

mushroom (to them ancient as the sun itself) to hear what their wisest philosopher has to say of the gloomy prospect. If I remember aright, he first told them that, incredible as it might seem, there was not only a time in the world's youth when the mushroom itself was young, but that the sun in those early ages was in the eastern, not in the western, sky. Since then, he explained, the eyes of scientific ephemera had followed it, and established by induction

from vast experience the great law of nature, that it moved only westward; and he showed that since it was now nearing the western horizon, science herself pointed to the conclusion that it was about to disappear forever, together with the great race of ephemera for whom it was created.

What his hearers thought of this discourse I do not remember, but I have heard that the sun rose again the next morning.

S. P. Langley.

## RECENT DISCOVERIES OF WORKS OF ART IN ROME.

BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW MUSEO URBANO.



IN a manuscript volume of the Vatican Library, belonging to the Syriac collection, and numbered one hundred and forty-five, a short description of Rome has been found, written A. D. 546, by Zacharias, a

Byzantine historian and bishop of Mitylene in the island of Lesbos. From his account we gather that, towards the middle of the sixth century of our era, there were in Rome *eighty* statues of gilt bronze representing gods, *three thousand seven hundred and eighty-five* bronze statues of miscellaneous subjects, and *twenty-five* bronze statues which according to the tradition had been removed from Jerusalem by Vespasian; in total, three thousand eight hundred and ninety works of art in bronze, exhibited in public places. Of this immense and invaluable collection a particle only has come down to us; in fact, the list of antique bronzes in modern Rome is so short that, as regards number, the contents of our museums cannot be compared favorably with the contents of the National Museum in Naples. Our list comprises, first of all, the Capitoline collection, namely, the "Bronze Wolf," the equestrian statue of M. Aurelius, the colossal head of Domitian, the "Camillus" or sacrificing youth, the "Boy Extracting a Thorn," and the "Hercules" from the Forum Boarium. Many errors connected with the origin and the discovery of these famous bronzes have been circulated, and are still believed by many. The equestrian statue is said to have been found between the Lateran and the basilica of S. Croce in Gerusalemme, in a vineyard adjoining the "Scala Santa"; the "She-wolf," to have been found under the N. W. spur of the Palatine hill, near the so-called "Arco degli argentieri" at S. Giorgio in Velabro; the colossal head of Domitian, to have been found in 1487 near the basilica of Constantine on the

"Sacra Via," and so on. The truth is that these celebrated works have *never* been lost and rediscovered; and that, from the fall of the empire downwards, they have been kept together and preserved in and around the Pope's palace at the Lateran, until Sixtus IV. and Paul III. caused them to be removed to the Capitol.

Of the equestrian statue of M. Aurelius we have accounts since the tenth century. In the year 966, Peter, prefect of Rome, was executed for rebellion against Pope John XIII., being hung by the hair from this horse; and at its feet was flung the corpse of the Antipope Boniface, son of Ferruccio, in the year 974. We hear again of the group in 1347, during the festivities which followed the election of Rienzi to the tribuneship, when, for nearly a whole day, wine was made to flow from one nostril of the horse, water from the other. This constant connection of the equestrian group with the Lateran, from immemorial time, makes us believe that it was never removed thither from the Forum, as commonly asserted, but that it must have belonged to the Lateran imperial residence since the time of Marcus Aurelius, who was born and educated in the house of the Annii close by.

As regards the "She-wolf," the positive evidence of its being kept at the Lateran dates from the beginning of the ninth century. Benedict, a monk from Mount Soracte who wrote a "Chronicon" in the tenth century, speaks of the institution of a supreme court of justice "in the Lateran palace, in the place called *the Wolf*, viz., the mother of the Romans." Trials and executions "at the Wolf" are recorded from time to time until 1450. Paolo di Liello speaks of two highwaymen, whose hands, cut by the executioner, were hung at the Wolf. It was removed to the Conservatori palace on the Capitol in 1473, together with the colossal head, and the "Camillus."

