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A KALEIDOSCOPE OF ROME.

WITH PICTURES BY A. CASTAIGNE.

IT is ebb-tide in modern Rome just now, and the waters of progress have subsided to the lowest water-mark, leaving bare many things which have long been hidden by the flood of politics and social change. After a period of great and disastrous activity, the sleepy indifference of old times is settling once more upon the city, the race for imaginary wealth is over, time is a drug in the market, money is scarce, dwellings are plentiful, the streets are quiet by day and night, and only those who still have something to lose, or very modest hopes of gain, take an interest in public affairs. One may dream again in Rome, as one dreamed thirty years ago, when all the clocks were set once a fortnight to follow the sun, when we used to ask at what time it would be midday, and were told that it would be noon at sixteen or seventeen or eighteen o'clock, according to the time of year. But, as the French proverb tells us, noon never came as early as fourteen o'clock — « *Ne cherchez pas midi à quatorze heures !* »

Does any one remember Mme. Rachel, who used to enamel unsatisfactory complexions « for one occasion » or « for life » ? There was much talk of her in her day. Those whom she enameled dared not smile, for the composition would have cracked; but at a distance, and by candle-light, the effect was really extraordinary. Rome has been enameled, and the enamel is cracking unexpectedly soon. Rome is restoring to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. They are much bigger and finer things than the symmetrical, stuccoed cubes which have lately been piled up everywhere in heaven-offending masses, and one is glad to come back to them after the nightmare that has lasted twenty years. One is surprised, moreover, to find how little permanent effect has been produced by the squandering of countless millions during the building mania, beyond a terrible destruction of trees, and certain modifications of natural local peculiarities. To do the moderns justice, they have done no one act of vandalism as bad as fifty, at least, committed by the barons of the middle ages, though they have shown very much worse taste in such new things as they have set up in the place of the old.

The charm of Rome has never been in its architecture, nor in the beauty of its streets, though the loveliness of its old-time gardens contributed much which is now in great part lost. It can certainly not be said, either, that the all-subduing magic of old Rome lay specially in its historical associations, since Rome has been loved to the verge of folly by

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half-educated girls, by extremely flippant little women of the world, and by empty-headed dandies without number, as well as by most of the men of genius who have ever spent much time there.

In the middle ages one might know all that was to be known. But times have changed since the medieval scholar wrote his book, «*De omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis.*» We cannot all be archæologists. Perhaps when we go and stand in the Forum we have a few general ideas about the relative positions of the old buildings: we know the Portico of the Twelve Gods, the temple of Concord, the Basilica Julia, the temple of Castor and Pollux; we have a more vague notion of the Senate-chamber; the hideous arch of Septimius Severus stares us in the face; so does the column of Phocas; perhaps we have been told where the rostra stood, and that the queer fragment of masonry by the arch is the «umbilicus,» the Roman center of the world. There is no excuse for not knowing these things, any more than there is any very strong reason for knowing them, if one is not a student. There is a plan of the place in every guide-book, with a description written to be read while running.

And yet, without much definite knowledge, —with «little Latin and less Greek,» perhaps,—many men and women, the guide-book in their hands forgotten for one moment, have leaned upon a block of marble with half-closed, musing eyes, and breath drawn so slow that it is almost quiet, held in day-dream wonder; and they have seen rise a vision of past things and beings, even in the broad afternoon sunshine, out of stones that remember Cæsar's footstep, and from walls that have echoed with Antony's speech. There they troop up the Sacred Way, the shock-headed, wool-draped, beak-nosed Romans; there they stand together in groups at the corner of Saturn's temple; there the half-naked plebeian children clamber upon the pedestals of the columns to watch the crowd, and double the men's deep tones with a treble of childish chatter; there the noble boy, with his bordered toga, his keen young face, and longing backward look, is hurried home out of the throng by the tall household slave, who carries his school-tablets and is responsible for his safety. A consul goes by, twelve lictors marching with him—black-browed, square-jawed, relentless men, with their rods and axes. Then two closed litters are carried past by big, black, oily fellows, beside whom walk freedmen and Greek slaves, and three or four be-curled and be-scented parasites, the shadows of the great men in the litters. Under their very feet the little street-boys play their game of pitching at tiny pyramids of dried lupins—because they have no filberts, and lupins are almost as good; and as the dandified hanger-on of Mæcenas, straining his ear for the sound of his patron's voice from within the litter, heedlessly crushes the little yellow beans under his sandal, the particular small boy whose stake is smashed clenches his fist, and with flashing eyes curses the dandy's dead to the fourth generation of ascendants, and he and his companions turn and scatter like mice as one of the biggest slaves threateningly raises his hand.

Absurd details rise in the dream. An old crone is selling roasted chestnuts in the shadow of the temple of Castor and Pollux; a tipsy soldier is reeling to his quarters with his helmet stuck on wrong side foremost; a knot of Jewish money-changers, with long curls and high caps, are talking eagerly in Hebrew, and clutching the little bags they hide in the sleeves of their yellow Eastern gowns; a bright-eyed, skinny woman of the people boxes her daughter's ears for having smiled at one of the rich men's parasites, and the girl, already crying, still looks after the fashionable good-for-nothing under her mother's upraised arm.

All about stretches the vast humming city of low-built houses covering the short, steep hills and filling all the hollows between; the seething Subura lies northeastward; the yellow river is beyond the few buildings to the west; southward rise the enchanted villas of the Cæsars; due east is the Esquiline of evil fame, redeemed and planted with trees and beautified by Mæcenas, but haunted even to-day, say modern Romans, by the grim ghosts of murderers and thieves who there died bloody deaths of quivering torture. All around, as the sun sinks and the cool shadows quench the hot light on the white pavements, the ever-increasing crowds of men—always more men than women—move inward, half unconsciously and out of inborn habit, to the Forum, the center of the empire, the middle of the world, the boiling-point of the whole earth's riches and strength and life.

Then, as the traveler muses out his short breathing-space, the vision grows confused, and Rome's huge ghosts go stalking, riding, clanging, raving through the surging dream-throng,—Cæsar, Brutus, Pompey, Catiline, Cicero, Caligula, Vitellius, Hadrian,—and close upon them, Gauls and Goths and Huns, and all barbarians, till the dream is a kaleidoscope

DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

THE FORUM UNDER THE CÆSARS.

of school-learned names that have suddenly taken shadows of great faces out of Rome's shadow storehouse, and gorgeous arms and streaming draperies, and all at once the sight-seer shivers as the sun goes down, and passes his hand over his eyes, and shakes himself, and goes away rather hastily, lest he should take the fever and turn ghost himself.

