

ROME REVISITED.

Some notes from letters written at Rome in February, March, and April, 1894.

OLD AND NEW ROME.

MY DEAR ———

I have been trying, for my own sake and yours also, to recollect, so far as is possible now, after twenty years, what we expected Rome to be like before we ever saw it.

Of course, we had not then, like the tourist of to-day, the advantage of having read Mark Twain's "Innocents Abroad," and gaining beforehand his frank impressions of the town, to help us in determining the relative merits of its various show places. I think that

our pre-conceived impression then was that most of Rome was in ruins, and consisted of churches and other buildings, most of them erected by Sixtus V., out of the ruins of the Colosseum and of pagan temples: that Michel Angelo paint-

ed most of the town, and that Bernini furnished the statues (most of them in bad taste). I think, too, that we expected to find it a larger and dirtier Italian town than those we had already seen—Siena, Perugia and Pisa—containing some fine churches, some good galleries, some historic buildings (in ruins), Michel Angelo's "Moses," Raphael's "Transfiguration," Guido's "Aurora," some extensive catacombs, and a general reminiscent flavor of our classical studies: but nothing clean, or modern, or "go-

ahead": no street cars: no electric lights, no asphalt pavements,—in a word—the Rome of the Cæsars and the Popes, cherishing and living only upon the memories of a dead and buried past.

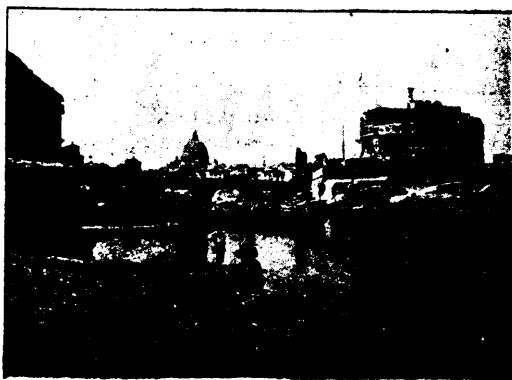
You will recollect our shock of surprise, when, after alighting from the train at a cleaner and more commodious railway station than the "New Union Station" seems likely even to be, we drove through the Piazza del Cinquecento, and past the lovely fountain

in the Piazza del Terme, down a well-paved and well-lighted street to our hotel, and saw on flaming posters the announcement of the performance that night, at a Roman theatre, of Offenbach's "La Grande Duchesse," (then the rage at Paris), with

Mlle. Schneider herself in the *titlle rôle*.

We (then, fresh from Paris and Vienna,) rubbed our sleepy eyes, and said "Can this be Rome?"

That, as you remember, was very soon after what the late Cardinal Wiseman, in his "Recollections of the last four Popes," always calls "The Sardinian occupation" of Rome,—in other words, its new birth as the Capital of United Italy. The first pulses of the new life had begun to throb even then; and now, twenty years after, young Italy is a giant in the



CASTLE S. ANGELO AND ST. PETERS.