The antique bronzes in the Vatican Museum

are less important in number and in interest than those of the Capitol; in fact, two only are worth mentioning: the "Pine-cone" in the "Giardino della Pigna," and the "Hercules," discovered in the autumn of 1864 under the foundations of the Palazzo Pio di Carpi, on the site of the theater of Pompey the Great.

The "Pine-cone," eleven feet high, is generally described as the pinnacle of Hadrian's mausoleum (now Castel Sant'Angelo), in the ruins of which it is said to have been found. The truth is that the "Pine-cone" has always been the central ornament of a large fountain, or basin, or pond, the water flowing in innumerable jets, *per foramina nucum*, that is to say, from each of the spikes. Pope Damasus, who did so much towards the embellishment of sacred edifices in Rome (between 366 and 384), removed the "Pine-cone" from its antique place, most probably from Agrippa's artificial lake in the Campus Martius, and adorned with it the magnificent fountain which he had built in the center of the so-called "Paradise" of St. Peter's, namely, in the center of the square portico in front of the basilica.

The other bronze of the Vatican, the colossal "Hercules" discovered twenty-two years ago near the Piazza di Campo dei Fiori, under the substructions of Pompey's theater, is remarkable more for having been an oracular statue than for its beauty. Very few persons are acquainted with the most striking feature of this Hercules. I mean very few persons know the existence of a hole on the back of the head, thirty-eight centimeters in diameter, through which a full-grown youth can easily penetrate into the colossus. The experience was actually made by a young mason named Pietro Roega, in November, 1864, in the presence of Commendatore Tenerani and other eminent personages; and the sound of his voice, in answering the questions addressed to him, was really impressive and almost supernatural. Hercules, like Æsculapius, Apollo, and the Fortune, was undoubtedly an oracular god, as shown by the existence of many temples and sanctuaries in which *responsa* or oracles were given in his name.

How happens it that so very few among the many thousand bronze statues of antique Rome have escaped destruction? The answer has already been given by Fea in his "Istoria della rovina di Roma," by Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," by Dyer in the last chapters of his "History of the City of Rome." During the long agony of the former capital of the world, an agony which lasted nearly seven centuries, from Constantine's age to the final burning of the city by Robert Guiscard and his Normans, in May, 1084, no one, except a few lime-burners, paid attention

to marbles; bronze and other metals were searched, spied, stolen, stripped, and melted with an almost incredible amount of labor and patience, on account of their marketable value and facility of transportation. In justice to the barbarians, upon whom is often cast the blame of spoliations committed by the Romans, we must acknowledge that the emperors themselves set the bad example of stealing bronze and other valuables from public places, especially from pagan temples and shrines, after the recognition of Christianity as the religion of the State. The first inroad upon this class of works of art was undoubtedly made by Constantine in transferring the seat of the empire to Byzantium; at any rate, under him began the wanton practice of changing the heads of bronze and marble statues, in order that they might be dedicated to new personages with no cost and no trouble.

The next important step towards the destruction of the artistic treasures of Rome was made in 383 by Gratianus, when he ordered, by imperial decree, the abolition and confiscation of the privileges and the patrimony of all pagan places of worship, on the ground that it was not becoming a Christian government and a Christian state to supply the infidels with the means of persevering in their errors. In 391 the edict of Gratianus was confirmed by his brother Valentinian II., and this measure having roused the indignation of the pagan majority in the Senate-house, ready to break into an open rebellion, the emperor decided to strike the final blow, and before that memorable year was over another decree prohibited forever superstitious sacrifices in Rome and in Italy, even if offered under a private name, at private cost, and within the threshold of a private house. The masterpieces of Grecian and Italo-Greek art, to which divine honors had been offered for centuries, were removed from their temples and exhibited in public places, in the baths, in the forums, in the theaters, as simple objects of curiosity. There is no doubt, however, that on this occasion, and on their being suddenly exposed to the hatred and violence of a Christian populace, who had so long and so bitterly suffered from the hatred and violence of the pagan aristocracy, the works of art must have suffered a certain amount of damage. The bronze "Hercules" of the Vatican, for instance, bears still the evidence of an ignoble attack, which must have taken place when the gates of the temple were shut behind him.