It matters very little whether the day-dream much resembles the reality of ages ago, whether boys played with lupins then, or old women roasted chestnuts in the streets, or whether such unloving spirits should be supposed to visit one man in one vision. It matters very little, especially to the traveler himself. He has had an impression which has not been far removed from an emotion, and his day has not been lost, if it be true that emotion is the soul's only measure of time. Perhaps the secrets of Rome's mysterious charm lie hidden somewhere in that fact. The place, the people, the air, the crystalline brightness of winter, the passion-stirring sirocco of autumn, the loveliness of the long spring, the deep, still heat of summer, the atmosphere, the city, the humanity, are

DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

A CORNER OF POPULOUS ROME.

all breeders of emotions in one way or another. Because Rome was once so very great indeed, a small amount of imagination in the tourist here produces in him the greatest possible emotional result. People who fancy that they understand Rome seem to be more common than people who imagine that they know all about other places; and in traveling nothing is so flattering to the traveler as to be able to think that he understands what he sees.

But it is not the object of this brief paper to analyze the emotions of the average tourist. In these days, since analysis, so called, has become cheap and general, the tourist has little difficulty in analyzing himself, and next to none at all in making public the results of his self-chemistry. It is wonderful to note how many people are ready and anxious to butcher their own souls, quarter them, and dispose of them piecemeal to the public, even as cat's meat.

THE men of Trastevere (the section «beyond the Tiber») boast that they are of better blood than the other Romans. They may be right. In many parts of Italy just such small ancient tribes have kept alive, never intermarrying with their neighbors, nor losing their original speech. There are villages in the south where Greek is spoken, others where Albanian is the language. There is one in Calabria where the people speak nothing but Piedmontese. Italy, too, has always been a land of individualities rather than of amalgamations, and she has owed most of her greatness to the fact. So the Trasteverines claim that they have preserved their individuality. This is true at least of the quarter where they live, cut off by the river from the modernizing fever which has raged so dangerously through the length and breadth of Rome proper.

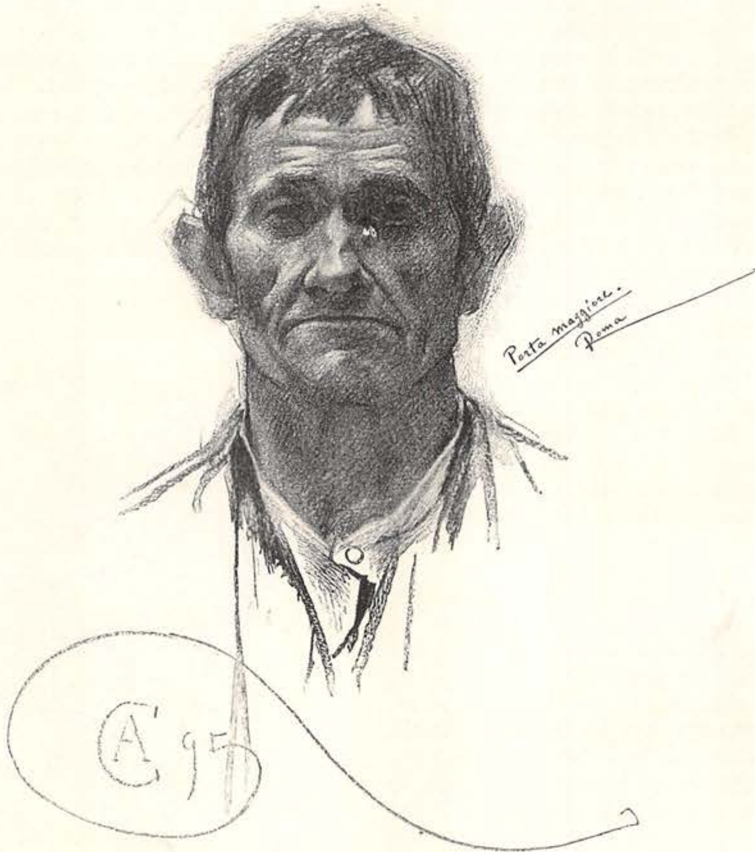
Trastevere is full of crooked little streets and irregularly shaped open places; the houses are not high, the windows are small and old-fashioned, and the entrances dark and low. But Trastevere is not a dirty quarter; on the contrary, to eyes that understand Italians, there is a certain dignity in its poverty, which contrasts strongly with the slipshod publicity of household dirt one used to see in the inhabited parts of the «Monti,» for instance.

The long, hollow Italian reed-cane stuck out of an upper window and «guyed,» as sailors say, with any old bits of line, is a convenient thing for hanging out clothes to dry, and was probably used for the same purpose several hundred years ago. The little inner court where the well is may have been wider in those days, but it must always have been a cool, secluded place in which the women could wrangle and tear one another's hair in decent privacy and comfort. In the days when everything went to the gutter it was a wise precaution to have as few windows as possible on the outside of one's house. The wine-shops and cook-shops, then as now, opened directly upon the street, because they were, as they still often are, mere single

DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

TEMPIO DI PALLADE.

vaulted chambers having no communication with the house within either by door or staircase. In old Rome, as in Trastevere to-day, there must have been an air of mystery about all dwelling-houses. In those days, far more than now, the head of the house was lord, master, and despot within his own walls; but something of that power remains by tradition of right at the present time, and the patriarchal system is not yet wholly dead. The business of the man was to work and to fight for his wife and children, just as to fight and hunt for his family were the occupations of the American Indian. The return he received was absolute obedience and abject acknowledgment of his superiority. The government-fed Indian and the Roman paterfamilias of to-day do very little fighting, working, or hunting, but in their several ways they still claim much of the same slavish obedience as in old times. One is inclined to wonder whether nowadays the self-assertion of women is not due to the fall in value of men, since it is no



