

what it was, enough has been spared to tell its lofty height and prodigious circuit. It is the Flavian Amphitheatre—better known as the Coliseum—the work of the Emperors of that family, Vespasian and Titus, by the latter of whom it was finished and dedicated some ten years after his return from his conquests in the Holy Land. It was erected upon that part of the grounds of Nero's golden house where the large artificial lake stood. The materials of Nero's building were employed by Vespasian in the erection of his own less selfish but equally ambitious structure. It is said that he demolished the first as being too sumptuous and magnificent even for a Roman Emperor. He could see the pride and ostentation which had given birth to the one huge edifice, but was insensible of those same feelings, which had equally produced the other. There is a much more perfect amphitheatre of the same kind still standing in the open square at Nîmes in the South of France—anciently called Nemasium, in the Province of Gallia Narbonensis: where are also the remains of other grand Roman works. But that amphitheatre will bear no comparison in point of size with the Flavian, which for grandeur and gigantic proportions has no equal in the world. It was circular as its name denotes; and like all ancient Roman masonry, admirably built of large hewn stones, which seemed to me to be joined without cement, but fitting together with wonderful compactness. There is scarcely more than a third part of this great building now standing; the whole has been stript and defaced—not only plundered of its costly ornaments and sculpture—but as in other cases, the stones have been carried off for the erection of their palaces, by modern nobles. Indeed such has been the treatment to which this magnificent edifice has been exposed, that parts of it have actually been burnt for lime—to the disgrace of those who have been guilty of this wanton outrage.

I am not about to give you a particular account of this wonderful structure, which built arch upon arch, and gallery over gallery, rose to the immense height of 140 or 150 feet and covered in its circuit an area of vast extent (6 acres). A minute description would be but tedious. Some idea may, however, be formed of its size and capacity by the fact, that it has been supposed sufficient to contain 87,000 spectators—a number equal perhaps to three times that of the population of the city of Halifax, men women and children included. The shows and spectacles exhibited in it, were at a prodigious cost. The very sight of such vast multitudes crowded together tier upon tier to so great a height, and facing each other in the circular edifice, must have been a great show in itself. There was seated the Emperor, by whose munificence the costly exhibition was often provided. There Senators and Knights, the nobility and wealth of Rome, had their appropriate places; and the people of all ranks and conditions and ages, eagerly thronged to an entertainment, of which they were spectators without cost. Even the women were admitted—but under Augustus were allowed to occupy the highest seats only at such shows. It is no doubt a splendid and attractive sight which has drawn such numbers there. Would you know what it is that holds them almost breathless, with faces flushed and throbbing pulses and on which all are so eagerly gazing. The savage fight perhaps of some ferocious wild beasts, maddened with pain, and tearing themselves to pieces. Five thousand of these perished thus at its first dedication by Titus; and more than double that number, provided by Trajan, were in like manner let loose to slaughter for the gratification of the people. But this was comparatively innocent sport. It was to be sure a bloody fearful sight; but it was the blood of wild beasts only that was shed; and they did but worry and mangle each other. The taste of blood, however, once indulged in is, it would seem, as, in the brute, so in man too, the incentive and whet to his appetite and