

The Vatican was the next place visited. It is believed that this palace was built by Constantine the Great on the site of the gardens of Nero; it has been much enlarged since its first erection and its present circumference is over seventy thousand feet; it contains more than 12,000 apartments. The statue of Constantine stands at the foot of the Scala Regia, or great staircase. A painting over the staircase door represents Charlemagne signing the donation of the Vatican.

Mrs. — and her family spoke of the great public works of the ancient pagan emperors—for instance, the reservoir of Sorrento. This *Piscina* has lasted 1700 years, and hundreds of years more will it last. These great aqueducts, which still cross mountains and valleys, bringing pure water to the city, are still untouched by time.

Eighteen hundred years ago the

Cloaca of Rome was a marvel, and it is still a marvel; still it bears to the Tiber the impurities (the sewage) of the great city. One of the marked traits of the ancient Romans is their conception of these great works. They built for eternity, or rather for *all time*. While feeling admiration for the genius and enterprise which designed and erected the wonderful structures of antiquity, can we forget the cost of these gigantic labours? The groans of slaves, the misery of captives, whose blood and tears bathed every stone in that extraordinary architecture of ancient times—the thousands of enslaved Jews, “the children of those who were slain, who did eat ashes as bread and mingled their drink with weeping.”

The next letter will be decidedly my last, as we shall soon take our passage for home.

PLACIDIA.



LETTER XLII.

HAMILTON, May, 18—.

MY DEAR BOY—This is my last letter from Bermuda, as we expect to leave for home next week; so I shall take this opportunity of offering you a little wholesome advice, which, I trust, if not very sweet (as wholesome things seldom are), you will not find it bitter, and it may prove some benefit to your inexperience.

“Ah! who can say, however fair his view,
Through what sad scenes his path may lie?
Let careless youths their seeming joys
pursue,

Soon will they learn to scan with thoughtful eye

The illusive past and dark futurity.”

All, when life is new, commence with feelings warm and prospects high, but time strips our illusions of their hue. You are yet within the boundary line of youth, and have been

up to this time a gay and happy dweller in that cloud land of rosy mist and shapeless castles, where the future shines before the eyes of dreaming youth, vague, glorious and golden, like a landscape by Turner. You have yet to learn “the arduous strife, the eternal laws, to which the triumph of all good is given, high sacrifice and labour without pause.”

If when the fallow years are spent the soil is richer, if haply strength of mind grows out of vague aspirations, and purpose out of hopes, then a rich harvest crowns all.

A youthful life is compared to a river by Tom Moore in his fanciful style.

“Smoothly flowing through verdant vales,
Gentle river thy current runs;
Sheltered safe from winter gales,
Shaded cool from summer suns.