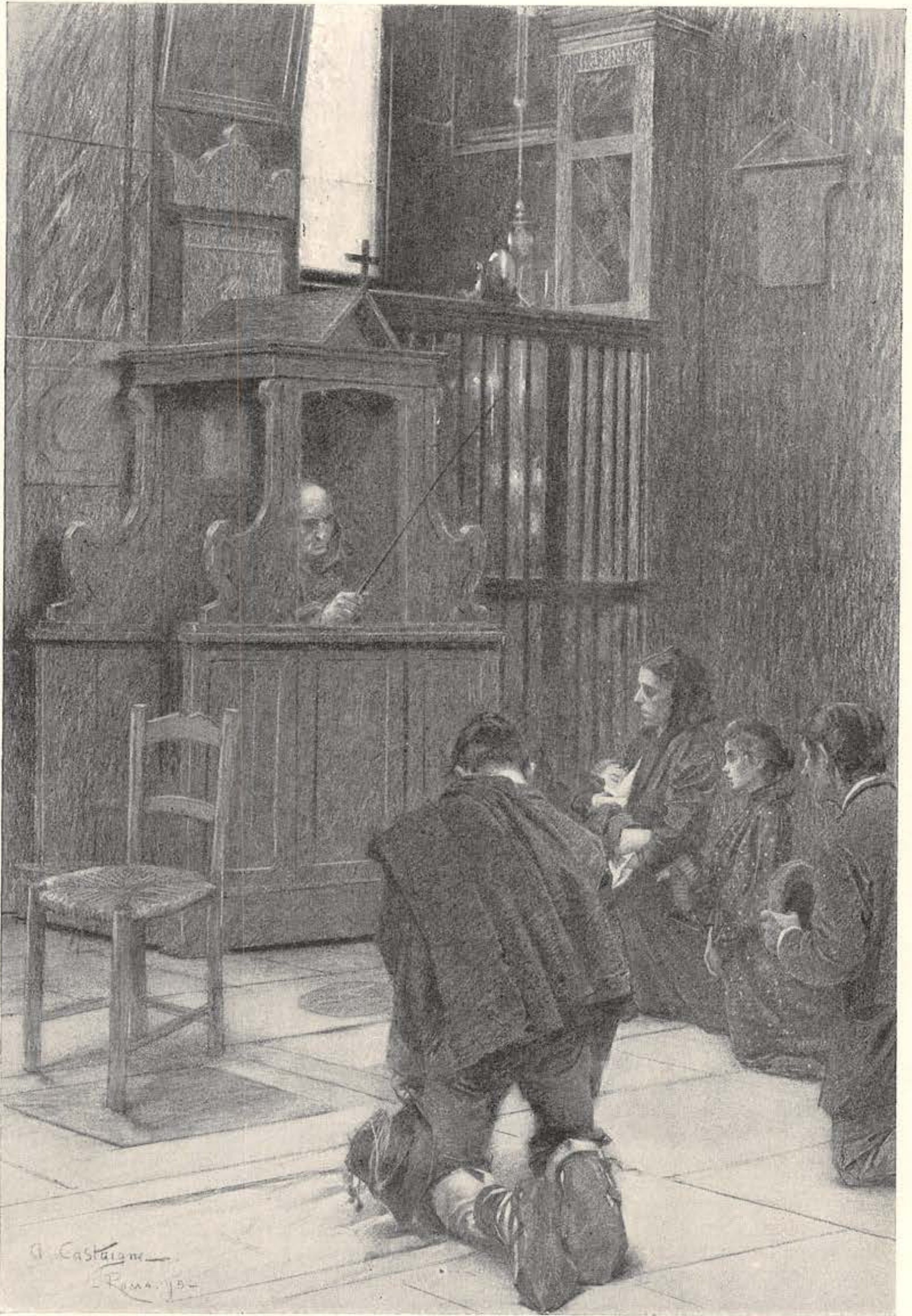
DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

AN OLD PEASANT FROM THE CAMPAGNA.

longer necessary to pursue wild beasts for food, since fighting is reduced to a science taught in three months and seldom required for a long time, and since work has become so largely the monopoly of the nimble type-writer. Women ask themselves and others, with at least a show of justice, whether, since man's occupation is to sit still and think, they might not, with a little practice, sit quite as still as he, and think to as good a purpose. In our own country it was one thing to fell big trees, build log huts, dam streams, plow stony ground, kill bears, and fight Indians; it is quite another to sit in a comfortable chair before a plate-glass window and dictate notes in barbarous English to a dumb and skilful stenographer.

But it is worth noting that with the development of woman's independence the air of privacy, not to say of mystery, disappears from the modern dwelling. In Trastevere things have not gone so far yet. One cannot thread the narrow streets without wondering a little about the lives of the grave, black-eyed, harsh-voiced people who go in and out by the dark entrances, and stand together in groups in Piazza Romana, or close to Ponte Sisto, early in the morning, and just before midday, and again in the cool of the evening.

It seems to be a part of the real simplicity of the Italian Latin to put on a quite useless look of mystery on all occasions, and to assume the air of a conspirator when buying a cabbage; and more than one great foreign writer has fallen into the error of believing the Italian character to be profoundly complicated. One is apt to forget that it needs much deeper duplicity to maintain an appearance of frankness under trying circumstances than to make a mystery of one's marketing and a profound secret of one's cookery. There are few things which the poor Italian more dislikes than to be watched when he is buying and preparing his food, though he will ask any one to share it with him when it is ready; but he is almost as prone to hide everything else that goes on inside his house, unless he has fair warning of a visit, and full



DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

THE CONFESSIONAL IN ARACŒLI.

