

# PLEASANT HOURS

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## THE ROMAN COLOSSEUM.

BY THE EDITOR.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands  
Childless and crownless in her voiceless woe;  
An empty urn within her withered hand,  
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago.

The Goth, the Christian, Time,  
War, Flood, and Fire,  
Have dealt upon the seven-  
hilled city's pride;  
She saw her glories star by  
star expire,  
And up the steep barbarian  
monarchs ride,  
Where the car climbed the  
Capitol; far and wide  
Temple and tower went down,  
nor left a site.

Alas! the lofty city, and alas!  
The trebly hundred triumphs!  
and the day  
When Brutus made the dag-  
ger's edge surpass  
The conqueror's sword in  
bearing fame away!  
Alas! for Tully's voice, and  
Virgil's lay,  
And Livy's pictured page!—  
but these shall be  
Her resurrection; all beside—  
decay.

—Childe Harold.

**R**OME at last! The  
goal of a thou-  
sand hopes—"the  
city of the soul"  
—"the Mecca of the mind"  
—"lone mother of dead  
Empires"—the city of  
the Caesars and the Popes.

Nothing so struck me  
in my first drive through  
Rome—through the  
Forum to the Colosseum  
and the Palatine Hills—  
as the appalling desola-  
tion of those once proud  
abodes of imperial splen-  
dour. The scene of some  
of the most heroic achieve-  
ments of the Republic and  
Empire is now a half  
buried chaos of broken  
arch and column. Here  
stood the rostrum where  
Tully fulminated against  
Cataline, and where, after  
death, his eloquent  
tongue was pierced  
through and through by  
the bodkin of a revengful  
woman. Here the Roman  
father slew his child to  
save her from dishonour.  
Here, "at the base of

Pompey's statue," the well-beloved  
Brutus stabbed the foremost man of  
all this world. Here is the *Via Sacra*,  
through which passed the triumphal  
processions to the now ruined temples  
of the gods. But for a thousand years  
these ruins have been the quarries and

the lime-kilns for the monasteries and  
churches of the modern city, till little  
is left save the shadow of their former  
greatness.

More utterly desolate than aught  
else were the pleasure palaces of the

broken arches I saw fair English girls  
sketching the crumbling halls where  
ruled and revelled the lords of the  
world.

Cypress and ivy, wind and wallflower grown  
Matted and massed together, hillocks heap'd

the Colosseum, stern monument of  
Rome's Christless creed. Tier above  
tier rise the circling seats, whence  
twice eighty thousand cruel eyes gloated  
upon the dying martyr's pangs,  
"butchered to make a Roman holiday."

Ten thousand Jewish cap-  
tives were employed in  
its construction, and at its  
inauguration five thous-  
and wild beasts were slain  
in bloody conflict with  
human antagonists. The  
dens in which the lions  
were confined, the gates  
through which the leo-  
pards leaped upon their  
victims may still be seen;  
and before us stretches  
the broad arena where  
even Rome's proud dames,  
unsexed and slain in  
gladiatorial conflict, lay  
trampled in the sand.

As I clambered over  
those time-defying walls,  
and plucked from their  
crannied niches the blue-  
bell and anemone, the  
soldiers of King Humbert  
were drilling in the  
meadow near its base,  
and the sharp words of  
command came softened  
by the distance. Save  
these, no sound of life  
was audible in this once  
humming hive of human  
passion and activity. The  
accompanying cuts give  
interior and exterior views  
of this world-famous ruin.