In 408 Alaric was induced to withdraw from Rome, on the payment of an exorbitant ransom, one of the items of which was five thousand pounds in weight of gold. In order to meet such a demand, the Romans were

compelled to strip the bronze statues of their heavy gilding. Two years later, on the 24th day of August, 410, Alaric and his hordes stormed the town, plundered it for three consecutive days, carrying off an incredible amount of articles of value.

In June, 455, the Vandals, with whom were mixed Bedouins and Africans, entered Rome by the Porta Portese, and plundered it at leisure during a whole fortnight. On this occasion the palace of the Cæsars was completely robbed, not only of its precious statues, but even of its commonest brass utensils. Genseric seems to have particularly devoted himself to the plunder of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; its statues were carried off to adorn the African residence of the Vandal king, and half the roof was stripped of its tiles of gilt bronze.

On the first of January of the following year, 456, the Senate decreed that a bronze statue should be raised in Trajan's forum in honor of Sidonius Apollinaris, the son-in-law of the emperor Avitus. Although the decree of the Senate must be understood in the sense that a new head, representing within a certain approximation the likeness of Apollinaris, should be put on a preëxisting statue, still the fact proves that in spite of so many inroads and plunders, works in metal were still left in Rome, not only in private palaces and villas, but also in public palaces such as the forum of Trajan.

It does not enter into the scheme of this paper to follow any longer, chapter by chapter, the history of the destruction of Rome. Two incidents only remain to be noted: first, the erection of a monumental column in honor of Phocas, the usurper of the throne of the East and the murderer of Mauritius, because, from the inscription engraved on the pedestal, we learn that the column itself was crowned with a statue *in gilt bronze*. A statue in gilt bronze could not have been modeled and cast in Rome in 608; it was merely a statue cast centuries before, to which, I am inclined to believe, not even the head had been changed. The second incident worth note is the grant from the emperor Heraclius to Pope Honorius I., of the gilt bronze tiles forming the roof of Hadrian's temple of Venus and Rome. The tile grant had been requested in favor of the basilica of St. Peter: a consequence of it was the destruction of Hadrian's masterpiece.

At length, in 663, Rome had, for the last time, the misfortune of an imperial visit. Constans II., compelled by the guilty conscience of a fratricide to wander from sanctuary to sanctuary, undertook the pilgrimage to Rome, in the spring of that year, and was met by Pope Vitalianus and the few inhab-

itants near the sixth milestone of the Appian Way. The short and friendly visit of this Christian emperor proved absolutely fatal; he laid his hands on everything which, after the repeated sieges of the Vandals, Goths, and Lombards, had been left for plunder. "In the twelve days which Constans spent at Rome, he carried off as many bronze statues as he could lay hands on; and though the Pantheon seemed to possess a double claim to protection, as having been presented by Phocas to the Pope, and as having been converted into a Christian church, yet Constans was mean and sacrilegious enough to carry off the tiles of gilt bronze which covered it. After perpetrating these acts, which were, at least, as bad as robberies, and attending mass at the tomb of St. Peter, Constans carried off his booty to Syracuse. His plunder ultimately fell into the hands of the Saracens" (Dyer: p. 356).

A remarkably interesting discovery has been made of late in connection with this visit of Constans to Rome. It is certain that the emperor, between his acts of doubtful devotion in churches and basilicas, found time enough to visit the pagan monuments and ruins. These visits were recorded by one of his attendants by scraping the name of the emperor on the most prominent place of each building which the party would dishonor with its presence. Here is the fac-simile of the record scratched on the "Janus quadrifrons" on the Forum Boarium.

ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ ΔΕΔΕΚΕΝΙΝΟΣ

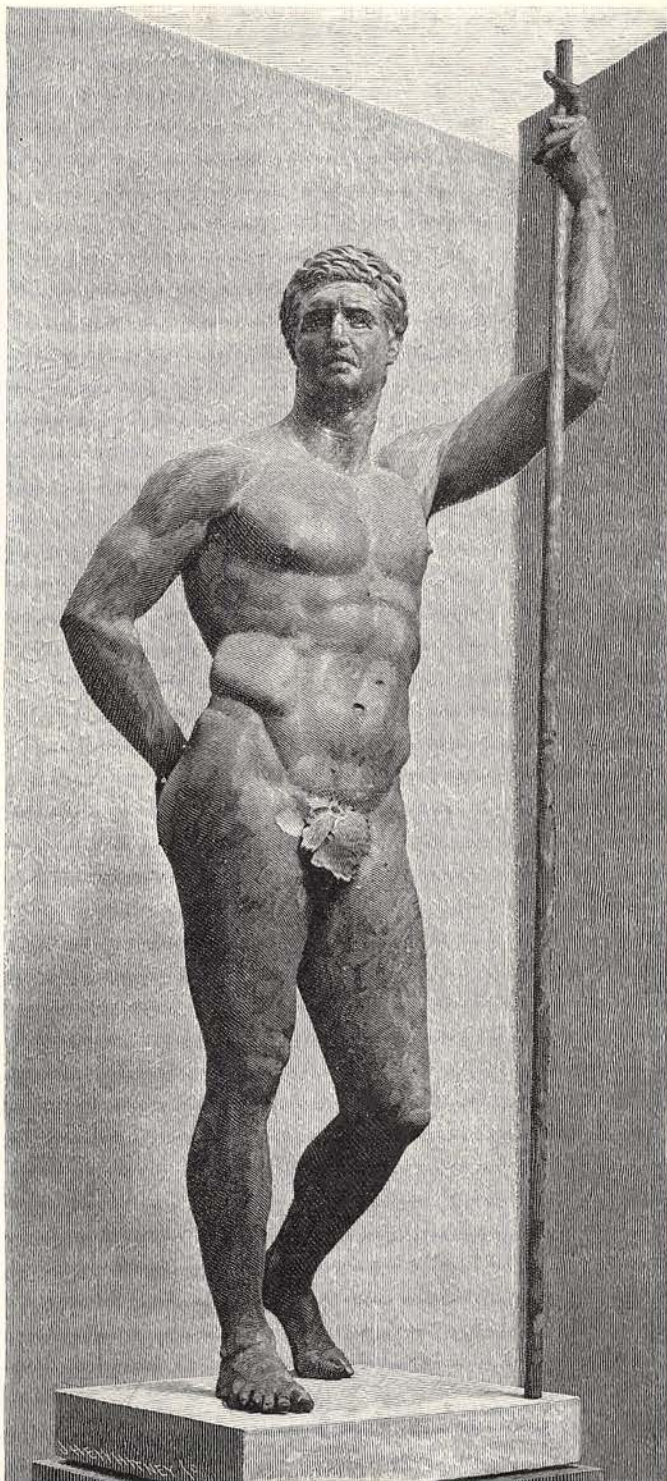
Another signature has been discovered and read on the very top of Trajan's column. I have no doubt that a careful examination of the principal Roman monuments, of the Coliseum, for instance, of the Pantheon, of the Antonine column, etc., would lead to the discovery of other such "graffiti," and would enable us to follow step by step the wanderings of the last emperor who saw Rome before its last destruction by the Normans.