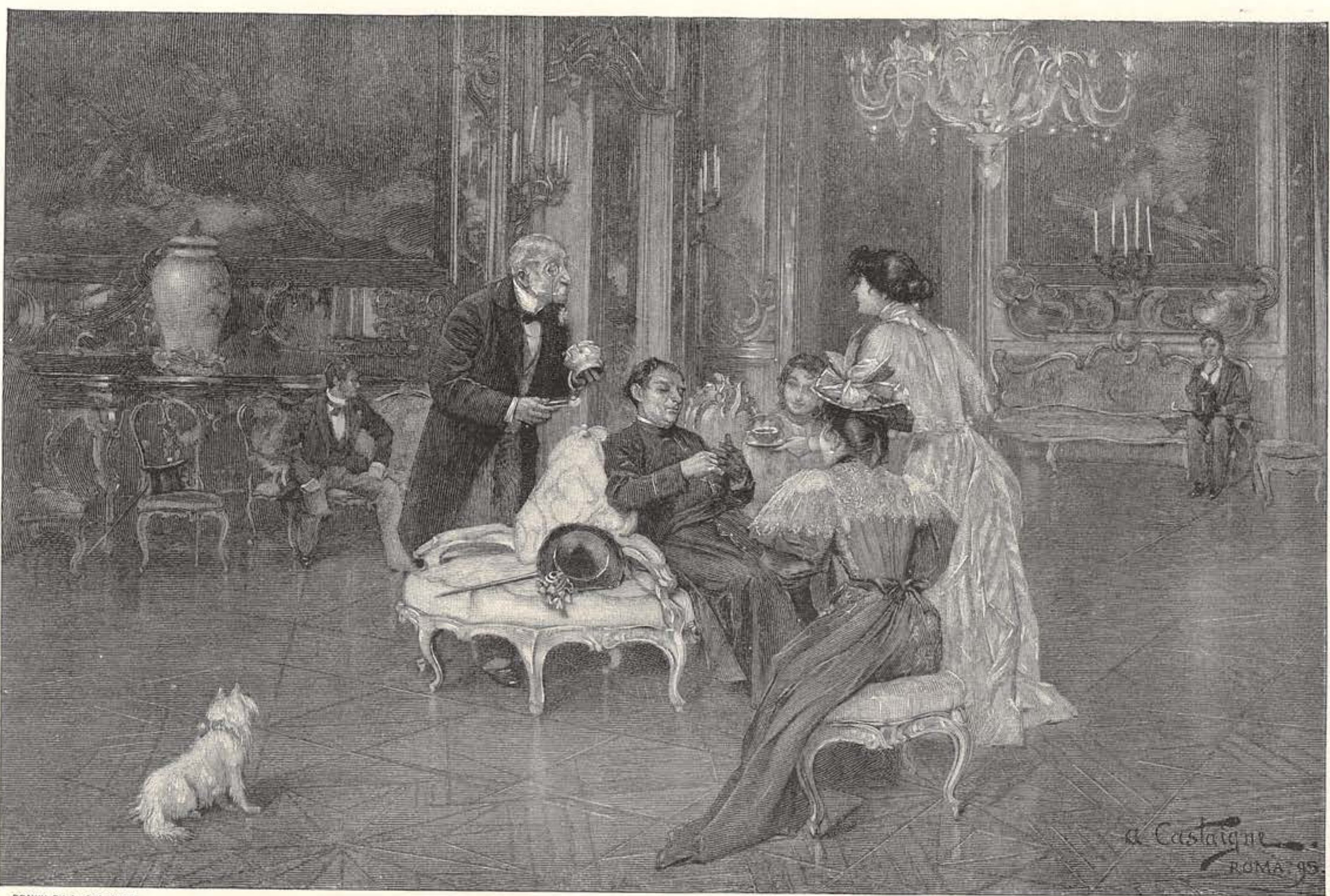
time to prepare himself for it. This is perhaps not entirely a race peculiarity, but rather a survival of medieval life as it was all over Europe. There are pretty clear indications in our own literature that the ladies and gentlemen of two or three hundred years ago did not like to be caught unprepared by inquisitive visitors. The silks and satins in which they are portrayed would not have lasted a lifetime, as they did, if they had been worn every day. As for the cleanliness of those times, the less said about it the better. In Rome there was a long period during which not a single aqueduct was in working order, and it was a trade to clear a supply of water out of the Tiber from a portion of the yellow mud by letting it settle in reservoirs, and to sell it in the streets for all household purposes. Who washed in those days? It is safer to ask the question now than it would have been then. Probably those persons washed who were the fortunate owners of a house well or a rain-water cistern, and those who had neither did not. Perhaps that was very much the same all over Europe. It is certainly to the credit of Trastevere that it is not a dirty place to-day, by Italian standards.

And yet it has preserved much of its old appearance and many of its old customs, though separated only by the river from the scene of the modern architect's most barbarous deeds. It is almost all that is preserved of the Rome of thirty years ago, beyond the churches and monuments and great palaces. Here the clothes are hung out to dry over the streets, it is true, but in the windows from which they hang there are pots of growing herbs and sweet flowers—basil, rosemary, and red carnations. Here one sees men and women in old-fashioned clothes; but their dark faces are calm and contented, compared with the eager, haggard features which have become so common of late years on the other side of the Tiber. Here there has been no sudden flood of fictitious prosperity and paper wealth, but neither has there been any retiring wave to sweep away all but life, and sometimes life too, into the bottomless pit of bankruptcy. Nor has a quarter of a century produced here the miserable, unhealthy throng of ill-grown boys and girls who crowd the Roman pavements at the school hours twice a day. The people of Trastevere look sounder and stronger in every way; they are quieter and more dignified; the men seem more manly, the women more womanly, the children more childlike, the whole population more natural.

The tendency in Rome has of late been toward the artificial, and it is a refreshment to come upon some untouched portion of what is good as well as picturesque. The attempt to produce a modern capital at all hazards and costs has told upon the population as well as upon the city itself. For at great centers the first result of modern civilization is vice, and the next is degeneracy. It is really quite useless to ignore the fact in print, when it is perfectly apparent to every man in his senses. Italy is no worse than other countries, but neither is she an exception to the general rule; and since the most necessary institutions of civilization are prisons and hospitals, it is to Italy's credit that she should have spent as much as she has upon them, in the midst of so much utterly senseless extravagance in other directions.

Old Rome was, in a sense, genuine, which does not mean exactly the same as «simple.» There was very little pretense about it, though some of the realities were complicated enough, according to our ideas. Modern civilization is made vulgar by the enormous amount of pretense, of sham, of miserable imitation, which its really good things bring in their train. This vulgarity sometimes goes to such lengths as to become positively pathetic. Is it not pathetic to see how the poor woman struggles against impossible odds to produce a cheap imitation of the rich woman's finery? Is there not something pitiful beyond words in the crumpled paper flowers fastened upon the limp old hat that has been ten times twisted to shapelessness in the attempt to follow the changing fashions? In old days the women of the people in Rome wore no hats at all, which was cheaper, simpler, and far more becoming. It is common to speak of the crimes done in the name of religion since the world's beginning. One forgets the sins done for the sake of fashion, which are far more numerous and far more base. One forgets the hard-earned wages squandered on worthless finery, and, a step higher in the scale, the men of small means ruined by their wives' extravagance—the men who, to satisfy woman's fancies, have gambled, have cheated, have stolen, and have been ruined at last; the children that have been robbed of a decent bringing up by vain and reckless mothers; worst of all, the millions of innocent girls who, since history began, have sold their souls for an ornament, for a frock, for a tinsel gimcrack. There was a great deal of sound good sense in sumptuary laws.

