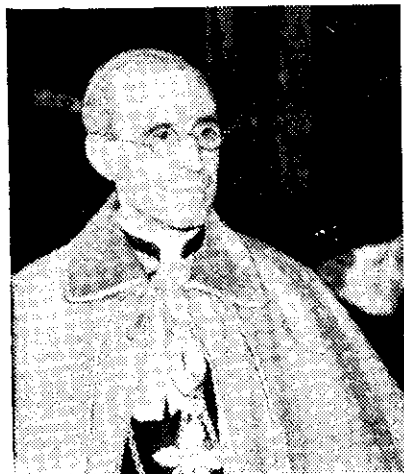


WILL THE POPE REMAIN IN ROME?



HIS HOLINESS, POPE PIUS XII

The Position of The Vatican In Current Events

ROME is not merely the centre of Axis organisation in mid-Italy: it is the home of the Pope. Will retreating Germans allow him to remain? Or will they try to rob Rome's conquerors of a good half of their advantage by carrying him off "in protective custody"? Or is he freer than we imagine, physically and psychologically, in his own private, independent city-within-a-city? In this article, written specially for "The Listener," A.M.R. gives a personal impression of the Vatican and of its place in current events.

dome there could be no mistaking—St. Peter's itself.

I leaped off to observe, straddling a white line that ran across the flags. My back wheel remained in Mussolini's Italy. But my front tyre was now in "foreign territory," where even Il Duce's writ did not run and his word returned to him void. In my three-minutes' run beside that wall I had half circumnavigated Italy's most contested modern frontier. I stood half in, half out of the Vatican City.

So physically small and sunk among its surroundings is the temporal kingdom of the world's most powerful potentate. And although, when you enter (on invitation) and examine it more closely, your feeling becomes one of amazement at its concentrated riches of architecture and art, you still feel towards it much as you do towards other tiny States—Monaco, Andorra, Ruritania. Nevertheless *Stato*

della Citta del Vaticano, the Vatican City, is in reality very far from being a mere "picturesque survival."

Still, picturesqueness certainly is one's first impression. At the "Bronze Door" entrance pace Swiss halberdiers, purely medieval in blue doublet and hose slashed with bright orange. Inside, a warren of stone passages proliferates without apparent end or intention, liberally peppered with Alice-in-Wonderland doors that do, some of them, lead into walled gardens or enormous rich salons and halls. Layer above layer lie acres of paintings and sculpture, treasures of antiquity and the Renaissance, overwhelming in sheer quantity. And the government of this vest-pocket Realm, should you inquire about it, is intricately divided out among hereditary Latin noblemen of complicated titles and intriguing attire.

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