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ST. PETER'S CHURCH, ROME.

BY THE EDITOR.

The most notable of the churches of Rome is, of course, St. Peter's. I shall not attempt to describe what defies description. Its vastness awes and almost overwhelms the beholder. Its mighty dome swells in a sky-like vault overhead, and its splendor of detail deepens the impression made by its majestic vistas.

The interior effect is incomparably finer than that from without. The vast sweep of the corridors and the elevation of the portico in front of the church quite dwarf the dome which the genius of Angelo hung high in air. But the very harmony of proportion of the interior prevents that striking impression made by other lesser piles.

"Enter: the grandeur overwhelms thee not;

And why? it is not lessened, but thy mind,

Expanded by the genius of the spot, Has grown colossal."

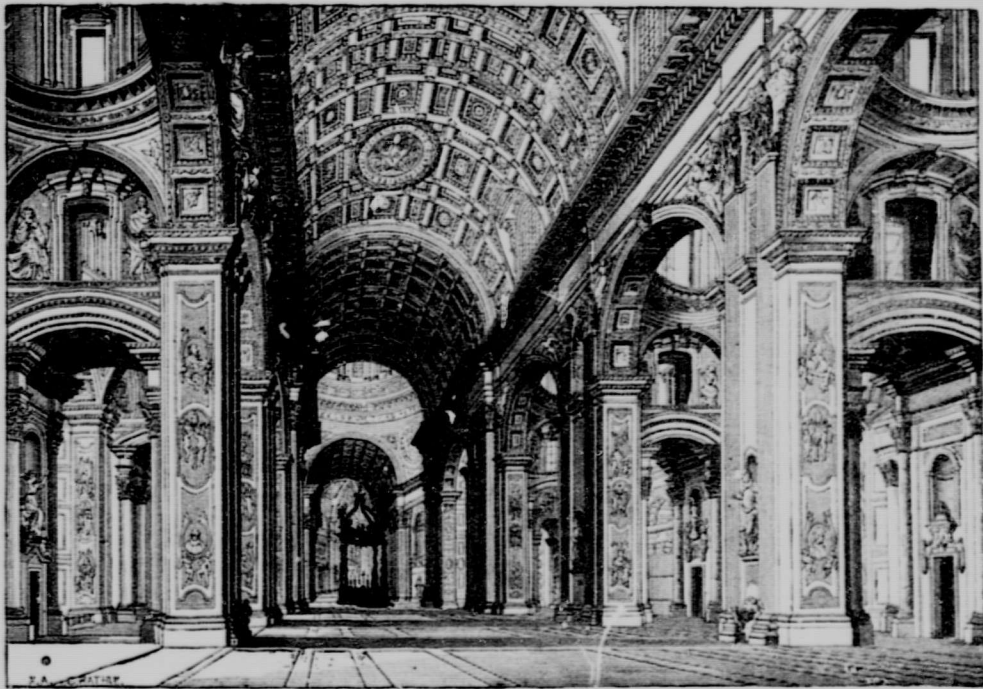
It is only when you observe that the cherubs on the holy water vessels near the entrance are larger than the largest men; when you walk down

the long vista of the nave, over six hundred feet; when you learn that its area is 26,163 square yards, or more than twice that of St. Paul's at London; that the dome rises four hundred feet above your head; that its supporting pillars are 230 feet in circumference, and that the letters in the frieze are over six feet high, that some conception of the real dimensions of this mighty temple enter the mind. It covers half a dozen acres, has been enriched during three hundred years by the donations of two score of popes, who

have lavished upon it \$60,000,000. The mere cost of its repair is \$30,000 a year.

No mere enumeration of the wealth of bronze and various colored marbles, mosaics, paintings and sculpture can give an adequate idea of its costly splendor. The view, from the summit of the dome, of the gardens of the Vatican, of the winding Tiber, the modern city, the ruins of old Rome, the far-extending

a profusion of flowers. Thousands of persons filled the space beneath the dome—priests, barefooted friars of orders white, black, and gray; nuns, military officers, soldiers, civilians, peasants in gala dress, and ladies—all standing, for not a single seat is provided for the comfort of worshippers in this grandest temple in Christendom. High mass was celebrated at the high altar



INTERIOR OF ST. PETER'S, ROME.

walls, the wide sweep of the Campagna, and in the purple distance the far Alban and Sabine hills, is one that well repays the fatigue of the ascent.

It was my fortune to witness the celebration of the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul in this very centre of Romish ritual and ecclesiastical pageantry. The subterranean crypts, containing the shrine of St. Peter, a spot so holy that no woman may enter save once a year, were thrown open and illuminated with hundreds of lamps and decorated with

by a very exalted personage, assisted by a whole college of priests in embroidered robes of scarlet and purple, and of gold and silver tissue. The acolytes swung the jewelled censers to and fro, the aromatic incense filled the air, officers with swords of state stood on guard, and the service for the day was chanted in the sonorous Latin tongue. Two choirs of well-trained voices, accompanied by two organs and instrumental orchestra, sang the majestic music of the mass. As the grand chorus rose and swelled and