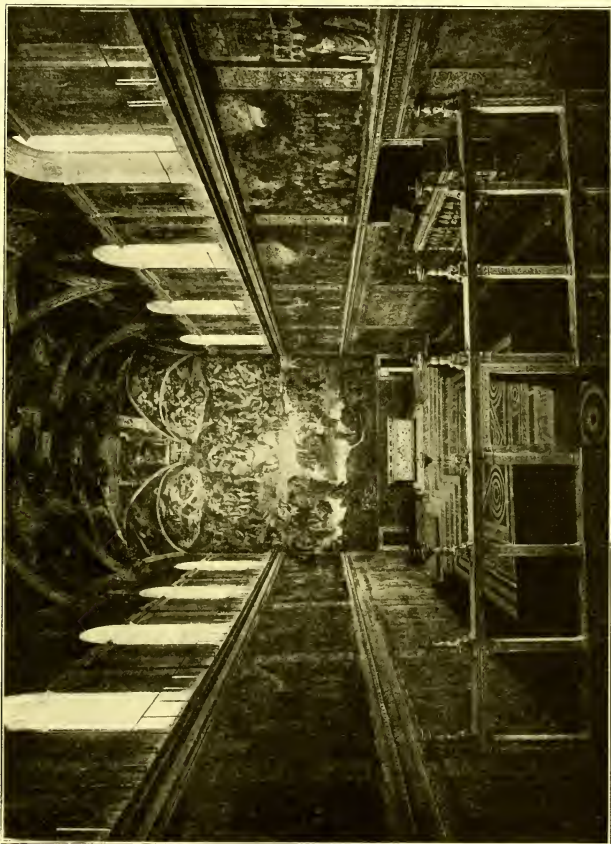


GROTTO OF THE NYMPH EGERIA.

The Vatican contains a grand museum, extensive galleries of antiquities, both Christian and pagan, and there is no end to the statuary, bronzes, vases etc. The hanging works of art, including the pictures, would, I think, cover the entire wall of China. Here is to be found every variety of paintings from the picture executed by the boy who first held a brush, up to the work of the most renowned artists. As in other celebrated galleries there are to be seen—or rather not to be seen—many old pictures, so old and dingy that pains come into one's back while bending this way and that, to so strike the light that some part of the pictures may be discernible,

and your back becomes stiff from craning and twisting about for the same purpose; all of which is hard labor without compensation.

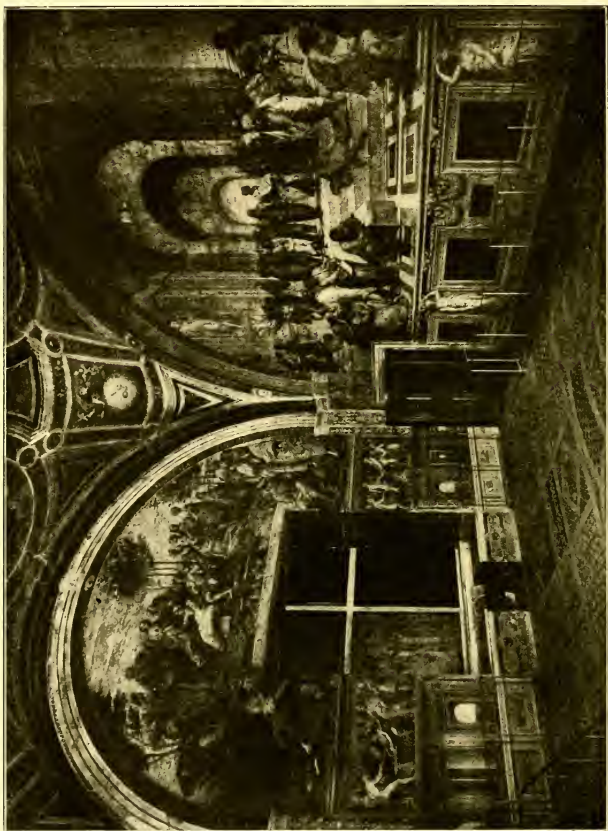
A delightful home the good Pope has in the Vatican, surrounded as he is by everything desirable that art, talent and money can collect



INTERIOR OF THE SISTINE CHAPEL.

and deposit for man's delectation. His body guard and serving attachés are dressed in striped suits of yellow, and as they move busily hither and thither they give the necessary color and life to the massive stone buildings. An extensive space is occupied by the

workers in mosaic; some of whom are employed in cutting out little square pieces from stone, or shell or glass; others are at work in the manufacture of the opaque glass or smalts from which the little pieces are taken; in glass alone they produce twenty-five thousand



