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The Sunday School Guardian

Rev. W. H. Withrow, M.A., Editor.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 25, 1879.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT.—With the close of the present volume of the **SUNDAY SCHOOL GUARDIAN** it will be published in an enlarged form, of a greatly improved character. It will be specially adapted to the maturer tastes of older scholars. For the younger scholars an entirely new paper will be prepared, suited to their age and tastes. It will be called **THE SUNBEAM**, and it is hoped will be as bright and cheerful as its name implies. We trust our friends will wait till they see our specimen numbers before ordering their papers for next year. We appeal to their Connexional loyalty and Canadian patriotism to support the effort of their own Church to prepare a paper that shall be every way worthy of their patronage. Specimens will be prepared and submitted for approval as soon as possible.

[LETTER FROM THE EDITOR.]

A VISIT TO POMPEII.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—

I promised that I would give you an account of my visit to this "city of the dead." It was on a bright sunny day that I drove, with a friend, from Mount Vesuvius to Pompeii. The city, it will be remembered, was buried beneath twenty feet by volcanic ashes and pumice stone, just eighteen hundred years ago. About the middle of the last century it was rediscovered, and ever since its excavation has been prosecuted with varying energy. A large part has now been disinterred, and the result is a revelation of the conditions of old Roman life such as is exhibited nowhere else. The houses, of course, are roofless, the woodwork having been ignited by the red-hot ashes and scoria. But their internal arrangements, their paintings, and their contents are perfectly preserved. It produces a strange sensation to walk down the narrow streets of this long-buried

city—they vary from fourteen to twenty-four feet wide—to observe the ruts made by the cartwheels eighteen centuries ago, and to see the stepping-stones across the streets, with the marks of horses' hoofs. On either side are small shops, just like those of Naples to day, for the sale of bread, meat, oil, wine, drugs, and other articles. The signs of the shopkeepers can, in places, be seen, and even the stains of the wine-cups on the marble counters. A barber shop, a soap factory, a tannery, a fuller's shop, a bakery with eighty loaves of bread in the oven, and several mills have also been found. At the street corners are stone fountains worn smooth by lengthened use.

The dwelling houses have a vestibule opening on the street, sometimes with the word "Salve," "Welcome," or a figure of a dog in mosaic on the floor with the words, "Cave canem," "Beware of the dog." Within is an open court surrounded by the bedrooms, kitchen, *triclinum* or dining-room, etc. The walls and columns are beautifully painted in bright colours, chiefly red and yellow, and adorned with elegant frescoes of scenes in the mythic history of the pagan gods and goddesses, landscapes, etc. In public places will be read election placards and wall-scribblings of idle soldiers and schoolboys. Opposite one shop is the warning, in Latin, "This is no place for lounging, idler depart." The public forum, the basilica, or court of justice, with its cells for prisoners; the temples of the gods, with their shrines and images, their altars stained with incense smoke, and the chambers of the priests; the theatres with their stage, corridors, rows of marble seats—one will hold 5,000 and another 2,000 persons; the public baths, with niches for holding the clothes and toilet articles, marble basins for hot and cold water, etc.; the street of tombs, lined with the monuments of the dead, and the ancient city walls and gates, may all be seen almost as they were when the wrath of Heaven descended on the guilty city. About two thousand persons are supposed to have perished in its ruins. In the house of Diomedes the bodies of seventeen women and children were found crowded together. At the garden gate was discovered the skeleton of the proprietor, with the key in his hand, and near him a slave with money and jewels. In the gladiator's barracks were found sixty-three skeletons, three of them in prison, with iron stocks on their feet. In the museum are preserved several casts of the ill-fated inhabitants in the attitude of flight, and in the very death struggle. Among these are a young girl with a ring on her finger, a man lying on his side, with remarkably well preserved features, and others. The very texture of the dress may be distinctly seen. The sight of this dead city called forth from its grave of centuries, made that old Roman life more vivid and real to me than all the classic reading I had ever done.