Of course the poorer the country or the



DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

A PET OF SOCIETY.

city, the cheaper and poorer the imitation of each fashionable freak must be. In Rome, which is in reality one of the poorest cities in the civilized world, the element of sham is enormous, and is found in everything, from architecture to millinery, and from millinery to groceries. In the architecture the very gifts of the Italians have turned against them. For they are born engineers and mathematicians, and by a really marvelous refinement of calculation they have done miracles in the construction of big buildings out of altogether insufficient material, while the Italian workman's traditional skill in modeling stucco has covered vast surfaces of unsafe masonry with the most hideous ornamentations ever seen. One result of all this has been a series of catastrophes of which a detailed account would appal grave men in other countries; another consequence is the existence of a quantity of grotesquely bad street decoration, much of which is already beginning to crumble under the action of the weather.

It is sadder still to see the modern ruins of houses which were not even finished when the crash put an end to the building mania. There are many of these, roofless, windowless, plasterless, falling to ruin, and never to be inhabited—landmarks of bankruptcy, whole streets of dwellings built to lodge an imaginary population, and which will have fallen to dust long before they are ever needed.

Rome's fascination is variable, like the beauty of some most fascinating women. There are days and times when it seems hardly to exist at all. One walks along the Via Nazionale and looks up at the stuccoed houses, and glances at the cheap signs of the cheap shops, and resents the superlative vulgarity of the people he sees, and the horrible Milanese and Piedmontese dialects he hears on all sides. The gaudy advertisements of poisonous drinks, the disquieting features of the overdressed men and women who drive by in over-showy equipages, the insolent stare of the military men in their skin-tight gray trousers, the noisy, dusty, horn-blowing tram-cars, and a thousand other things of the sort, contribute to produce a horribly depressing effect. On such days, in the hour of one's discontent, the very air has an evil taste, the blue Roman sky has a dusty, colorless look, and all artificial hues are offensive, so that one longs for the nobility of a black-and-white universe.

Perhaps the climate has special power to call up these moods in a man, as it has virtue, also, to soothe and charm him at other times. The wind changes, and blows softly from the west, the sun sinks toward the distant sea, the pale sky turns as blue as sapphire, and the swallows shoot down like the flight of a thousand arrows from the lofty eaves of an old palace. Down in Piazza Colonna,—a forum with cafés for temples and a bandstand for the rostra, but in a sense the real forum of to-day,—in the shade of the great buildings, the people begin to gather together toward evening, in little groups, by tens and scores, and by and by in hundreds; the carriages crowd one upon another at a footpace, and the idlers line the carriageway on each side, moving along a little, now and then, to get a better view, at a rate that cannot be called walking. The types of life appear in their social order down to the lowest grade that can afford a good hat, but no lower. That seems to be the test in Piazza Colonna. It is surely not a severe one, though it would hardly have found favor with Cincinnatus.

It is strange that just at that hour and place one should be struck by the absence of all vulgarity, as one was stifled by its overwhelming presence an hour earlier in the Via Nazionale. The people are quiet—notably so, as compared with the people of most cities. There is a softness, a mellowness, in the air, which steals into the soul with an inexplicable power of fascination. The bitterest, weariest man must feel just then that it is not altogether sorrow to live. And strolling onward toward the old city, he bears the growing charm with him, and finds, perhaps, that it has a creative power of its own, like the air of dreams, out of which the possible and the impossible are shaped at the faint suggestion of a passing thought, so that what has never existed is suddenly as familiar as with a lifelong intimacy of association. Our dreams hardly ever seem vulgar to us, because they are generally the expression of our own tastes, and they tell us to some extent what we should be if we had our choice of body, soul, and character. Is any man vulgar in his own eyes?

Perhaps it is true that the impressions which Rome makes upon a thoughtful man vary more according to the wind and the time of day than those he feels in other cities. Perhaps, too, there is no capital in all the world which has such contrasts to show within a mile of each other—one might almost say within a dozen steps.

DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

THE ANGELUS, IN THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA.

One of the most crowded thoroughfares of Rome, for instance, is the Via del Tritone, which is the only passage between the Pincian and the Quirinal hills, from the region of Piazza Colonna toward the railway-station and the new quarter. During the busy hours of the day a carriage can rarely move through its narrower portions any faster than at a foot-pace, and the insufficient pavements are thronged with pedestrians. In a measure, the Tritone in Rome corresponds to Galata bridge in Constantinople. In the course of a week most of the population of the city must have passed at least once through the crowded little street, which somehow, in the rain of millions that lasted for two years, did not manage to attract to itself even the little sum which would have sufficed to widen it by a few yards. It is as though the contents of Rome were daily drawn through a keyhole. In the Tritone are to be seen daily magnificent equipages, jammed in the string, between milk-carts, omnibuses, and dustmen's barrows, preceded by butchers' vans and followed by miserable cabs, smart dog-carts, and high-wheeled country vehicles driven by rough, booted men wearing green-lined cloaks and looking like stage bandits; even saddle-horses are sometimes led that way, to save time; and on each side flow two streams of human beings of every type to be found between Porta Angelica and Porta San Giovanni. A prince of the Holy Roman Empire pushes past a troop of dirty school-children, and is almost driven into an open barrel of salt codfish, in the door of a poor shop, by a black-faced charcoal-man carrying a sack on his head more than half as high as himself. A party of jolly young German tourists in loose clothes, with red books in their hands, and their field-glasses hanging by straps across their shoulders, try to rid themselves of the flower-girls dressed in sham Sabine costumes, and utter exclama-

DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

PIAZZA COLONNA AT NIGHT.

