

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN ROME.

The theme of the author of this magnificent work * is the transformation of Rome from a pagan into a Christian city. This was part of the great struggle between Christianity and paganism for the possession of the world. It is striking proof that God can make the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty. The Christian religion spread rapidly. "We are but of yesterday," writes Tertullian at the close of the second century, "yet we fill every city, town, and island of the Empire. We abound in the very camps and castles, in the council chamber and the palace, in the senate and the forum; only your temples and theatres are left."

Some of the noblest names of Rome (even members of the Imperial family) occur in the epitaphs of the catacombs. The evidence adduced on this subject by Signor Lanciani is of a most interesting character. Through recent exploration, countless objects of pagan and Christian antiquity have been found, among them hundreds of cartloads of votive offerings from pagan temples. Countless marble monuments were burned into lime or built into new structures.

Cardinal Mai enumerates a thousand churches in Rome, some dating back it is alleged, to Prisca and Pudens, mentioned in the Epistles of St. Paul. The sepulchres of the early Christians shared with those of the pagans the protection of the law. Except in times of persecution the Romans made not war upon the dead. We have records of funeral clubs and of their monthly contributions.

The experience Signor Lanciani gained in twenty-five years of active exploration in ancient Rome, both above and below ground, enables him to state that every pagan building which was capable of giving shelter to a congregation was transformed, at one time or another, into a church or a chapel. Smaller edifices, like temples and mausoleums, were adapted bodily to their new office, while the larger ones, such as baths, theatres, circuses and barracks were occupied in part only.

Rome under Augustus was probably as large as the London of to-day. In 14 A.D., its census enumerated 4,937,000

people, an increase of 874,000 during his peaceful reign. He found Rome brick and left it marble, and so adorned with art that in the hyperbole of the times it was easier to find a statue than a man. Yet the mausoleum of this great Emperor is now used as a circus, and harlequin plays his pranks over the tomb of the Lord of the world. These ancient tombs were often rifled for treasure. It is alleged that from that of David at Jerusalem Hircanus stole 3,000 talents of silver, nearly \$4,000,000.

The Christian catacombs, with their 587 miles of corridors, and over 3,000,000 Christian graves, yield most important testimony as to the life and character, the domestic and social relations, the rites and institutions and beliefs of the early Christians.

The disposal of the dead of the Imperial city for hundreds of years was a difficult problem. A niche for an urn cost from \$8.25 to \$8,000. The cost of the huge monuments that for many miles line the Appian Way cannot be estimated.

The contrast between the blankness of despair of the pagans and the hope of the Christians is very striking. Signor Lanciani quotes the following from a wife to her husband: "We knew we loved each other from childhood; married, an impious hand separated us at once. Oh, Infernal Gods! do be kind and merciful to him, and let him appear to me in the silent hours of the night; and, also, let me share his fate, that we may be reunited *dulcius et celerius*." The last two words "more sweetly and swiftly," he thinks of exquisite feeling.

Many pagan epitaphs give the rank in the army or navy, and even the name of the warship in which the deceased served. In the Christian tombs few military inscriptions occur. The author gives a curious example of the way in which the spade illustrates history. Titus repudiated his second wife, but no reason is assigned. In a marble statue of the dame, figured in this volume, "she looks," he says, "hopelessly disagreeable." A pagan inscription describes an area as sacred to the "Divine Crows." It is curious that the same spot is thronged with their descendants to the present day. The effigy and epitaph of a boy of eleven and a half years, who won a prize in competition against fifty-two Greek poets, is reproduced. The successful poem is engraved

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