

It was early morning on their arrival here, and consequently no visitors were there besides themselves. It was not, however, too early for those people who gain a living by acting as guides to places of interest, or exhibitors of buildings and monuments. On account of their volubility and eloquence they are called by the name of the greatest of Roman orators, and the Italian Cicerone is one of the most familiar of Italian institutions. One of these was already in the place as Clive and David reached it, and after a few approaches he accosted them. It was not their practice to avail themselves of the services of guides except on special occasions, but the present instance seemed to justify them in engaging the Cicerone before them. He spoke English very well, and poured forth his information with all the volubility and fulness which distinguishes his tribe.

He led them all about the place. He gave them the fullest possible information as to the extent of the wall, the number of chambers, and the size of each. He gave a brief outline of the history of the Prætorian Guards, and their connection with the rise and fall of several emperors, and mentioned many interesting relics which had been exhumed in this spot and transferred to the chief museums of Rome. Finally he informed them that he himself, in the course of a lifetime spent among these ruins, had found a large number of most interesting relics of the past, which he was willing to dispose of on the most reasonable terms.