

"DARKEST LONDON"

Revolving Phases of Humanity.

Catholic Union and Times.

This term, "Darkest London," is metaphorically used by public writers when the attempt is made to depict the moral degradation and fallen state of humanity in the great modern Babylon.

The late lamented and venerated Cardinal Manning used to speak and write on the subject with a vivid and pathetic force that caused the hearts of true Christians to bleed with compassion for the unhappy condition of the multitudes of men and women in London, who led brutalized lives of immorality and shame, and who were entirely beyond the pale of religious influence.

No man knew better than Cardinal Manning the density and extent of the sin, wickedness and immorality that existed in the sordid districts, and his ever-watchful and zealous priests were constantly on the alert to rescue and to save their own Catholic flocks from the filthy whirlpools of vice which hemmed in on all sides.

The able and esteemed Cardinal Vaughan, who succeeded the beloved Cardinal Manning, and his learned and zealous body of priests are working like Trojan to purify and lift up the inhabitants of the great city to a higher plane of social and Christian life.

On the managing committee and supporters of the great project can be counted dukes, peers and noblemen of the highest rank and standing, and leagued with these is the present Lord Chief Justice of England.

Severe critics and moralizers in the past and present have predicted the downfall and ruin of the great historic city on the Thames; but they forgot that the destroying angel promised to spare the doomed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah only ten just persons could be found within their walls.

It was then and by that act of spiritual revolt that licentious men burst the salutary religious restraints which alone could suffice to keep them in just and humble bounds.

Had England firmly resisted the wave of error that swept across Germany, the present and past generations would have been saved much of

ABOUT ST. PETER'S IN ROME.

F. Marion Crawford's Vivid Description of the Great Cathedral.

In the deep Mamertine prison, behind the tabernacle of the Forum, writes F. Marion Crawford in the Century for July, it was customary to put to death only political misdoers, and their bodies were then thrown down the Gemonian steps.

These are some of the reasons why all Anglican and Parliamentary efforts have effected so little good in reforming the drunken and debauched elements of London and the other great cities of the United Kingdom.

When he was dead, after much torment, and the sentinel soldier had gone away, they took the holy body and carried it along the hillside, and buried it at night close against the long wall of Nero's circus, on the north side, near the place where they buried the martyrs killed daily by Nero's wild beasts and in other cruel ways.

The times being quieter then, Nero fell and perished miserably, scarcely able to take his own life in order to escape being beaten to death in the Forum.

Now came Constantine, in love with religion and inclined to think Christianity best, and made a famous edict in Milan.

It needs 50,000 persons to make a crowd in St. Peter's. It is believed that at least that number have been present in the church several times within modern memory.

Zola, the unsavory French novelist, has been recently placed in an awkward "fix." His book on "Rome" attracted widespread attention, and as some parts of it were a caricature on the Pope it naturally offered a few drops of consolation to anti-Catholic bigots.

"Canst thou minister to a mind diseased?" asks Macbeth. Certainly, my lord; the condition of the mind depends largely, if not solely, on the condition of the stomach, liver, and bowels, for all of which complaints Ayer's Pills are the sovereignest thing on earth.

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Taken together, the picture is too big for convenient sight. The impression itself moves unweildly in the cramped brain. A building almost 500 feet high produces a monstrous effect upon the mind.

Nothing, perhaps, is more striking than the general appearance of St. Peter's than the constant variety of detail. The vast building produces at first sight an impression of harmony, and there appears to be a remarkable uniformity of style in all the objects one sees.

There are no oil paintings to speak of in the church, and but few frescoes. The great altar pieces are almost exclusively fine mosaic copies of famous pictures which are preserved elsewhere.

Imperishable, and beyond all influence of climate or dampness, and they are masterpieces of mechanical workmanship. But many will think them hard and uncompassionate in outline, and decidedly crude in color.

The strangest, most extravagant, most incomprehensible, most disturbing sight of all is to be seen from the upper gallery in the cupola looking down to the church below.

And the broken symmetry of streets and squares ranges below, cut by the winding ribbon of the yellow Tiber; to the right the low Aventine, with the dark cypresses of the Protestant cemetery beyond, and the Palatine, crested with trees and ruins; the Pincian on the left, with its high gardens, and the mass of foliage of the Villa Medici behind it.

It is worth the effort of climbing so high. Four hundred feet in the air, you look down on what ruled half the world by force for ages, and on what rules the other half to day by faith—the greatest center of conquest and of discord and of religion which the world has ever seen.

The blood of brothers, the blood of foes, the blood of martyrs without end. It flowed and ebbed in varying tide at the will of the just and the unjust, but there was always more hands to shed it. And so it may be again hereafter: for the name of Rome has a heart-stirring ring, and there has always been as much blood spilled for the names of things as for the things themselves.

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F. Marion Crawford's Vivid Description of the Great Cathedral.

One of the best tombs in the basilica is that of Sixtus IV., the first Pope of the Rovere family, in the chapel of the Sacrament. The bronze figure, lying low on a sarcophagus placed out upon the floor, has a quiet, manly dignity about it which one cannot forget.

After all, his bones have been allowed to rest in peace, which is more than can be said of all that have been buried within the area of the church.

When he was dead, after much torment, and the sentinel soldier had gone away, they took the holy body and carried it along the hillside, and buried it at night close against the long wall of Nero's circus, on the north side, near the place where they buried the martyrs killed daily by Nero's wild beasts and in other cruel ways.

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