

Christian Messenger.

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"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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Poetry.

Invocation to the Spirit.

BY THE REV. T. T. LYNCH.

Gracious Spirit, dwell with me,—
I myself would gracious be,
And with words that help and heal,
Would thy life in mine reveal;
And with actions bold and meek,
Would for Christ my Saviour speak.

Truthful Spirit, dwell with me,—
I myself would truthful be;
And with wisdom kind and clear,
Let thy life in mine appear;
And with actions brotherly
Speak my Lord's sincerity.

Tender Spirit, dwell with me,—
I myself would tender be;
Shut my heart up like a flower,
At temptation's darksome hour;
Open it when shines the sun,
And his love by fragrance own.

Silent Spirit, dwell with me,—
I myself would quiet be,
Quiet as the growing blade
Which through earth its way has made.
Silently, like morning light,
Putting mists and chills to flight.

Mighty Saviour, dwell with me,—
I myself would mighty be,
Mighty so as to prevail;
Where unaided man must fail;
Ever by a mighty hope
Pressing on and bearing up.

Holy Spirit, dwell with me,—
I myself would holy be;
Separate from sin, I would
Choose and cherish all things good;
And whatever I can be
Give to him who gave me Thee.

—From "The Rivulet."

History and Topography.

For the Christian Messenger.

Recollections of Rome.

[No. 2.]

VIEW FROM THE TOWER OF THE CAPITOL.

I SUPPOSE myself to have threaded the damp, and dreary lanes of Rome, for there are no streets worthy of the name, and to have reached the capitol. I ascend the numerous steps which conduct me to the summit of the hill, and stay a moment to look around me, at some choice specimen of ancient art which are placed here. Then, anxious to get a good view of Rome, I hurry up the steps of the tower of the Capitol, and am soon in a position to have my wishes gratified.

Towards the west is the city of the Popes, towards the east the scattered fragments of the city of the Caesars. I look first at the former. The Tiber, winding for many miles through the vast, but desolate Campagna, divides the modern city into two unequal portions, here and there passing under bridges of various degrees of age and excellence. The city, by itself considered, does not present a very enchanting view. The houses are not remarkable in any respect, and the innumerable lines of crooked, narrow streets do not set off, to the best advantage, those edifices in whose erection the genius of the architect has been employed. The streets are so narrow as scarcely to permit the passage of two carriages. The beams of the sun rarely cheer the passenger, who plods on, overshadowed by lofty but dismal houses. Palaces there are in great abundance, and evidently designed to be magnificent. Probably they were so once, but their glory has become dimmed through the combined influences of time and neglect, but the noblest architecture would be thrown away in these damp and dreary lanes, amidst these squalid, dismal houses. In many instances the princely mansion has been transformed into a cafe, or a lodging house. In every quarter of the city the domes and towers of the religious edifices appear. Their number is really wonderful, even though Rome be the head-quarters of Roman Catholicism, the Protestant who is accustomed to regard religious houses,

as places designed not only for the public worship of God, but for the diffusion of religious instruction, is amazed at the number of churches in a city which enjoys unity of faith. Towards the western extremity of the city the magnificent cathedral of St. Peter appears, its domes and colonades making it a very prominent object, beside it is the palace of the popes,—the Vatican.

Then, besides these palaces and churches, many of which, when once closely inspected, are of great beauty and interest, there are magnificent relics of antiquity. Towards the left, by the city wall, is the pyramid of Caius Cestus; towards the right, near the opposite side of the city, is the mausoleum of Augustus; on towards the cathedral of St. Peter, is the Pantheon, the most perfect monument in Rome, and the tomb of Hadrian, now the castle of St. Angelo.

