

will be opened at the Gregorian University, and will be placed under the supervision of the Society of Jesus. Secondly, the best teachers are to be procured, under whose direction the pupils will acquire a facility of writing forcibly and clearly. Thirdly, after a two years' course, a diploma will be granted to proficient students, and will be taken into account when positions are vacant on the staff of Roman congregations, Episcopal curias, and the like. In the fourth place, a gold medal will be awarded each year to the most suc-

cessful student; and, fifthly, the school will be open to laymen as well as clerical students.

It is the Holy Father's wish that bishops throughout the world should endeavour to offer this advanced course to seminarists or priests who show a special aptitude for Latin literature. The well-informed of every nation and creed, aware that the Catholic Church preserved learning from decay and total destruction in ages past, will welcome with acclamation this action of the learned Pontiff who now occupies the Chair of Peter.



## NOTES



### Language and Archaeology

There is no lovelier language on earth than the Italian; and the Italian is at its best when spoken by a Roman. Florence for purity of diction, and Rome for accent, is an old saying: *Favella toscana in bocca romana*. One hears people who do not know say that it is an easy language, just as one hears Americans say that the city for full knowledge of which a lifetime is too short can be seen in a week. When going to Rome, Mr. Steed, like many another, told himself that with his knowledge of Latin and French he would be able to learn Italian in less than no time. "This presumptuous belief," he says, "was soon shaken. Italian I found harder to master than French or German. The wealth of its vocabulary, the subtlety of its phraseology, its very capacity to express the most delicate shades of meaning, give it a singularly elusive quality; and until foreigners learn to speak it and write it with some approach to accuracy and elegance, they cannot know Italy." Even if you never go to Rome the language is worth learning for the sake of its literature. There is also another reason. The best works on archaeology are in Italian. And there is no more fascinating study than that of the ancient monuments which bring one in touch, not only with the beginnings of civilisation in the west, but also with the beginnings of Christianity. Some thing of its interest may be gathered from the following note on the labors of Cavaliere Boni:

He meant to find out the true nature of the Forum, to read its early history from its *strata* and to discover, if possible, why a practical people like the Romans chose the bottom of a marshy valley as the centre of their civic and political life, instead of placing the Forum upon one of the surrounding hills. Whenever the Tiber rose, the lower parts of the Forum and, especially, the place of meeting, or Comitium, were liable to be flooded out. Yet here the Romans gathered, here they built their temples, and hither ran their Sacred Way. Why? Every morning at 3 a.m. Boni began work, reading and re-reading the classical authors, known or forgotten, whose writings bore on the Forum. Having thus entered into the spirit of the place, he went down to it and, with a faithful workman sworn to secrecy, dug by candle-light. He found first the Black Stone, the *Niger Lapis*, reputed of old to mark the tomb

of Romulus. Below the *Niger Lapis* he found again an ancient four-sided shaft, or stela, with a Latin inscription so archaic that it was deciphered with difficulty. When funds threatened to run short, an Englishman, Mr. Lionel Phillips, came to the rescue and provided a stimulus. Little by little, Boni changed the face of the Forum and brought new life and meaning into its dead stones. Yet his main purpose remained unfulfilled. He could not find the answer to the riddle why the Forum had been built in a marsh. Believing that the early Romans were a prehistoric Aryan race, upon whose religious customs Sanskrit literature might throw some light, he read the Vedas until he found a passage indicating that the dead should be buried in ground sloping down towards still waters. He came to me one day looking like an inspired prophet. "I have it now," he said. "There must be a prehistoric necropolis somewhere on the slope leading down to the bottom of the Forum valley. The Sacred Way runs along the slope. That would explain why it was called the Sacred Way and why the still waters of the marsh at the bottom of the valley were held by the Romans in so religious a respect that the valley became the centre of their life. Now, I must find the necropolis."

Either he had the gift of divination or he was mad. Many people thought him mad. Boni, quite unmoved, began to search for the necropolis. When a dozen attempts had failed to yield the desired proof, his antagonists grew joyful, but Boni's confidence increased.

One hot day he came to lunch. "I shall find it this afternoon," he said. "I walked over it this morning and felt it burn my feet." I asked what other signs he had. "None," he answered. "I know. I will telephone as soon as I have found it." Towards 5 o'clock that afternoon he telephoned that he had found it, and called me to the Forum. In a deep hole by the side of the Basilica of Antoninus and Faustina, which flanks the Sacred Way, was a prehistoric urn of black earthenware containing other urns; one of which held human ashes. Soon more than a score of tombs were found on the same site, and it was shown that, in laying the foundations of the Basilica of Antoninus and Faustina, the Romans had cut right through their prehistoric necropolis, which, as Boni had guessed, ran right along the slope of the Sacred Way."

### The Charm of Rome

Byron, whose centenary the world of letters commemorates this year, in a moment of genius sang:

O Rome, my country! city of the soul;  
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee.

No man who ever lived long in the Eternal City escaped the spell which she casts over her children. We come to her from afar and she adopts us. She gives us her love and she wins ours. All the world and all the charm of the world is in her. She is a universe in herself:

*Eine Welt gar bist du, O Rom!*

said Goethe who never touched the zenith of his powers until the love of Rome had filled him with inspiration. Among the ruins, when the Ave Maria has sounded from hundreds of bellfries, travellers may become victims of the malaria microbe which usually remains with them for the rest of their days. In the old and unchanging city one catches another microbe—the microbe of love which for ever after leaves a nostalgia, like the pain of exile, wherever one may wander henceforth. Rogers, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Goethe, Veuillot, and countless others of great name, have left us their impressions of their sojourns in the "city of the soul," and their thoughts are probably familiar to many of our readers. To the long list of souvenirs it is worth adding an interesting page in which a modern, Wickham Steed, records his submission to the old, old spell which gave pathos to Ovid's song of exile two thousand years ago:

The secret of Rome and of her eternal charm is that she destroys the notion of time. Nowhere else in the world have I been so conscious of living at once in the distant and less distant past, the present and the future. Physical marvels like the high Alps, or that great wonder, the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, dwarf humanity into insignificance. They chill and sadden even while they inspire. In Rome, all is human. In an early morning or a moonlight midnight ramble, one may muse by the pre-historic necropolis, by the wall of Servius Tullius, by early Christian Churches, by Renaissance palaces, and by the ambitious piles of modern Italy. In them and round them men have striven, hated, loved, dreamed dreams of power fulfilled and unfulfilled, hoped, despaired, and achieved. Everything has been; what is, will pass—and yet there is ever the promise of great things to do. Thus Rome gives not sadness but a rich calm born of a sense that though some efforts fail, others succeed and all may be worth making for their own sake. Within her walls a man may learn that his individual importance is, indeed, infinitesimal; but she teaches also that notable things have been done through the agency of minute unimportances such as his. If he learn to smile at the illusions men cherish, his smile will be kindly, not a sour grimace. This is the secret of Rome. It is a place of visions and of vision. In Rome men may take counsel of the gods and taste of eternity.

Crown Hotel

Under new management. Accommodation unsurpassed.  
Excellent Cuisine and Appointments. Correspondence  
promptly attended to. Box 220. Telephone 978.

JACK METCALFE  
RATTRAY STREET Dunedin