

THE PANTHEON AT ROME.

When the great fire which destroyed the greater part of Chicago a few years since had spent its force, and the smoke had cleared away, in the very heart of what had once been the city stood the walls of its courthouse, apparently uninjured and intact. Around it spread acres and acres of desolation where scarcely one stone lay upon another. So the Pantheon must have stood more than once, the solitary survivor of days of sack and nights of conflagration.

The inscription over the portico gives us the date of its erection, *M. Agrippa, L. F. Cos. Tertium Fecit*. The third consulate of Agrippa we know to correspond with the year 27 B.C. The portico is therefore over 1,900 years old. It is generally believed that the rotunda, though in all probability built by Agrippa, is somewhat older than the portico, as a pediment and entablature are distinctly visible behind the present portico, which seems to have been built to conceal them. Whether the addition of the building, or simply dissatisfaction with its first appearance, we cannot tell. Nor can any one certainly affirm the original purpose of the building itself. As many people take all their theology from Milton, so others receive all their classical history from Byron. To such this is an undoubted Pantheon,

"Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
From Jove to Louis."
But in spite of the passages in Pliny, upon which this theory is chiefly founded, no one familiar with the construction of the ancient Roman buildings can fail to see in this an exact fac-simile of the *Caladriana* of the great baths of Rome. The baths built by Agrippa were certainly in this neighborhood, and in the days of Agrippa consuls built baths for the honoring of the people rather than temples for the honor of the gods.

While the Pantheon has preserved through so many centuries its matchless lines and proportions, it has lost the greater part of its ancient wealth and beauty. The walls of the rotunda are of plain brick strengthened, as is seen in the smaller illustration, by blind arches; but these walls were once covered by a veneering of beautiful marbles. The pediment, which now shows only so many plain blocks of masonry, was filled in with elaborate bas-reliefs, the marks of the iron bolts which secured the same to the wall being plainly visible. The roof of the portico and of the rotunda was covered with heavy plates of gilded bronze, but emperor and pope have long since shared these spoils between them.

The bell towers which to-day disfigure this majestic front are the work of pope Urban VIII. who equally marred whether he added to or took from a work of art. And the elevation of the whole mass is reduced by the filling up of the surrounding space to the depth, or height, of several feet.

It is now over a thousand years since the Pantheon was dedicated to services of the Christian faith. The larger illustration gives an admirable view of the interior as it now appears. The rotunda is 142 feet in diameter, and the height 143 feet. The opening in the centre is 28 feet across, and it lights the interior in a most charming manner. The water which in time of storm necessarily enters is carried off by a drain below the centre of the pavement, towards which the pavement itself almost imperceptibly inclines. The pavement is composed of porphyry and different marbles, more or less restored, but of undoubted antiquity. The beautiful columns and pilasters which support the frieze are nearly 50 feet in height; and the first cornice, which is of white marble, perfectly preserved, is one of the most elegant

architectural remains of ancient Rome. The ceiling of the dome, now showing only so many plain, square recesses, was, it is supposed, decorated with reliefs of gilded bronze, whose value proved their ruin. The altars which are built between the pilasters are of modern date; but the niches before which they stand were once occupied by statues of Julius Caesar and other historical or mythical patrons of the imperial city.

The last chapter of the history of the Pantheon reminds us thus of its first and earliest; for close beside the figure of the great Julius stood we of to-day have seen laid away the form of Victor Emmanuel, the first king of a restored and reunited Italy; a man not worthy to be remembered among the greatest of Rome's defenders, a ruler whose heart was ever loyal to her liberties, and a general whose hand was ever dreaded of her foes.—*Illustrated Christian Weekly*.

ANIMALS AS BAROMETERS.

I do not know, says a writer in the *Cincinnati Inquirer*, any surer way of predicting the changes in the weather than by observing the habits of the snail. They do not drink, but imbibe moisture during a rain and exude it afterwards. This animal is never seen abroad except before a rain, when you will see it climbing the bark of trees

Every farmer knows when swallows fly low that rain is coming; sailors, when the sea-gull flies toward the land, when the stormy petrel appears, or Mother Carey's chickens, as they are called, predict foul weather.