But let us turn to the city of the Caesars, the city of the seven hills. From the tower of the capitol, these hills can all be traced. First there is the Capitoline on which I am standing, steeper and more prominent than any of the others. To the right, the Palatine can be readily traced, with its mouldering walls and heaps of rubbish. From this hill, Rome had its origin; here the gorgeous palaces of the emperors of the world were once erected, and now they have crumbled to the dust, leaving the Palatine almost as desolate as when Evander and his Arcadian associates first came to seek their fortunes here. Farther on to the right, Mt. Aventine rises with its summit crowned by a solitary convent. Though once one of the most important of the seven hills, it does not possess one relic of interest to recal its former connection with the imperial city. Beyond the Palatine, towards the east, the Caelian mount may be traced. By the extremity nearest the capitol, the almost perfect triumphal arch of Constantine appears, and towards the west, one marks the magnificent cathedral of St. John Lateran. The whole extent of ground covered by this hill is nearly uninhabited, a few old monuments, two or three interesting churches of considerable antiquity, are all its attractions, if we except the associations connected with one of the seven hills. Opposite the Caelian and Palatine, towards the left, we trace the Esquiline mount. This is more extensive than either of the others, and is marked on its southern side by a heap of ruins, the remnants of the baths of Titus. The two remaining hills can be traced with less distinctness from the tower of the capitol, partly because they are less distinctly marked than the others, and partly because they are the only hills to any extent inhabited. Many relics of great interest are to be found in them, but they require a near inspection for their discovery.

Before ranging with the eye outside the city walls, let us look down beneath the Capitol, and for a few moments examine the valley that lies between the Palatine and the Esquiline. Here are scattered the most interesting fragments of ancient Rome. Along the base of the Capitoline are relics of temples, columns still standing of exquisite beauty, and triumphal arches which have withstood, with wonderful success, the ravages of time. I see the very prison which once held the apostle Paul, the very walls which heard his prayers, and witnessed his tears for the city whose mouldering relics I see before me. Before me in this valley was the Roman Forum. I cannot trace its boundaries, nor tell where Cicero stood when he delivered his orations, it is enough for me to know that there, under my eye, the Romans congregated, that there they listened to eloquence which to this day enchants the ear of man. Farther on is the triumphal arch of Titus, to the Christian the most interesting monument in Rome; its own exquisite proportions and the beauty of its ornaments make it worthy of the great events which it commemorates, "the destruction of Jerusalem." Under the arch, on the sides of the piers, there is a most beautiful bass-relief, illustrating the furniture of the Jewish sanctuary, the table of shew-bread, the golden lamp-stand and the

silver trumpets. A short distance beyond this arch, a little to the left, the gigantic form of the Coliseum arises. How powerful was Rome when she erected this stupendous mass, destined to be her monument, when she herself was no more. How populous was Rome when she could fill every gallery in this vast amphitheatre; and, after all, how barbarous was Rome, when so many thousands could be summoned to glut their eyes on the dying agonies of criminals or Christians.

Now let us rove for an instant beyond the walls. Passing over the scattered tombs and temples which appear near the city, we gaze on the bare and dreary Campagna, whose dead level is only broken by long lines of ruined aqueducts. But towards the east, beyond the dismal plain, scenes appear, which again attract us to the past. There is the land of the Albans, and there the country of the Sabines. On the long ridge in the distance once flourished Alba Longa, the earliest and most mighty of the enemies of infant Rome. At the base of one of those hills is Tivoli, where Horace sought refuge from the tumult of the ancient city. Beyond, the gracefully rounded forms of the wooded Appenines, rise majestically over the Sabine and Alban hills. Far off to the left, the striking form of Mt. Soracto appears.

"Not now in snow which asks the lyric Romans aid
For our remembrance, and from out the plain
Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,
And on the curl hangs pausing."

From the tower of the Capitol we have presented one of the most soul-inspiring views on earth. The spectator breathes an exhilarating atmosphere, every object is illuminated by the clear sun of Italy, and every object is fitted to awaken intense interest. Most of the important facts in the world's history for the last thirty centuries are here perpetuated in visible monuments, in still existing relics, or in spots verified by comparison with ancient writings, or by venerable and trustworthy traditions. Scenes, viewed and described by Horace, Virgil or Juvenal, still live to make the poetry of ancient Rome doubly interesting, and to increase ten-fold the enthusiasm of the pilgrim to Rome. The production of the world's greatest men arise before us. Here are records of the magnificence of Vespasian, and Leo X, of the Caesars and the pope, and here are monuments of the genius of Apollodorus and Michael Angelo, the pagan and the Christian. Then though ancient Rome may have died, though modern Rome be dying, still the sepulchre has been and will be glorious. The beauty of nature will survive the ravages of time and adorn the tomb of the departed powers. The yellow Tiber will wind on through this plain, the seven hills will never vanish, the Campagna will remain still and solemn, the waters of the Mediterranean will still glitter in the sun-light, and the graceful, undulating hills which I see in the distance will always overlook these scenes.

