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ROME OF 2000 YEARS AGO

Some of the wonders of the Column
of Trajan

Among the many marvellous monuments of Rome, one of the most interesting and remarkable is the Column of Trajan. It stands in the Forum of that Emperor—now mostly covered with houses—and marks the height of a tongue of land cut away by Trajan in order to open up the city at this point. It is 117 feet 7 inches in height; the pedestal is 17 feet 11 inches high; and the statue of the Emperor Trajan, with which it was crowned—now superseded by a colossal statue of St. Peter—is conjectured to have been 20 feet in height. The shaft is composed of 19 drums. From pedestal to capital this shaft of white marble is carved in bass-reliefs, winding in spiral form round the column. Those bass-reliefs relate in a very clear and realistic manner the story of Trajan's war against the Dacians. From a close study of the arms, armor, uniform, flags, eagles, bridges, forts and cities, modern students have been enabled to picture forth the whole military system of the Romans in the first and second centuries of the Christian era.

This column has just had attention again drawn to it. Signor Boni, whose notable discoveries in the Roman Forum may be described as epoch-making, has made investigations here, and has brought to light the tiny chamber in which, as he concludes, the bones of the Emperor Trajan were placed. Seeing how carefully Signor Boni proceeds in his process of discovery, it is very probable that further investigation may confirm his present statement.

The Emperor Trajan died at Selinunte, in Cilicia on the 11th of August, A.D. 117. His ashes were brought to Rome, and, as a special mark of favor, the Senate permitted that the law against intramural interment should, on this occasion, be abrogated, and the remains of the great Emperor placed in the storied column to be erected in his honor. One tradition relates that these ashes were enclosed in the gilt bronze ball which was held in the left hand of the Imperial statue which crowned the column; another story has it that they were placed within an urn of massive gold which was hidden in a secret chamber or repository, within the base of the column.

It is the latter tradition that has guided Boni in his search. Keeping in mind, the hints given by ancient writers, he examined the remains of the ancient entrance to the column, which is hollow—and within which a staircase of 145 steps, in marble, leads to the summit. Here he removed the plaster, and beheld a wall of rough tiles which closed the entrance and concealed the marble door posts. The threshold appeared, bearing the marks of the two bronze half doors that swung upon their hinges the impression of these still remains. The upper surface of the marble threshold is worn away, as if the doors were frequently swung to and fro. These and other signs induce Boni to regard it as a certainty that there existed here a sepulchral monument; and he hopes by further investigations to make it still more clear, by the evidence of new facts, that it was here the urn of the Emperor Trajan was deposited.

Few of the Roman Emperors have left so remarkable a memory on later ages than did Trajan. The column which for eighteen centuries has been a wonder and a delight to every traveler who visited Rome, must have been a brilliant spectacle when the scaffolding was removed from around it, and when it shone in all its beauty in the bright Roman sunshine. Patient investigators have examined the surface of this column and have discovered on it traces of coloring and gilding. Signs have been discovered of green, blue, red and gold. It is needless now to conjecture on what figures or spaces on the bass-reliefs these colors were employed; suffice it to say that it is difficult for us now on looking at this weather worn, bullet-bespattered surface, to picture to ourselves what it must have looked like in the brilliance of its harmonious colors in the light of a Spring day.

The mediaeval mind surrounded the

name of Trajan with strange legends, and even went the length of considering him worthy of being transferred from hell to purgatory. In that strange old book, "Mirabilia Urbis Romae"—"The Marvels of Rome, or a Picture of the Golden City"—he is understood to be the Emperor who was ready in his chariot to go forth to war, when a poor widow fell at his feet, weeping and crying: "Oh, my lord, before thou goest, let me have justice!" And he promised her that on his return he would do her full right; but she said: "Peradventure thou shalt die first." This considering, the Emperor leaped from his chariot and held his consistory on the spot. And the woman said: "I had one only son and a young man hath slain him." Upon this saying the Emperor gave sentence. "The murderer," said he, "shall die, he shall not live." "Thy son," then said she, "shall die, for it is he that, playing with my son hath slain him." But when he was led out to death the people cried out that the young man should be given to the woman instead of her son, and this was done, and the woman departed with rich gifts from the Emperor.

It is this event, said to have been sculptured on a block of marble in the Forum of Trajan, and seen by St. Gregory the Great as he passed through it, that led the Pontiff to pray for the soul of the Emperor, and to procure his admission into purgatory, or, as Dante describes it:

"There the high glory of the Roman Prince
Was chronicled, whose great beneficence
Moved Gregory to his great victory;
'Tis of the Emperor Trajan I am speaking."