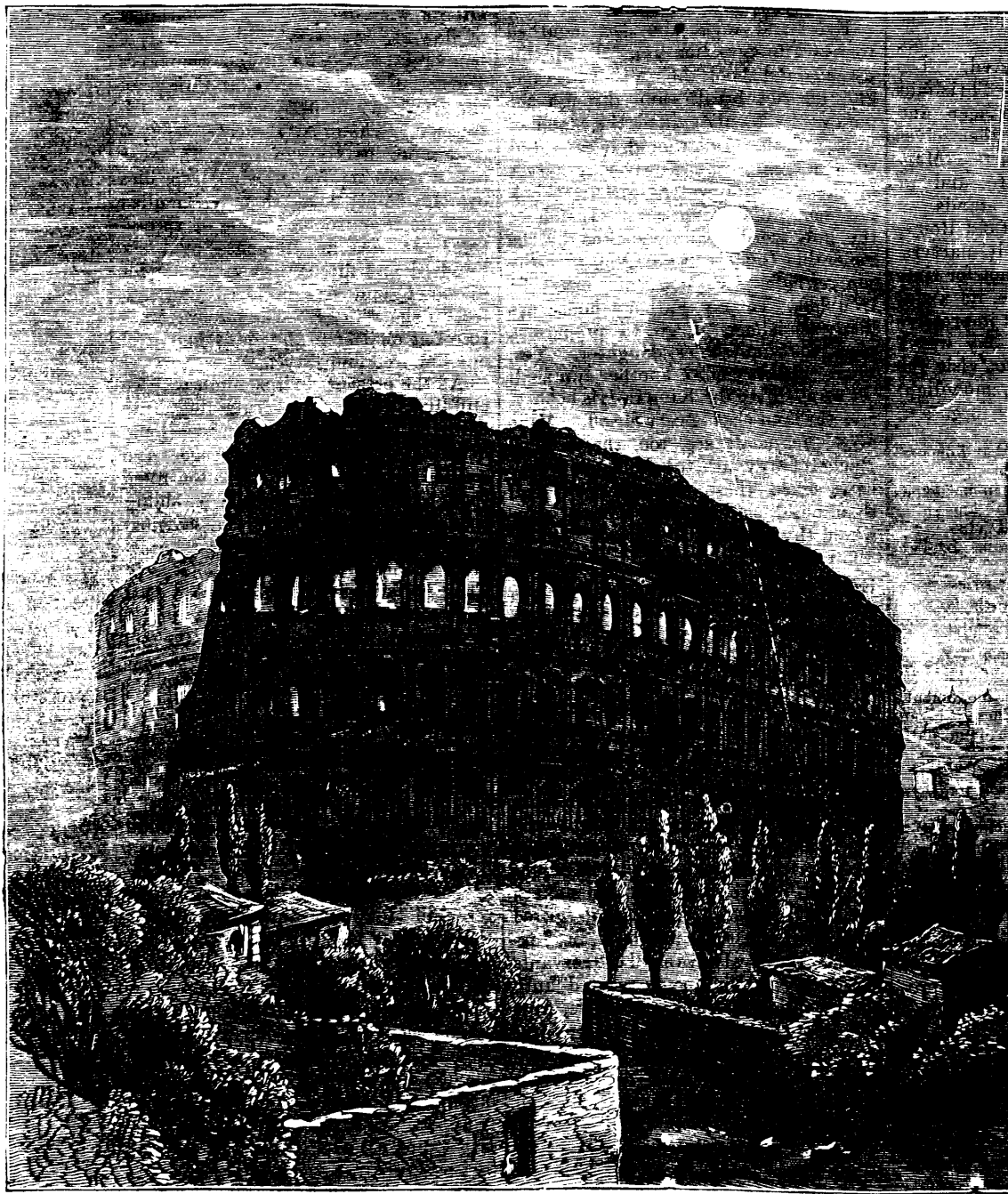
A ruin—yet what ruin! from  
its mass  
Walls, palaces, half-cities  
have been rear'd;  
Yet oft the enormous skeleton  
we pass,  
And marvel where the spoil  
could have appear'd.  
Hath it indeed been plundered  
or been clear'd?

"While stands the Col-  
osseum, Rome shall stand,"  
said an ancient legend,  
"when falls the Colos-  
seum, Rome shall fall,  
and when Rome falls,  
with it shall fall the  
world."

The following is the  
account given by the Rev.  
Hugh Johnston, B.D., of

this famous ruin:

"Now we have reached the world-  
famous Colosseum, 'a noble wreck in  
ruinous perfection,' alive and teeming  
with historical recollections. Begun  
by Vespasian, who built as far as the  
third row of arches, it was completed by



COLOSSEUM—EXTERIOR.

proud emperors of the world—the  
Golden House of Nero, the palaces of  
Tiberius, Caligula, the Flavii,—monu-  
ments of the colossal vice which called  
down the wrath of Heaven on the  
guilty piles. All are now mere mounds  
of splendid desolation, amid whose

On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column  
strewn  
In fragments, choked-up vaults, and frescoes  
steep'd  
In subterranean damp, where the owl peep'd,  
Deeming it midnight.

Near by rise the cliff-like walls of