

perfection of hatred, not only reigned in Rome, but throughout the vast extent of its empire. There can be no doubt about this matter, as is proved by the deeds perpetrated in the Flavian amphitheatre. This great resort of pleasure known as the Coliseum was constructed in an elliptical form, its width was five hundred and twenty-five feet, the terraced seats, with which it was surrounded, rose to a height of one hundred and sixty feet, accommodating one hundred thousand spectators. Underneath the seats were the prisons and cages where the wild beasts, intended for the conflicts, were confined. These fierce savages of the desert, for some days before the combats, were deprived of food that they might attack their victims with greater fury. The persons who fought in the arena were called gladiators; they sometimes fought with wild beasts, at other times with one another; their ranks, depleted by these bloody contests, were filled by the unfortunate prisoners of war or by poor slaves, whose only crime was that they were poor and helpless, and not unfrequently by abandoned children whose lives were spared and who were nurtured and brought up for that unholy purpose. It is said in our Christian era, that one touch of nature makes the whole world kin, but in pagan Rome the wealthy and powerful did not retain the least natural feeling, not even the last vestige of humanity, for the millions subject to their sway; even those bound by the strongest ties of nature were forced to slaughter each other, for it very often happened that fathers, sons and brothers met in mortal combat for the gratification of

a blood-thirsty and a degraded people. Persons of all sexes, ages and rank, possessing Roman citizenship, the emperor included, feasted their eyes on the horrible carnage. These exhibitions were of frequent occurrence, and the number of combatants and wild beasts that took part in them is simply appalling, for in the period of one hundred and twenty-three days, ten thousand gladiators and eleven thousand wild animals appeared on the arena of the Coliseum, by order of Trajan, who was not by any means considered one of Rome's most cruel emperors. Nor was this carnage confined to the city of Rome alone. Throughout the vast extent of the great empire there were amphitheatres, where the proconsuls, governors, and even private citizens, supplied large numbers of gladiators, so large that millions on millions of able bodied men were slaughtered in these bloody contests. The clash of swords, the roar of the wild beasts, the groans of the victims as the fierce savages of the desert dragged them across the arena, was a scene of delight to the ears and the eyes of the children of paganism, when paganism had reached the highest development of its civilization.

Taking these matters into consideration, how thankful we should be for the enjoyment of the refining influence of the Christian religion. Any thing that is of real value in the world today, the civilization, the refinement, the peace and the society, that men enjoy, and I will add, the charity that is felt to exist amongst us, is the legitimate and sole offspring of the Christian religion.