INTERIOR OF THE CAMERA DEL SEGNATURA.

shades. In different rooms and alcoves the artists are at work cementing in place these toy bits of glass and stone, often working on the same subject for a very long time; several pieces done for the church of St. Peter's represents the work of twenty years each. The origin of the art is unknown and is past finding out, which,

alas, goes to show that even history is not lasting, but must die and be forgotten. The oldest mosaic work I have seen is in the pavements of Pompeii; it is a favorite art with the Russians, and in recent years they have excelled.



ST. PETER'S FROM THE EAST.

Rome possesses only three or four Protestant churches, the remaining three or four hundred are Roman Catholic, and the wealth they represent is enormous.

My first visit was to St. Peter's, the largest and most gorgeous cathedral in the world, and built upon the reputed grave of St.

Peter. As I pull aside the heavy leather curtained door, and, as it were, shove myself in, the first surprise is bewildering. Am I in a church, or have I made a mistake? I behold so much at the one first glance that I am dazzled, as one who looks at the sun. I pause in admiration, collect myself, and move slowly on realizing that St. Peter's is indeed the god of churches, the combination of all in one. Contained within its walls are a wonderful collection of paintings, and the perfection of statuary. The sweetest music you hear coming to, and going from you, floating above you in the golden dome and chasséing in and out among the flying cupids. One would



ST. PETER'S.
(Villa Panfil.)

not be surprised at any moment to behold the Opera of Nero, or witness the ship scene in Anthony and Cleopatra, so much is continually going on. Instead, however, we witnessed the representation of the Crucifixion. The priests and boys were in gorgeous costumes of red, trimmed with gold, and were marching around the body of the church carrying long lighted candles, and a very large cross, looking as though made of the entire trunk of a tree, and singing as they marched to the accompaniment of the organ.

Here and there about the building are beautifully decorated little chapels, where in one room or another, and frequently in many

rooms, religious services were progressing. We attended a priests' service in one of these chapels which appeared to me as odd and meaningless as that of any Eastern worship I had witnessed. Was it owing to my ignorance of the language and of the symbols? The priests first read a few verses in a strange tongue, and knelt and rose many times within an hour; they burned incense until one could hardly breathe, and several times they drank wine; they embraced each other, and kissed certain portions of the book which at times they held over the incense; pages and servants were kept busy arranging and smoothing out their robes; they partially undressed and dressed repeatedly during the ceremonies, which were interspersed with chanting and jerky music. I did wish that some of those old white-haired priests would step forward and in plain English tell us truly just how far they had traveled on the road of religious knowledge, and all they had learned by the way. If hearts could be revealed, their secrets known to us, they would differ very much from the masquerading words of the mouth. I fear if with our eyes closed we could hear our most intimate friends relate the true story of the heart we would not recognize them.

Far different from the priests' showy exercises were those of the poor silent figures scattered over the church kneeling in quiet and out-of-the-way places trying to get from heaven that consolation which they so much needed to carry them through this world of trouble, which had left them little except hope. We were shown into the private dressing-rooms of the priests, and were fortunate in meeting a party who were influential enough to procure us admittance, with them, into the private apartments of the church where were kept the gold, silver and precious stones, as also the Pope's bejeweled crowns. In large glass cases were to be seen the presents that had been given by the people to the different popes; it was a rare collection. The Pope's jubilee is celebrated every twenty-five and fifty years, the presents given are numerous and many of them are of great value. We also examined the priests' finer robes of gorgeous colors, and embroidered with gold.

The designers and artists who decorated this cathedral seem not to object to the nude in art, in fact the tendency runs that way, as for example, one woman was chiseled so voluptuously in white marble that she attracted much questionable admiration, and the Pope fearing its influence would tend to drag men to earth rather than lift their thoughts to heaven, ordered a portion of her lovely form to be covered with metal. It is still, however, one of the most notable and admired works in St. Peter's. St. Peter's cost forty

million dollars, and it requires thirty thousand to mend its clothing each year. One hundred and fifty popes are buried beneath the church. Above the many confessionals are written in gold letters some word, or sentence, in the different languages, so that each penitent may easily find the priest who can speak in his or her own native tongue.

As I stood inside of the great cathedral and looked at its grandeur it seemed as though poverty in the world should be as a thing unknown.

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]