

ROME.

BY PROF. A. P. COLEMAN, PH.D.,
Victoria University.



THE WOLF OF THE CAPITOL.

No other city embodies so much of the world's history as Rome. Its massive ruins, shattered, gray, gnawed by the slow tooth of time, have in their decay a gloomy majesty and nobility such as no brand-new creations of to-day—no Washington monument, no Eiffel Tower,

no just finished cathedral, can hope to rival. There still clings about those ponderous masses of honest brick-work and squared stone something of the indomitable will, the proud self-sufficiency, the calm endurance of their builders of twenty centuries ago. But with our pleasure in the grim endurance mingles a chill thought charged with endless pathos, that build we never so solidly, of mere earthly materials, our work must decay.

The very dust of Rome's streets, the soil of her suburbs has for the reflective mind a solemn interest. That dust once lived, jested and hated, toiled and battled. Some atoms of that soil made Cicero's lips of eloquence and Cæsar's brain of power; all shrivelled and withered now into a few handfuls of wind-driven dust.

Rome was not to me a joyous place. It was too full of haunting memories. Up yonder was Cæsar's palace, where pride, and power, and cruelty looked down upon the mean city. Here are the huge pillars of temples to mighty gods, whose names are now meaningless breath. There is the tremendous ellipse of the Coliseum, in whose sanded centre fought savage beasts, and more savage men; on whose blood-soaked surface died tigers, gladiators and martyrs, while the brutal thousands applauded. Here, built into the wall, is a fragment of carved stone from some earlier building; there, in a neglected corner of a courtyard, is the earth-stain: a torso of a statue—to whom and for what?