

ruins, royal, magnificent, tragic, in decay, are encroached upon and dwarfed by the erection of barrack-like buildings which spread their ever-increasing proportions in all directions.

The Rome of a new epoch is making war upon the lingering dignity of a passionate past.

In no place can the mutability of life be more closely observed and pondered than in Rome, and once more the Eternal City is standing on the brink of a revolution; if she has not already been engulfed. There is war between past and future; utilitarianism and the impracticability of the picturesque; tradition—remembrance and the matter-of-fact needs of modern necessity, between the goddess of beauty and the worshipper of the golden calf.

The glory of Rome has departed. The glory of its kings and emperors; of its republics; of its marvellous ruins; of its popes, of whom only a picturesque "Prisoner of the Vatican" remains.

Faiths come and go with their pathetic history of frenzied devotion, blind martyrdom, and hopeless longing after

ideals which crumble in the dust by the weight of their own illusions; each faith leaving its impress upon the life of the child which repudiates its parentage. Superstitions and customs cling about the rites and beliefs of a living Church which have their roots buried deep in the rich imagination of the early ages, and speak of the ceaseless striving of the spirit which has ever breathed over the troublous waters of human life.

It is Easter-tide and the "Queen of Nations" is wearing her deepest garb of woe and penance. The fasting and mourning of Lent are culminating in numerous services, and a great concourse of people from all parts of the world is gathered in anticipation of the Church's most solemn hour and highest festival—now but a feeble reflection of the pomp and circumstance of Roman spiritual power in the heyday of its splendour.

In the already languorous heat of a mid-day sun the Piazza di Spagna is filled with the idle of many nations, gathered at the foot of the noble steps which lead up to the Trinita di Monti, and about the Barcaccia fountain casting its sparkling waters in a thousand sheddings of diamond sprays. High about its brink, banked in careless profusion, a mass of exquisite spring flowers lie with their sun-kissed petals gleaming in the cool mist of the fountain, tempting the unwary to lavish expenditure of centimes.

Many types and many personalities move to and fro in the colour, gaiety and brilliance of the Piazza. An odd collection of individuals, animated by the same desires, the result of many diverse influences. The bookworm, who has dreamed and worshipped from afar; the butterflies of fashion, relentlessly driven by the desire to emulate their neighbours in the race for pleasure; the heart-weary, for whom the good times of life are over; the artist, seeking to slack his insatiable thirst for the beautiful—all meet on common ground, each eager to gain through mental and physical turmoil his own especial object.



THE SCALA SANTA.