We cannot look down upon the ruins of ancient Rome without emotion. Horace and Virgil taught us to sing, and Cicero told us how to speak. The great acts that stirred our first enthusiasm were Roman, and here I see the former home of Romulus and Tullus, of Brutus, Virginius, of Marcellus and Scipio, of Caesar and Titus. With feelings of sadness we regard the scattered bones of the former mistress of the world, who, by her own prudence and fortitude, welded into one vast empire, the disconnected and warring barbarians of antiquity, who gave birth to the language, the art, the literature of modern Europe and America. The ruins on the Palatine, the vast pile of the Coliseum, recall her ancient splendour, explain her fall, and are now the monuments over her sepulchre.

The Niobe of nations, there she stands
Childless, and crownless in her voiceless woe.
An empty urn within her withered hands,
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago.
The Scipio's tomb contains no ashes now.
The very sepulchres be tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers. Dost thou flow,
Old Tiber, through a marble wilderness?
Rise with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire
Have dealt upon the seven-hilled cities pride.
She saw her glories one by one expire,
And up the steep, Barbarian monarchs ride
Where the car climbed the capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site.
Chaos of ruins, who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, here was, or is where all is doubly night.

The following story may well follow "Recollections of Rome." How many such scenes as it describes have occurred within its walls, without having so pleasing a conclusion.

Three Trials.

In an old city in the olden time, when Christianity was a new religion and Heathenism was trying to subdue it, there dwelt a woman, named Agatha, with her husband and three children. I don't know whether she was handsome or whether her children were beautiful; I don't know whether her husband was rich, nor whether their house was a grand palace, with pictures on the walls, and marble floors, and fine statues and leaping fountains—but the beauty of holiness belonged to them all, and the "true riches" were in their dwelling. The mother had heard of Christ and had believed. She had taught her little ones to trust in Him: the husband had been won by the conversation of the wife, and they were all bent on the same journey that had the golden-city in the skies for its end.

Their religion was not popular: it did not, as old John Bunyan says, walk "in silver slippers." Ah no—it went barefoot for the most part, and was terribly wounded and bruised by the stones of stumbling over which it passed. When Agatha went with her husband and children to worship, it was not in some comfortable chapel or grand old church, but under ground, where slaves were buried, and in the dead of the night. They were in danger even there, and worshipped there with the full knowledge that before the last Amen was said, rough soldiery might fall upon them and kill them, or drag them off to grace some holiday fete, and be torn to pieces by wild beasts as a public show.

Well—this did not happen. They sang their hymns in peace—offered up their prayers, and listened—oh, how devoutly!—to the reader as he unrolled his book, and went through some passage in Christ's story. And Agatha rejoiced, with all that were in her house, that the lines still fell to them in pleasant places. But there were betrayers in that little company of Christians with whom they met—betrayers who did not die with shame and fear when they heard it read how Judas kissed his master, and with that kiss betrayed him. The betrayer made it known to the Governor who these Christians were who worshipped in the tombs. None escaped notice—the rich lady, who came veiled; the Ethiopian who came with her—"no longer a servant, but a brother beloved in the Lord;" the little hump-backed shoemaker; the centurion; the dancing girl, with her light, graceful form; the old gladiator, with his strong limbs; the rough labourer, with his iron hands; the young noble, with his satin skin—all were marked, and all their names written in a book—the Governor's Criminal List. Ay, and in a better and more lasting volume—in the Lamb's Book of Life.

One night there came a messenger to Agatha's house, and a guard, who bore a letter from the Governor, commanding the arrest of all the family, and their committal to the town prison. So they were hurried away; but instead of, as they expected, being separated from one another, were all lodged in the same ward. On the morrow there came a messenger, saying that Agatha was to appear before the Governor. The hour of trial had come. She anticipated this. When she became a Christian she knew that a crown of glory would be hers—but a cross and a sepulchre lay between her and its possession. She kissed her children and embraced her husband, and felt—only as a mother and a wife can feel when separated from all they love; and was sustained as a Christian can be—by God's grace in the hour of adversity.