

# HAPPY DAYS

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## ST. PETER'S AT ROME.

BY THE EDITOR.

The most notable of the churches at Rome is, of course, St. Peter's. I shall not attempt to describe what defies description. Its vastness awes and almost overwhelms the beholder. Its mighty dome swells in a sky-like vault overhead, and its splendour of detail deepens the impression made by its majestic vistas. The interior effect is incomparably finer than that from without. The vast sweep of the corridors and the elevation of the portico in front of the church quite dwarf the dome which the genius of Angelo hung high in air. But the very harmony of proportion of the interior prevents that striking impression made by other lesser piles.

Enter: the grandeur overwhelms thee not;

And why? It is not lessened, but thy mind,

Expanded by the genius of the spot,  
Has grown colossal.

It is only when you observe that the cherubs on the holy water vessels near the entrance are larger than the largest men; when you walk down the long vista of the



KISSING THE TOE OF ST. PETER.

nave, over six hundred feet; when you learn that its area is 16,163 square yards, or more than twice that of St. Paul's at London, that the dome rises four hundred feet above your head, that its supporting pillars are 230 feet in circumference, and that the letters in the frieze are over six feet high, that some conception of the real dimensions of this mighty temple enters

the mind. It covers half a dozen acres, has been enriched during three hundred years by the donations of two score of popes, who have lavished upon it \$60,000,000. The mere cost of its repair is \$30,000 a year.

The bronze statue of St. Peter in the nave, originally, it is said, a pagan statue of Jove, was sumptuously robed in vestments of purple and gold—the imperial robes it is averred of the Emperor Charlemagne—a piece of frippery that utterly destroyed any native dignity the statue may have possessed, and multitudes were kissing its toe, as shown in the picture. The bronze toe has several times been entirely kissed away, and had to be replaced. The vast and shadowy appearance of the cathedral in the background is indicated in the cut.

“Where is your umbrella?” I asked little Dick one rainy day, when I met him coming from school without any. “Oh, I lent it to the girls,” he said. “They hadn’t any. Ladies first always, mother says.” Sure enough! The two little girls behind him were able to keep quite dry under his umbrella, in spite of their old, thin jackets.—*Selected.*