

dinary system of Roman architecture consists of heavy stone blocks on which were superposed a strongly cemented brick structure. The Coliseum is an exception; from lowest foundation to loftiest summit it is one mass of Tivolian stone, a kind of fire-resisting marble. On the ground level are two circular porticos completely embracing the whole edifice. The exterior portico opened on the interior as well as on the stairway by which access was gained to the superior porticos. Through these superior porticos the crowds pressed on the (steps) grades whence a full view of the arena was obtained. The outer porticos served as shelter from heat and rain. They were embellished by four different kinds of architecture, each of which brings its own quota of beauty to the noble structure. The Doric comes first distinguished for simplicity and strength; this is principally employed in the inferior pillars, in the arches and columns in demi-relief. Next comes the Ionic whose distinguishing feature is the volute of its Capital. Its ornaments the arches of the first story as well as the pilasters without columns. The Corinthian succeeds the Ionic. The architect by a graduation of styles evidently studied effect as well as solidity. This most delicate of all architectural orders with its olive leaf or acanthus adorned capital, beautifies the pilasters and cinters of the porticos of the third story. Here the arches cease, and the topmost story consists of large windows with united pilasters of the composite order. From its very nature the composite order is admirably fitted for terminating this wonderful piece of architecture. So called because the capital is composed of the Ionic order grafted upon the Corinthian, it retains the same proportion, the same general character as the Corinthian, with the exception of the capital in which the Ionic echinus and volutes are introduced, and the Corinthian caulicoli are left out. It resumes, as it were, all the preceding orders, and forms the diadem of the Coliseum's royal head. Between the large windows of the upper story appear the consoles that supported the wooden beams mounted with bronze destined to bear the weight of the velarium.

The portals of the Coliseum are of two kinds. The large, two in number, are at

the narrow end of the oval, and are remarkable for beauty and proportion. One faces the Capitol, the other looks in the direction of St. John's. Their disparity of dimensions is explained by the fact that the gladiators entered by the Capitoline door, while the machinery and appliances employed in the games gained entrance by the larger one. The smaller portals extend to the right and left of the large ones. They number eighty in all, and go around the edifice; they still preserve above their centers the numbers in order, thereby indicating to every class of citizens the entrance by which they might easily find their appointed places. There is, however, an exception deserving special attention: one of the portals directly opposite the Constantine Arch has no number. What is the reason for this omission? Is it an accident? Research is of opinion that the numberless entrance is the imperial one. Its position and decoration and especially the vast hall by which it terminates all seem to confirm the conjecture.

Let us hasten to gain a view of the interior. The Coliseum has an impressive effect on the visitor when seen from the outside, but it is only when the pilgrim finds himself on the spot once bedewed with the blood of so many Christian martyrs that it can be truly said to be sublime. But few years have elapsed since the writer had that privilege, and amidst the vicissitudes of life the souvenir is as strong and as fresh as that of the bright day when he first beheld it. Glorious old Coliseum keep thy perennial freshness, and be more imposing in thy ruin than the temples of other rites in all their uninjured beauty.

Penetrating into the interior, our attention is first fixed on the arena. The arena is the empty space in which the combats took place. In the centre was raised the portable altar on which was immolated the human victim. On this very spot in later times was placed a large cross.

The arena of the Coliseum is 285 ft. in length, 182 ft. in breadth and 748 ft. in circumference. The present level of the Coliseum is fully fifteen feet above the ancient one. The preservation of the massive ruin demanded this, and it seemed becoming to the Sovereign Pontiff, that the ground sanctified by the blood of so many