After such a marvelous succession of robberies and spoliations, there is no reason to wonder at the scarcity of antique bronzes in Rome; in fact there is reason to wonder at the chance by which the few we possess have come down to us. The explanation of the mystery is this: *Every bronze discovered in Rome since the Renaissance* (I speak of this later period, because our knowledge of earlier finds is too imperfect and fragmentary to be valued) *had been carefully concealed and hidden*, evidently under the apprehension of a great and imminent danger. The secret of the hiding-place was never revealed, either on account of the murder or of the death of those who knew it,

or else on account of the destruction of the building under which the treasure had been buried. To quote only discoveries which have taken place in my life-time, I will mention first of all the treasure-trove of the "Vicolo delle Palme" in the Trastevere. In 1849, a few weeks before the storming of Rome by the French army of General Oudinot, under the house No. 17 in the above-mentioned lane, a most remarkable collection of works of art was discovered by mere accident. It comprised the "Apoxyomenos" of Lysippus, now in the Braccio nuovo (a marble copy from the bronze original, which stood in front of the baths of Agrippa); the bronze horse, now in the Palazzo de' Conservatore, described by Emil Braun as "an unique work, a masterpiece, and a genuine Grecian antique"; a bronze foot, with an extremely ornamented shoe, which may possibly have belonged to the rider of the horse; a bronze bull, and many other fragments of less importance. Here we have the evidence of a collection of works in metal, stolen from different places, and concealed in that remote corner of the Trastevere, in readiness for shipment from the quay of the Tiber close by. Whether the deed was committed by a barbarian from the hordes of Genseric, who entered and left Rome precisely from this quarter, or by a Jew of the Transtiberine community, the fact is that the treasure was never removed from its hiding-place until its accidental discovery in 1849.

The Vatican "Hercules" above described, and discovered on August 8th, 1864, under the substructions of Pompey's theater,

VOL. XXXIII.—77.



STANDING ATHLETE, DISCOVERED FEBRUARY, 1835.



SITTING ATHLETE, AS DISCOVERED.

had been not only concealed, but actually buried with utmost care in a kind of coffin built of solid masonry and coated with marble.

In 1881, when the foundations of the English chapel were first laid at the corner of the Via del Babuino and the Via del Gesu-Maria, a collection of bronze imperial busts was found heaped up and concealed in a subterranean passage. The same thing had happened two years before at the corner of the Via Nazionale and the Via di St. Eufemia, when a remarkable set of bronzes was found by Madame Ristori concealed under the foundations of her palace. The discovery of the two magnificent athletic statues, which forms the subject of this paper, has taken place under circumstances absolutely identical, as I shall presently relate.

In the spring of 1884 an application was made to the government and to the municipality of Rome for the constitution of a "national dramatic society," and for the grant of a plot of ground, upon which the society's theater could be built. Both requests having been accepted by the State and the town authorities, the society took possession of a beautiful plot of ground, on the western slope of the Quirinal hill, between the Colonna gardens and the Palazzo Campanari, on the condition that whatever should be found in clearing

the site should become the property of the State. The work of excavation had not even begun, when I received a letter from an old digger of antiquities, warning me to watch carefully the building of the new theater, on account of some rare bronzes which he thought were buried there at a great depth. The surmise was not based on any real knowledge; the plot of ground had never been excavated or explored before, and no human being could tell what would be the chances and the results of such an excavation. Strange to say, the prophecy of my humble correspondent, Signor Guisepppe Gagliardi, proved to be correct beyond expectation; the two bronze statues discovered there in March and April, 1885, must be classed among the finest masterpieces ever brought to light from the Roman soil.

The slope of the Quirinal hill, upon which the society is building, was occupied in ancient times by three different edifices: by the temple which the Emperor Aurelian dedicated to the Sun, A.D. 273, after his victories in the East; by the shrine dedicated to Semo Sancus, an archaic, little-known Sabine god; and lastly, by a portico built under Constantine, and known in topographical books as the "porticus Constantini." Still the limits of these three buildings were so imperfectly known, that we

could not tell how large a portion of each would be discovered in clearing the site for the new theater. The result of the excavations has shown that the lower portion of the ground was occupied by a private house of a modest appearance, the existence of which was altogether unknown; the upper portion was occupied by the towering substructions of the temple of the Sun.