De Rossi, the great Christian archaeologist, related to the present writer that he had at one time contemplated writing the archaeology of the "Divina Commedia," and that he had collected many notes on the subject. He has conjectured that the window of the legend was, as Nichols says in his notes to the Mirabilia, in the original sculpture, a suppliant nation at the feet of the emperor—a subject of which there are many specimens in Roman sculpture galleries. Thus Boni's discovery concerning Trajan awakens memories of an emperor held in high esteem in Rome throughout the ages.—P. L. Connellan, in the Dublin Freeman.

WHAT CAUSES APPENDICITIS

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IMMURED IN A LEPER COLONY

(St. James' Budget)

When an individual becomes a member of the leper colony at Molokai, in the Pacific ocean, he is lost to the world; there is no cure, no return, except in the rare case of an escape, an almost impossible performance.

It has, nevertheless, happened, and that within the past three months. The fact reveals tragedy and pathos transcending fiction, and would scarcely be believed, if it were not vouched for by the best authority. For reasons that will be readily appreciated, it is undesirable to mention the name of the gentleman who, through his brother's help has just succeeded in returning to freedom if not to happiness.

He is a Canadian, and was married in January, 1890. A month later, while still on the honeymoon, the young couple visited Honolulu. After a few days' enjoyment of the life and sights of the capital of the Sandwich islands, the husband, at that time a man of twenty-five years of age, failed to return to the hotel for dinner. The anxious wife waited and waited, and

finally called in the assistance of the Hawaiian police, but he had disappeared as completely as though the earth had opened and engulfed him.

The young woman cabled to her relatives in British Columbia, and her father proceeded to her assistance. Father and daughter remained two months in Honolulu, and then, as there was still no tidings of the missing man, they returned home.

His parents were wealthy, and engaged the services of a well known American detective agency, urging that no expense should be spared to get at the facts of the disappearance. A competent man was sent to Honolulu, and after six weeks' patient investigation he discovered what had happened.

It seems that shortly after lunch on the day he disappeared he told his wife that he was going to the bank to draw some money, and then he would go to the club for an hour or so and return in time to take her out for a drive before dinner. Immediately after leaving the bank, where he had drawn \$500, he was arrested by four men, and after being placed in a carriage was driven to the house of a native official doctor. Here, after the most cursory examination, he was declared to have leprosy, and when the necessary papers had been signed, he was drugged.

It is easier to imagine than describe what his feelings were when he awoke to consciousness and found himself lying in the hold of the little vessel, bound he knew not whither. Although the island is less than 40 miles from Honolulu, morning had dawned before Molokai was reached. On arriving he was left to take his place in the company of over a thousand lepers. It was in vain that he protested, demanded his instant release, and refused to believe it possible that he was a prisoner there for life.

When the report was made to the parents by the detective agency they did all in their power to obtain their son's release, but in vain. Years went by. The distracted wife died of a broken heart and a few months afterwards his father likewise.

Fortunately for the lonely sufferer, he possessed a brother a year younger than himself, who decided to spare neither himself nor his friends nor his fortune in efforts at rescue.

It was not found difficult to charter a vessel that would carry off the man if he could reach it, but the difficulty was to enter into any communication with the people on the island, so that co-operation could be had from that source. A man was finally found who possessed a skin disease that in appearance might be mistaken for a form of leprosy. This man was poor, out of work, and with a family to provide for. He agreed for £2,000 to be paid to his wife to risk his liberty and life. He was taken to Honolulu, and accused of being a leper. The doctor who examined him had grave doubts, but the man's statement that his father had contracted leprosy in a mild form in India before his marriage, also that later in his life the disease became worse, and he died a loathsome object to look upon, removed them, and he signed the necessary papers as he could conceive no reason why a man should voluntarily desire to proceed to Molokai as a resident.

His arrival there brought the first ray of hope into the life of the man who for fifteen years and six months had borne and endured such as few men have had to do in the history of the world. The two men were not long in meeting, and the plot for escape was unfolded.

It was four nights later that a good-sized schooner yacht, which had been lurking off the island out of sight all day, drew gradually closer and by ten o'clock was within a hundred yards of a part of the shore least likely to be patrolled by the guards. No lights were shown, but occasionally small pieces of board were thrown overboard coated with luminous paint. As the current was drifting shoreward they were thrown on the beach in a short space of time. Suddenly to the watcher of those on board, two pieces were raised in the air and held in that position. Immediately a boat with muffled oars made for the shore and took on board the two men who were in waiting, having eluded the guards in the darkness.

Two weeks later the yacht arrived at Vancouver, and the brothers were reunited. Doctors who have examined the elder say that there is not the slightest trace of leprosy about him. The mystery is who caused the abduction?

Worse Still

The Husband—Who's been using my razor?

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