

THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. X.

APRIL, 1898.

No. 6.

ROME DURING HOLY WEEK.

"The moving finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on; nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

Omar Khayyam.

THE balmy air of spring is touching all nature with its caressing breath, as it roams to and fro above the infinite melancholy and majesty of the wide-stretching Campagna; making murmurous music amongst the reeds and grasses, whispering in mystic monotone in the lonely hollows and undulations. A faint purple mist softens the outline of the distant hills, and wraps the horizon in a slumberous haze; the moss-grown ruins are radiant with young and tender greens, trailing their delicate tendrils over the gaping wounds, and concealing the humiliation of once stately piles. Over all the vast meadows and treeless slopes lie, in prodigal confusion, tender wide-eyed anemones of many hues, the winsome, pink fringed daisy, and a gracious myraid of wild flowers bathed in the golden light of an Italian April.

Like a ribbon of silver—winding in and out between low-lying desolate banks—old Father Tiber moves sluggishly. He shakes his hoary head and drones over the memories of twice ten hundred years, as he travels on towards the ocean in turns and twists of tawny gleam, across the illusive dis-

tance of "the drear and lifeless sea" to the ancient port of Ostia.

The grass-grown plain, enveloped in an impenetrable shroud of mystery, broods silently like a great lonely soul that has suffered, stern, hopeless, and apart, with the hand of fate heavily upon it, exhausted by its burden of pain and holding in its lifeless breast the secrets of a buried past.

Far down the lengthening way of the Via Appia, like a jewel flashing in the hollow of its hand, lies the "Eternal City" in the midst of the Roman Campagna.

Glowing with opaline tints beneath the brilliance of an Italian sky, the great dome—head and centre of Rome—stands out strongly against a background of ethereal blue, drawing all eyes to itself—the nucleus of the world.

Palaces, churches, statues and minarets, rise from the midst of a conglomerate mass of irregular roofs of all conceivable forms. The majestic ruins of the Palatine Hill, which once sheltered the proud heads of the Cæsars; the site of the Golden House of Nero; the splendid sweep of the mighty Colosseum; the baths of Caracalla and many lesser