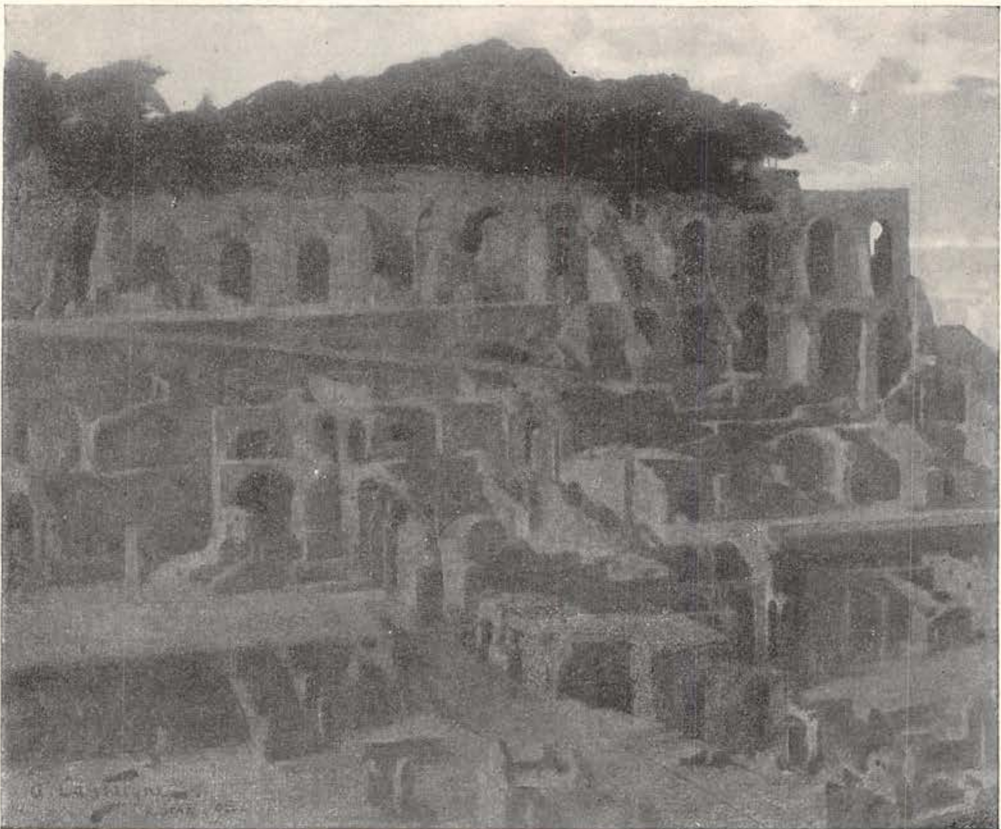
DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

FROM THE CAMPAGNA.

tions of astonishment and admiration when they themselves are almost run down by a couple of the giant Royal Grenadiers, each six feet five or thereabouts, besides nine inches, or so, of crested helmet aloft, gorgeous, gigantic, and spotless. Clerks by the dozen and liveried messengers of the ministries struggle in the press; ladies gather their skirts closely, and try to pick a dainty way where, indeed, there is nothing «dain» (a word which Dr. Johnson confesses that he could not find in any dictionary, but which he thinks might be very useful); servant girls, smart children with nurses and hoops going up to the Pincio, black-browed washerwomen with big baskets of clothes on their heads, stumpy little infantry soldiers in gray uniforms, priests, friars, venders of boot-laces and thread, vegetable-sellers pushing hand-carts of green things in and out among the horses and vehicles with amazing dexterity, and yelling their cries in superhumanly high voices—there is no end to the multitude. If the day is showery, it is a sight to see the confusion in the Tritone when umbrellas of every age, material, and color are all opened at once, while the people who have none crowd into the codfish shop and the liquor-seller's and the tobacconist's, with the traditional *con permesso* of excuse for entering when they do not mean to buy anything; for the Romans are mostly civil people and fairly good-natured. But rain or shine, at the busy hours, the place is always crowded to overflowing

with every description of vehicle and every type of humanity.

Out of the Babel—a horizontal Babel!—you may turn into the little church dedicated to the «Holy Guardian Angels.» It stands on the south side of the Tritone, in that part which is broader, and which a little while ago was still called the Via dell' Angelo Custode—Guardian Angel street. It is an altogether insignificant little church, and strangers scarcely ever visit it. But going down the Tritone, when your ears are splitting and your eyes are confused with the kaleidoscopic figures of the scurrying crowd, you may lift the heavy leathern curtain, and leave the hurly-burly outside, and find yourself all alone in the quiet presence of death, the end of all hurly-burly and confusion. It is quite possible that under the high, still light in the round church with its four niche-like chapels, you may see draped in black that thing which no one ever mistakes for anything else; and round about the coffin a dozen tall wax candles may be burning with a steady yellow flame. Possibly, at the sound of the leathern curtain slapping the stone door-posts as it falls behind you, a sad-looking sacristan may shuffle out of a dark corner to see who has come in; possibly not. He may be asleep, or he may be busy folding vestments in the sacristy. The dead need little protection from the living, nor does a sacristan readily put himself out for nothing. You may stand there undisturbed as long as you please, and see what all the world's noise comes to in the end. Or it may be, if the departed person belonged to a pious confraternity, that you chance upon the brothers of the society—clad in dark hoods with only holes for their eyes, and no man recognized by his neighbor—chanting penitential psalms and hymns for the one whom they all know because he is dead, and they are living.



DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

THE PALACE OF THE CÆSARS.

Such contrasts are not lacking in Rome. There are plenty of them everywhere in the world, perhaps, but they are more striking here, in proportion as the outward forms of religious practice are more ancient, unchang-

ing, and impressive. For there is nothing very impressive or unchanging about the daily outside world, specially in Rome.

Rome, the worldly, is the capital of one of the smaller kingdoms of the world, which those who rule it are anxious to force into the position of a great power. One need not criticize their action too harshly; their motives can hardly be anything but patriotic, considering the fearful sacrifices they impose upon their country. But they are not the men who brought about Italian unity. They are the successors of those men; they are not satisfied with that unification, and they have dreamed a dream of ambition beside which, considering the means at their disposal, the projects of Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon sink into comparative insignificance. At all events, the worldly, modern, outward Italian Rome is very far behind the great European capitals in development, not to say in wealth and magnificence. «Lay» Rome, if one may use the expression, is not in the least a remarkable city.

