

Rome, Sept. 8.

We have had three days of superficial sight seeing here in Rome and have only skimmed over the surface of this wonderful city. So many influences have centered here that it would be the work of a lifetime to sort out and analyze the effects of the different civilizations, whose greatest works of art were brought here by the conquering Romans. Obelisks and sphinxes from Egypt, ancient Etrusian pottery exquisitely beautiful Greek statuary and columns all utilized and woven into the luxurious fabric of Roman life,--mutilated and destroyed by the barbarians from the north, sadly neglected after the removal of the capitol to Constantinople, appropriated and perverted for the construction of church by the Popes, and only since the 17th and 18th centuries brought to light again. These ruins of infinite variety tell the story of the intense life that has surged about and over them.

It is impossible to describe, individually and minutely, the things we have seen here. A mere skeleton of each day's activities will have to suffice. Tuesday morning we went first to St. Peter's where we took the elevator part way and climbed the rest of the way to the top of the immense dome, where we got a wonderful view of the city. The interior of the dome is decorated with mosaic portraits of the Biblical characters. From St. Peter's we went to the Sistine Chapel which we left reluctantly, for Michael Angelo has populated the wall and ceiling with powerful magnetic characters. In the Vatican museum we saw many of Raphael's paintings and tapestries and some of the most famous statuary in the world,--the Apollo Belvedere, the Laocoon group, and many others. It is a museum which one could visit again and again.

It was three when we left the museum, and even then we left because it was the closing hour. After lunch at a little restaurant in the shade of St. Peter's we walked to Castle St. Angelo, originally the tomb of Hadrian, later used as a fortress during the invasions of the barbarians and finally as a medieval castle and residence of the popes. It was here that Benvenuto Cellini, Beatrice Cenci, and other notables were imprisoned. The wooden catapults and stone balls used in the defense of the castle were still visible.

Tired of seeing so many things at close range, we jumped into a taxi, drove about the city for about two hours, went back to the hotel and called it a day. Passed many beautiful fountains, and visited St. Paul's, a beautiful church. The next day we spent in the Roman Forum. The beautiful columns of the Temple of Saturn and the Temple of Castor and Pollux furnish a skeleton around which one can build an imaginary picture of the real Forum---- a majestic group of temples and public buildings. Nearby is the Colosseum, where we saw the cages and prisons where wild animals and their prospective victims were kept. Walking past the Palatine hill where many of the Caesars had their palaces, we came to the site of the Circus Maximus, the scene of chariot races and other public festivities, such as the feeding of slaves and christians to the lions and tigers.

On every mound of old Roman ruins stands a church, and in most cases the churches are merely reconstructed pagan temples. Building materials have been appropriated on a wholesale scale, and many beautiful works of art have suffered at the hand of over-zealous christian architects.

On our way back into town we stopped for a moment at the so-called Temple of Vesta and the Temple of Fortune, the latter probably the best preserved of all the Roman Temples. In the afternoon we took a taxi and drove out onto the Appian way, visited the extensive ruins of the baths of Caracalla, the tomb of Metalla, and the catacombs of St. Calixtus which were rather disappointing after the ones we had seen near Palermo. We stopped to visit three churches as we came back into town, St. Peter in Vincallo where we saw Michael Angelo's powerful dignified statue of Moses, St. John Lateran, decorated with heroic size statues of the disciples and finally the church of St. Maria Maggiore.

Thursday morning we went to the National Museum, situated in the ruins of the baths of Diocletian. The outstanding piece of work here is the Venus of Cirene, headless and armless, but nevertheless indescribably beautiful and graceful. From the museum we took a taxi to the Fincio, one of the seven hills of Rome, where the Villa Borghese is situated. Such beautiful trees and statues! Thru the Porto del Populo to the Piazz de Spagna, the center of Rome's foreign colony where we poked around in some of the shops but found things rather expensive.

We had luncheon near the huge new Victor Emmanuel monument in the centre of town and headed for the Capitoline museum where we saw "The Dying Gaul" and many other excellent pieces of statuary. The Mamertine prisons, where St. Peter and St. Paul are said to have been imprisoned proved to be quite interesting. We returned to the hotel thoroughly tired out, for museums are taxing things. Music in the garden of the hotel in the evening. We all went to see Hector.

Friday morning we bought more Italian money, settled the hotel bill, bought tickets all the way to the Swiss border through Cook's and packed our grips. At one o'clock we appeared at the Vatican for Hector had arranged for us to be present at one of the Pope's audiences. We passed the Swiss guard, climbed hundreds of stairs, walked through several large marble rooms, were lined up with hundreds of other people around the sides of the room and stood waiting for the entrance of the holy father. Numerous pages in red suits ran here and there beckoning and gesticulating, and near the door stood one of the Swiss guards, looking like a masquerader in his vivid blue, orange and red uniform. The women were all veiled and the men wore dark clothing.

A hush fell over the room as several brilliantly uniformed military attaches came through the door, and a moment later we all knelt as Pope Pius entered. Passing rapidly around the room he extended his hand to each person in turn that we might kiss his ring. Having gone about the room he pronounced his blessing on all of us, and on the things people had brought to be blessed.

From my impressions of the time I remember his as a positive man whose personality was felt the moment he entered the room. Physically, he is of medium height, stocky but not at all fat, clear, rather light complexion, and firm hands. He wore a white robe or surplice and red shoes with golden heels.

The whole occasion was very colorful, and at the same time dignified and reverent. It was a privilege for which I am very grateful. A taxi back to the hotel, a quick change of clothing, and Uncle Dudley Leo and I boarded the train for Florence. The trip was rather uneventful but as we went farther north the landscape became more and more beautiful---more green everywhere---trees and gardens---and less of the dry parched appearance of southern Italy. At half past eight we arrived in Florence, went at one to the Hotel Baglioni, had dinner and went to bed.

More later,

Dan.