On Saturday, February 7th, 1885, toward sunset, a workman engaged in clearing the rubbish which filled up the space between the first and the second substruction wall of the temple (at the south-west corner of the platform) discovered the fore-arm of a bronze statue lying on its back at a depth of seventeen feet below the level of the platform itself. The news was kept secret by the contractor of the works until the following day; and when the government officials met on the spot, the statue had been already removed from its place of concealment, and consequently we were not able to study and take notice of the circumstances of the find, which circumstances, however minute and uninteresting they appear at first sight, may sometimes throw an unexpected light on problems otherwise very hard to deal with.

This noble figure is seven feet four inches high, two feet wide at the shoulders, and represents a naked athlete, or at least a man of the athletic type, in the full development of his strength, whose features are evidently modeled from nature — in other words, it is a portrait statue. Some adepts of that modern archaeological school which pretends to be able to identify everything, have started up the idea that the statue may represent one of the Macedonian kings,— I don't recollect exactly which,— but there seems to be hardly any foundation for such a statement. The figure stands and rests on the right leg, the left being extended a little forward. The right arm is bent behind the back and rests on the haunches, as is the case with the Vatican Meleager and the Hercules of Glycon. The left arm is raised high above the head and was supported by a rod or a lance, the traces of which are to be seen all along the fore-arm. On the breast of the figure the letters

L · VIS · L · XXIIIX

have been engraved at a very late period, that is to say, many years, centuries perhaps, after the removal of the statue from Greece to Rome. These letters have given rise to much

speculation. They have even been read and explained as follows, *L(ucius) VIS(ullius) L(uctavit) XXIIIX*: "Lucius Visullius has fought in the arena twenty-eight times!" I need not dwell on such absurdities, the truth being that nobody, not even the great Mommsen, has been able to give a satisfactory explanation of those mysterious signs.

The excitement created by this extraordinary find had scarcely abated, when, about a month later, a second bronze statue was dug up, under the same circumstances as related above. The discovery took place between the second and the third foundation wall, at a depth of eighteen feet below the level of the platform. Being warned at once, we assembled this time on the spot when only the head of the figure was coming out of the ground, and consequently we could watch and follow and ascertain the minutest details of the find.

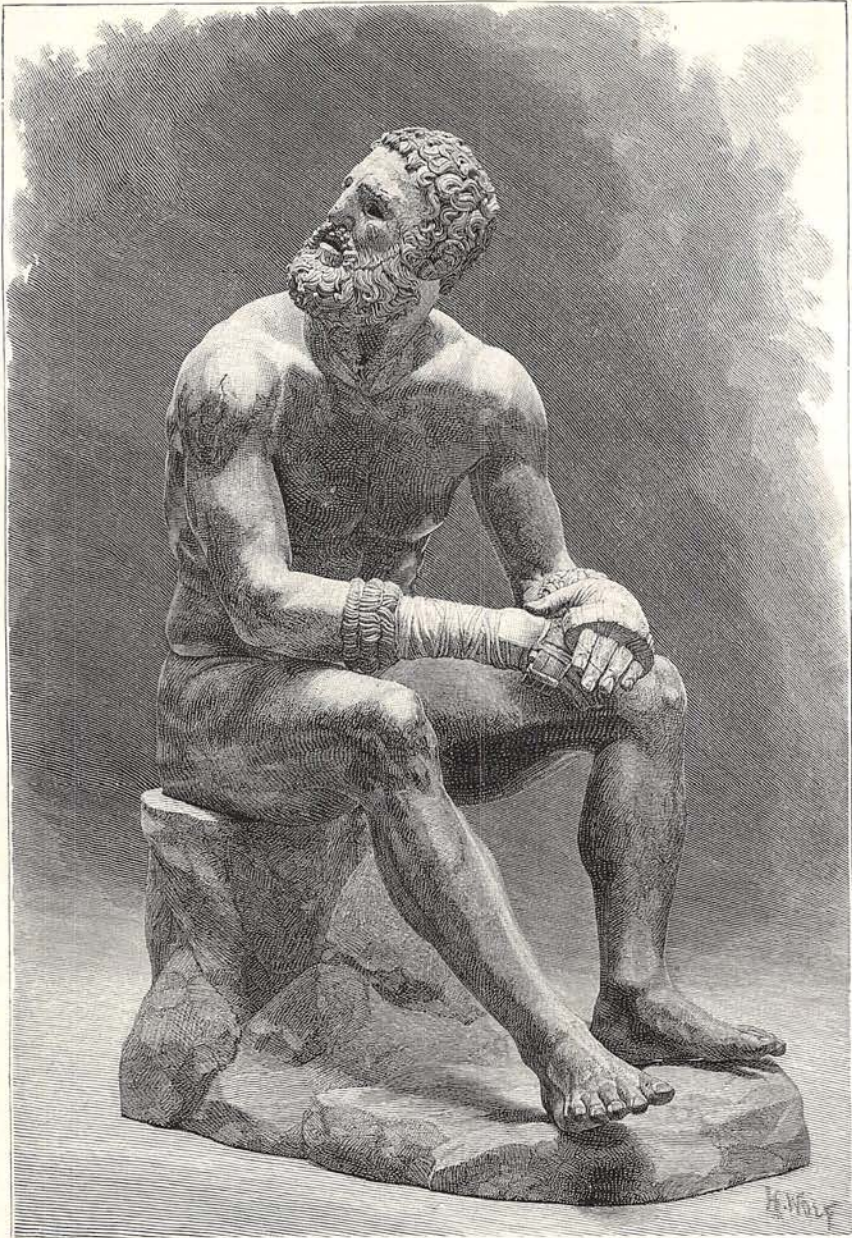
The most important piece of evidence collected, in witnessing and following the removal of the earth in which the masterpiece lay buried, is that the statue had not been thrown there disorderly, or buried in haste, but that it had been concealed and treated with utmost care. The figure, being in a sitting posture, had been placed on a stone capital of the doric order, as upon a stool, and the trench, which had been opened through the lower foundations of the temple of the Sun to conceal the statue, had been filled with sifted pure earth, in order to save the surface of the bronze from any possible injury.