«Ecclesiastic» Rome is the stronghold of a most tremendous fact, from whatever point of view Christianity may be considered. If one could, in imagination, detach the head of the Catholic Church from the church, one would be obliged to admit that no single living man possesses the far-reaching and lasting power which in each succeeding papal reign belongs to the Pope. Behind the Pope stands the fact which confers, maintains, and extends that power from century to century —a power which is one of the hugest elements of the world's moral activity, both in its own direct action and in the counteraction and antagonism which it calls forth continually.

It is the all-pervading presence of this greatest fact, literally, in Christendom which has carried on Rome's importance from the days of the Cæsars, across the chasm of the dark ages, to the days of the modern popes; and it is this really enormous importance which continually throws forward into cruel relief the puerilities and inanities of the daily outward world. It is the consciousness of that importance which makes old Roman society what it is, with its virtues, its vices, its prejudices, and its strange, old-fashioned, close-fisted kindliness; which makes the contrast between the Saturnalia of Shrove Tuesday night and the cross signed with ashes upon the forehead on Ash Wednesday morning, between the careless laughter of the Roman beauty in Carnival, and the tragic earnestness of the same lovely face when the great lady kneels in Lent before the confessional to receive upon her bent head the light touch of the penitentiary's wand, taking her turn, perhaps, with a score of women of the people. It is the knowledge of an always present power, active throughout the whole world, which throws deep, straight shadows, as it were, through the Roman character, just as in certain ancient families there is a secret that makes grave the lives of those who know it.

In Rome itself one loses sight of the Vatican and of the cupola of St. Peter's. The view of them is easily shut out when one is near. But at a little distance, as you drive out upon the Campagna, the dome rears itself up by degrees, as though a giant were slowly thrusting up his helmeted head from the horizon; and as you go farther away the mass rises still in respect of the littlenesses around it, enormous out of all foreseen proportion, until it hugely masters and thrusts down all the rest beneath the level line of mist, and towers alone above everything, in vast imperial solitude.

But out upon that broad expanse of rolling land one need not look forever at St. Peter's dome. Half the history of the world has been written in stones and blood between the sea-line and the ranging mountains. The memory of a Brahman sage, the tongue of a Homer, the wisdom of a Solomon, kneaded into one human genius, would not suffice to recall, to describe, and to judge all that men have done in that bounded plain.

Where the myths of ages were born and grew great and died, where the history of five and twenty centuries lies buried, romance has still life to put forth a few tender blossoms. For although the day of the Cæsars is darkened, and the twilight of their gods has deepened into night, the human heart has not yet lived out its day nor earned its rest.

On the very spot where you pause, dim primeval battles were fought, Christian martyrs died, barbarians encamped, Roman barons slew one another, and foreign conquerors halted before besieging Rome. Where you are standing, fair young St. Julia may have breathed her last upon the cross; Augustus may have drawn rein a moment there, while Julius Cæsar's funeral pyre still sent up its pillar of smoke from the distant Forum, as the Jews fed the flames, bewailing him through seven days and nights; the Constable of Bourbon passed this way, riding to his death; by this road Paolo Giordano Orsini led his young wife to haunted Galera, having in his heart already determined that she should

die; Savelli, Frangipani, Orsini, Colonna, Vitelleschi, without number, have ridden by, in war and peace, to good and evil deeds.

AND a man's eyes come back to it again and again as he slowly turns, viewing and reviewing the broad grave of half the world's greatness. It has the attracting fascination of a distant and lofty island in the midst of a lonely ocean, and draws the sight to itself in the same way. One cannot get rid

DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.
A TRASTEVERE BEAUTY.

of it until he is in the city again, and even then it haunts him, and impels him to climb to some high place and look at it once more before the sun goes down. The drawing power of Rome itself is proverbial among travelers, taking form in the belief that whoever drinks of the water of Trevi by moonlight, and throws a coin into the fountain, will some day come back. The name Trevi is sometimes derived from «Trivium,» «cross-roads,» and all cross-roads belonged to Hecate, goddess of enchantment, so that the superstition probably had its far-away origin in a spell of bygone days. But it is neither the moonlight, nor the water, nor the offering of the obolus to the infernal gods, whereby the wanderer is sooner or later brought again to Rome. The center-seeking force which once drew all the world to Rome's feet is not yet quite spent. In Rienzi's day there were not twenty thousand souls, all told, within the city. Things have changed again since that time, and there has probably never been a time when so many people of all nations have been at least once in their lives within Rome's walls.

As for Roman moonlight, however, it has a beauty and a magic of its own. Moonlight has everywhere the effect of reproducing the day-picture in black and white, as a painting is reproduced by engraving or etching. The lights and shadows, in the course of nature, always fall in the same series of general directions in which they are cast by the sun from morning to evening; but the moon, according to her southing when near the full, may happen to cast at midsummer the long shadows which the sun makes at Christmas, and the contrary. No one seems to have noticed this fact in its connection with the unexpected effects produced by the moonlight in places well known to us. We are really much more familiar with the shadows where we generally live than we know, and any sudden displacement of them when the sun is shining, were such a thing possible, would probably produce a terrifying impression upon us. The sensation of seeing something new, which one so often feels in the moonlight, is most likely connected with the difference in shadows caused by the moon's chancing to be much farther south or north than the sun at that time of year. The character of moonlight in general in any city depends on the colors of the houses and on their shapes. The yellowish stuccoed walls of Rome give back the light, warm and soft, and the strong shadows are deeper and fuller than those cast by white surfaces or gray. Even the tint of the paving-stones is less cold than in other places. Moreover, there are nowhere such fountains as here, in every square, at every corner, in every open place. Lastly, there is perhaps no old city in the world where the architecture is so uniformly bad as seen by daylight, and therefore so easily improved by the ennobling change from vulgar color to plain black and white. For color accentuates vulgarity of shape.

Be these things as they may, a moonlight night in Rome has a special enchantment.

The stillness is like a pause in sweet music; the sound of the running water is like the chant of a spell. The electric light does not dazzle the eyes at every turn. There is no night traffic. Except during the short winter season, there are not many carriages about, even in the principal streets. People who walk alone move quietly, and even those who go together in twos and threes talk in low tones, or not at all; for enough of old-time tradition has survived to make respectable citizens instinctively cautious about being out late in the less frequented neighborhoods. It is only near the theaters, when the play is over, that there is any life; and in the central part of the Corso, near Aragno's café, and by the Piazza Colonna, where there are many others, it is not quiet until an hour after midnight.