Take the ants; have you ever noticed the activity they display before a storm—hurry, scurry, rushing thither and yon, as if they were letter-carriers making six trips a day, or expressmen behind time? Dogs grow sleepy and dull, and like to lie before a fire, as rain approaches; chickens pick up pebbles, fowls roll in the dust, flies sting and bite more viciously, frogs croak more clamorously, gnats assemble under trees, and horses display restlessness. When you see a swan flying against the wind, spiders crowding on a wall, toads coming out of their holes in unusual numbers of an evening, slugs, worms and snails appearing, robin redbreasts pecking at our windows, pigeons coring to the dovecot earlier than usual, peacocks squalling at night, mice squeaking, or geese washing, you can put them down as rain signs. Nearly all the animals have some way of telling the weather in advance. It may be that the altered condition of the atmosphere in regard to electricity, which generally accompanies changes of weather, makes them feel disagreeable or pleasant. The fact that a cat licks herself before a storm is urged by



THE FRONT VIEW OF THE PANTHEON.



THE INTERIOR OF THE PANTHEON.

and getting on the leaves. The tree-snail, as it is called, two days before rain will climb up the stems of plants, and if the rain is going to be a hard and long one, then they get on the sheltered side of a leaf, but if a short rain or the outside. Then there are other species that before a rain are yellow; after it, blue. Others indicate rain by holes and protuberances, which before a rain rise as large as tubercles. These will begin to show themselves ten days before a rain. At the end of each tubercle is a pore which opens when the rain comes to absorb and draw in the moisture. In other snails deep indentations, beginning at the head between the horns and ending with the jointure of the tail, appear a few days before a storm.

some naturalists as proof of the special influence of electricity. Man is not so sensitive. Yet many people feel less before a storm, to say nothing of aggravated headaches, toothaches, rheumatic pains, and last, but not least, corns.

MOLLY'S PENNIES.

The young assistant editor of one of the most important magazines in New York is also the teacher of a class of little ragamuffins in a mission Sunday-school. These children are allowed to bring a penny each on Sunday, for the help of other children still worse off than themselves. Mind, they are allowed, as a privilege—not required or

even expected. It is set before them as an honor to help in the good work; and many of them bring their penny regularly—others seldom; but there is scarcely one so poor as not some time to produce it.

Among the class is one little mite, perhaps six years old, who always comes well-patched and clean, yet whose whole aspect shows her to be one of the very poorest of the poor. She is not a pretty child. Life has been hard on her, and pinched her little face, and made sharp angles where there ought to be soft outlines and dimples; but she has bright, eager eyes, and she never loses a word the teacher says to her, and he feels that she is one of his most hopeful scholars.

One Sunday last winter, when the times were very hard, he heard a small voice at his elbow:

"Teacher?"

"Well, Molly?"

"Please, sir, here's four pennies, for this Sunday, and three more Sundays."

"Why do you bring them all at once, Molly?" the teacher asked, with curious interest.

"Because, please, father is out of work, and he said there might not be any pennies if I did not take them now," and the thin little brown hand slipped into his brown-paper parcel in which the four pennies were carefully wrapped.

So the good work was not to suffer, however hungry the child's mouth might be before the month was over. The teacher wondered how many of the rich men, playing with fortunes as a child plays with toys, would remember to provide for the charities they were wont to help, lest there should not be any money in the weeks to come.—*Youth's Companion*.

THOMAS PAINE'S PREDICTION.

The Bible Society's house in Earl Street, Blackfriars, stands on the site where, in 1378, the council met to forbid Wycliffe to circulate portions of the Holy Scripture, and where he uttered those memorable words "The truth shall prevail;" and the Religious Tract Society's premises are built on the spot where Bibles were publicly burnt at St. Paul's Cross. In 1782, the publication of the first American Bible was sanctioned and approved by the Federal Government, after a due examination by the chaplains of Congress. It was about this time that Thomas Paine declared, "In five years there will not be a Bible in all America." The report of the American Bible Society for 1884 assures us that over 160,000,000 copies of the Bible, in whole or in part, have been given to the world since this century began; and when that Society prints its twenty-five cent Bibles at the rate of over 500 a day, and its ten cent Testaments at the rate of 1,000 copies a day, it does not appear that Mr. Paine was much of a prophet.—*Ez.*

THE SECRET of muscular recuperation is in stopping when fatigue begins. He or she who is not the fresher in body and mind for the exercise taken has had an overdose of what in proper measure would have been a benefit. The gain in strength is shown and felt in the increasing ability to do more and more without exhaustion. The measure of success is not in the greatness of the feat accomplished, but in the ease with which the exercise is indulged in, and in the absence of exhaustion after it. There are occasions frequent enough in which people in the struggle of life are forced beyond their powers of endurance, and there is no need to carry into the pursuit of recreation the fatigue which exacting work imposes.—*Ez.*