I have witnessed in my long career on the active field of archæology many discoveries,\* but I have never felt such an extraordinary impression as the one created by the sight of this magnificent specimen of a semi-barbaric athlete coming slowly out of the ground, as if awakening from a long repose after his gallant fights.

His torso bends gently forward; his elbows rest on the knees; his attitude is the attitude of a boxer (wrestler, pugilist, pankratiastes) exhausted by the numerous blows received, the traces of which are visible all over his body. The face, of Herculean type, is turned towards the right, the mouth is half open, the lips seem to quiver, as if speaking to some one,— in fact, there is no doubt that the statue belongs to a group. Every detail is absolutely realistic: the nose is swollen from the effects of the last blow received; the ears resemble a flat and shapeless piece of leather; the neck, the shoulders, the breast, are seamed with scars. The

\* To convey an idea of the riches which our Roman soil is capable of yielding, in spite of so many centuries of uninterrupted excavations, I quote from the municipal statistics. From January 1st, 1872, to December 31st, 1885, the following works of art and objects have been

found in building the new quarters: 192 marble statues, 266 busts and heads, 152 bas-reliefs, 390 columns, 2360 lamps, 4024 inscriptions, 405 bronzes, 711 cameos, intaglios, and precious stones, 47 objects in gold, 39 objects in silver, 36,679 coins in gold, silver and bronze, etc.



SITTING ATHLETE, AS SEEN IN THE MUSEUM.

modeling of the muscles of the arms and of the back is simply wonderful. The gallant champion is panting from sheer fatigue, but he is ready to start up again at the first call. The details of the fur-lined boxing-gloves are also interesting, and one wonders how any human being, no matter how strong and powerful, could stand the blows from such engines as these gloves, made of four or five thicknesses of leather, and fortified with brass buckles.