Sometimes, if one wanders upward toward the Monti when the moon is high, a far-off voice rings through the quiet air—one of those voices which hardly ever find their way to the stage nowadays, and which, perhaps, would not satisfy the nervous taste of our Wagnerian times. In Japan, where almost everything is very artificial, girls who are to sing in public for a living must break their voices before they are thought able to sing at all. The breaking consists in singing as loud as possible upon the roof of the house at night, in the bitterest winter weather, until a violent and dangerous sore throat ensues. This presumably produces a permanent roughening and thickening of the vocal chords, and the consequence is a sort of strident, harsh tone which delights Japanese ears but would set most European teeth on edge. A similar result seems to be produced on many voices by singing Wagner's later music, and there are certainly to be found persons who prefer such singing to the common but perfectly natural Italian tenor. Perhaps it sounds better in the moonlight, in those lonely, echoing streets, than it would on the stage. At all events, it is beautiful, as one hears it, clear, strong, natural, ringing. It belongs to the place and hour, as the humming of honey-bees to a field of flowers at noon, or the desolate moaning of the tide to a lonely ocean coast at night. It is the sort of singing that belongs to romance. It is true that the romantic is somewhat out of fashion just now. It is not an exaggeration, nor a mere bit of ill nature, to say that there are thousands of fastidiously cultivated people to-day who would think it all theatrical in the extreme, and would be inclined to despise their own taste if they felt a secret pleasure in the scene and the song. But in Rome even such as they might condescend to the romantic for an hour, because in Rome such deeds have been dared, such loves have been loved, such deaths have been died, that any romance, no matter how wild, has larger probability in the light of what has actually been experienced by real men and women.

DRAWN BY A. CASTAIGNE.

A ROMAN BOY.

So going alone through the winding moonlighted ways about Tor de' Conti, Santa Maria dei Monti, and San Pietro in Vincoli, a man need take no account of modern fashions in sensation; and if he will but let himself be charmed, the enchantment will take hold of him and lead him on through a city of dreams and visions, and memories strange and great, without end. Ever since Rome began there must have been just such silvery nights; just such a voice rang through the same air ages ago; just as now the velvet shadows fell pall-like and unrolled themselves along the gray pavement under the lofty columns of Mars the Avenger and beneath the wall of the Forum of Augustus; such white stillness as this fell then also, by night, on all the broad space around the amphitheater of all amphitheaters, the wonder of the world, the chief monument of Titus, when his hand had left of Jerusalem not one stone upon another. The same moonbeams fell slanting across the same huge walls, and whitened the sand of the same broad arena when the great awning was drawn back at night to air the place of so much death. In the shadow, the steps are still those up which Dion the senator went to see mad Commodus play the gladiator and the public fool. On one of those lower seats he sat, the grave historian, chewing laurel-leaves to steady his lips and keep down his laughter, lest a smile should cost his head; and he showed the other senators that it was a good thing for their safety, and there they sat, in their rows, throughout the long afternoon,

solemnly chewing laurel-leaves for their lives, while the strong madman raved on the sand below, and slew, and bathed himself in the blood of man and beast. There is a touch of frightful humor in the tale.

And one stands there alone in the stillness and remembers how, on that night when all was over, when the corpses had all been dragged away, and the arena had been freshly strewn with sand, it may have been almost as it is now. Only, perhaps, far off among the arches and on the tiers of seats, there might be still a tiny light moving here and there; the keepers of the terrible place would go their rounds with their little earthen lamps; they would search everywhere in the spectators' places for small things that might have been lost in the press—a shoulder-buckle of gold or silver or bronze, an armlet, a woman's earring, a purse, perhaps, with something in it. And the fitful night breeze would now and then make them shade their lights with their dark hands. By the «door of the dead» a torch was burning down in its socket, its glare falling upon a heap of armor, mostly somewhat battered, and all of it bloodstained; a score of black-browed smiths were picking it over and distributing it in heaps, according to its condition. Now and then, from the deep vaults below the arena, came the distant sound of a clanging gate, or of some piece of huge stage machinery falling into its place, and a muffled calling of men. One of the keepers, with his light, was singing softly some ancient minor strain as he searched the tiers. That would be all, and presently even that would cease.

One thinks of such things naturally enough; and then the dream runs backward, against the sun, as dreams will, and the moon-rays weave a vision of dim day. Straightway tier upon tier, eighty thousand faces rise, up to the last high rank beneath the awning's shade. Meanwhile, under his silken canopy, sits the emperor of the world, sodden-faced, ghastly, swine-eyed, robed in purple; all alone, save for his dwarf, bull-nosed, slit-mouthed, hunchbacked, sly. Next, on the lowest bench, the Vestals, old and young, the elder looking on with hard faces and dry eyes, the youngest with wide and startled looks, and parted lips, and quick-drawn breath that sobs and is caught at sight of each deadly stab and gash of broad-sword and trident, and hands that twitch and clutch each other as a man's foot slips in a pool of blood and the heavy harness clashes in the red, wet sand. Then gray-haired senators; then curled and perfumed knights of Rome; and then the people, countless, vast, frenzied, bloodthirsty, stretching out a hundred thousand hands with thumbs reversed, commanding death to the fallen—full eighty thousand throats of men and women roaring, yelling, shrieking over each ended life. A theater indeed, a stage indeed, a play wherein every scene of every act ends in a sudden death.

And then the wildest, deadliest howl of all on that day; a handful of men and women in white, and one girl in the midst of them; the clang of an iron gate thrown suddenly open; a rushing and leaping of great lithe bodies of beasts, yellow and black and striped, the sand flying in clouds behind them; a worrying and crushing of flesh and bone, as of huge cats worrying little white mice; three sharp cries, then blood, then silence, then a great laughter, and the sodden face of mankind's drunken master grows almost human for a moment with a very slow smile. The wild beasts are driven out with brands step by step, dragging backward nameless mangled rags of humanity in their dripping jaws, and the bull-nosed dwarf offers the emperor a cup of rare red wine. It drips from his mouth while he drinks, as the blood from the tigers' fangs.

«What were they?» he asks.

«Christians,» explains the dwarf.

«They were very amusing,» answers the emperor. «They were like little white mice. We will have more!»

F. Marion Crawford.