This bronze was considered at first to belong to the best period of Græco-Roman sculpture; the majority of connoisseurs and archæologists are now in favor of a purely Greek origin. This latter opinion, to which I fully subscribe, is confirmed to a certain degree by a circumstance which loses none of its importance because it is minute. Under the middle toe of the left foot I have traced the existence of a letter, of a big A, which

letter has not been engraved after the casting (as is the case with the signs on the breast of the standing athlete), but cast at the same time with the figure. The letter is not a Latin A, but a Greek *Αιφα*, and of a rather archaic shape, its height and width being absolutely the same. The minute circumstance proves, if I am not mistaken, that the work was not cast in Rome, but in Greece, and cast at a comparatively early period.

As regards the building in which the two statues were exhibited in Rome, and from which they were removed under the apprehension of danger, to be buried so carefully and at such a depth, I have no doubt it was the Baths of Constantine, separated from the temple of the Sun by a narrow street. Athletic statues were the special ornament of Roman *thermæ*, and those of Constantine must have possessed their share of this class of works in metal and marble. I have no doubt that many more statues may be found if a proper search is made under the substructions of the temple; the work however is difficult, costly, and not exempt from danger, on account of the modern buildings under which the exploration ought to be extended.

The third bronze statue, a Bacchus, discovered in Rome in the spring of 1885, comes from the bed of the Tiber, from that mighty reservoir of antiquities which seems to be inexhaustible. It was found in making the foundations of the middle pier for the new bridge (Ponte Garibaldi alla Regola) which spans the river between the Ponte Sisto and the island of St. Bartolomeo.

The statue lay in almost a perpendicular position, head downwards, sixteen feet below the bottom of the river, and twenty-six below the surface of the water. The merry god is represented in the full bloom of youth, and has a decidedly feminine type, especially as re-

gards the arrangement of the long curling hair, which is parted in the middle and fastened with a band on the forehead. The band is gracefully inlaid with copper and silver; the eyeballs are made of a soft yellowish stone called "palombino."

This Bacchus, compared with the two superb masterpieces from Constantine's baths, seems altogether too tame, and need not be described at length. It is, at any rate, Græco-Roman work of the first century of the Christian era, a fact proved, first, by the stiffness and, as we Italians say, by the "maniera" or "conventionality" of the attitude and of the outline of the figure; secondly, by the impression of a coin on the calf of the left leg. Our best numismatists think that this coin must have been an imperial gold piece, probably of the time of Nero.

The lower portion of the body has evidently suffered from the effects of fire, but under what circumstances, by whom, at what period, this valuable work of art was hurled into mid-stream, it is impossible to determine. Its discovery, at any rate, affords us a compensation for the many losses which the gigantic work of the embankment of the river makes us suffer. One of those losses, the greatest perhaps of all, is the destruction, or, to speak more exactly, the deformation, of the antique bridge connecting the island of St. Bartolomeo with the Trastevere, to which bridge two modern arches will be added on each side, as the bed of the Tiber must be widened there. The bridge was built twenty-one centuries ago by Lucius Cestius, and restored A. D. 380 by the Emperor Gratianus with blocks of travertine stolen from the theater of Marcellus close by, a circumstance which shows to what degree of poverty and humiliation Rome, the queen of the world, had descended at the end of the fourth century of the Christian era.

*Rodolfo Lanciani.*

#### THE RIVER OF REST.

A BEAUTIFUL stream is the River of Rest;  
The still, wide waters sweep clear and cold,  
A tall mast crosses a star in the west,  
A white sail gleams in the west world's gold;  
It leans to the shore of the River of Rest —  
The lily-lined shore of the River of Rest.

The boatman rises, he reaches a hand,  
He knows you well, he will steer you true,  
And far, so far from all ills upon land,  
From hates, from fates that pursue and pursue;  
Far over the lily-lined River of Rest —  
Dear mystical, magical River of Rest.

A storied, sweet stream is this River of Rest;  
The souls of all time keep its ultimate shore;  
And journey you east, or journey you west,  
Unwilling, or willing, sure-footed, or sore,  
You surely will come to this River of Rest —  
This beautiful, beautiful River of Rest.

*Joaquin Miller.*