

The City of Many Waters

COLOR AND SPLENDOR OF ROME.

(By M. DUNCAN BENNETT, in *T.P.'s and Cassell's Weekly*.)

"Where a voice of living waters never ceaseth," so runs Gilbert Murray's translation of a chorus of Euripides. It was another part of Italy that the Greek poet wrote of, but it might well apply to Rome. For the waters of Rome flash and laugh and sing all the year round; scarcely ever are you out of the sound or the sight of them. Wander on the streets or through the green shade of the gardens, and the noise of waters is ever in your ears, the sparkle of waters in your eyes.

So, away from Rome, it is not first of her colors, which indeed no city on earth can match, golden and flame and purple, of her glorious buildings, her glowing sunsets, that I think; not first of her marvellous gardens with their green walks and views over the city, but of her waters—not those of Frascati or Tivoli, lovely as they are, but those of every piazza and garden. I dream of the great and commanding fountain of the Pauline water, of Trevi where the lover of Rome makes his offering that he may return, of Bernini's many fountains, bees and ships and classic figures, of the cleanest of waters to see, the purest to drink.

Where to Drift is Best.

The only thing to do in Rome is to drift. Try to be methodical and you are lost, for there is no method, no reason in the arrangement of the city. In the morning you will, perhaps, shudder a little at the endless cold galleries of the Vatican, and on the same day rest in the golden glory of the Forum at sunset. You will pass from the refined peace of the Medici garden to the strange other-worldly peace of the Catacombs, and from the Catacombs to that lovely spot where Shelley lies under the Aurelian walls.

From the Aventine.

You will sit on the Aventine, that deserted and lovely hill, and meditate, surprised to find yourself at last really in Rome, that city of all our dreams; you will let the very name of all that lies in the city below you thrill with magic. Descend from the quiet hill and you may be at will in San Clemente, with its temple of Mithras and its air of the bygone ages, or on the Palatine where the flowers grow among the ruined glories of the rulers of the world, in San Giovanni, mother Church of Christendom, in the Colosseum, fine and unlovable, out on the age-old, lovely Appian way among the tombs, in the rich glow of St. Peter's, in the gardens of the Renaissance.

How well I remember the golden evening when first I went over the Aventine. It was Christmas Eve, and the day had been one of such jewel-like splendor that it seemed hard to believe, in the sun, that it was midwinter. My companion, a young American, and I had bought roses to lay at sunset on Shelley's tomb.

We walked by the by-ways. There is no

part of Rome that is richer than this, for when we had lingered in that little gem among churches, S. Maria in Cosmedin, and my companion had lied with his hand in the Bocca di Verita and proved that legend lied too, since it did not close on him, we leaned on the Palatine Bridge and talked as we looked at that lovely temple whose name none knows, at the Cloaca Massima, on all that is left of the Ponte Rotte, on Tiber itself.

Gardens of Peace.

To climb the Aventine, as we did presently, is to leave the world behind. It is almost impossible to believe that you are in a great city. Here among the gardens reigns unbroken peace, and we saw the orange tree of St. Dominic in the pleasant Cloister of Santa Sabina, and the line of the Palatine Hill and the Church of St. Saba.

The Garden of the Knights of Malta was very peaceful, and at the end of the green tunnel we looked down on Tiber flowing below the hill and across to the city near, and yet all the world away from this garden which indeed seemed to make of life nought but "a green thought in a green shade." And, of course, there was water.

Indeed, it seemed a pity at length to come down from the hill to find that grave under the walls, so deserted was the Aventine, for we saw no one but ourselves and the peasants. But perhaps Christmas Eve keeps people in shops and churches.

Glorious Sunsets.

The soul of a city, the charm of a city, are things one can feel but can scarcely convey. It cannot be denied that part of the lure of Rome—and a very large part—is her color. The light deepens in the Forum, on the Palatine, on the Aventine, best of all in the Campagna, to flame and golden yellow, to blues and purples that I have never seen matched. The whole city seems to burn, her stones glow as if with an inward fire. I never saw Turner's colors at Venice, whose colors seem to be those that a child (or Fra Angelico) paints, almost without shadow so bright and rich are they, but only in Turner's canvases have I seen caught for an instant the wonder of Roman light.

If I had never heard the name of Caesar, if I did not know a Roman from a Gothic building, if I cared nothing for art and nothing for history, still I should feel the magic of Rome, because, although history and art and literature are so much to me, whenever I think of Rome I think first of fountains and then of light-days like jewels, sunsets like the glory of another world.

And when this splendor is joined to the name of Rome, to more history and tradition than all the world holds beside, there are no words to describe its appeal. Just to say to yourself "I am in Rome" is to feel that life is almost too wonderful to be true.

FATHER KNOX ON CONVERTS NO ALTERNATIVE TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

"Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away? Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Speaking from this text at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Liverpool, on a recent Sunday, Father Ronald Knox, M.A., said that people who left the Catholic Church generally lost faith, lost hope, and drifted away. Converts did not drift into the Catholic Church. To become a Catholic did not mean losing their grip on any religious convictions they had before, but it meant they must declare their assent to a number of doctrines which probably they had never considered before. One might leave the Catholic Church by drifting with the tide, but to come into the Church one must set his teeth and swim. To whom did they go, those unfortunate souls who lost the Faith? A few of them found an uneasy satisfaction in other forms of worship, Christian or half-Christian, but the bulk of them did not go to any sort of church. They knew what they had lost: they did not want patent religions that were "very nearly as good." They went to swell in a small degree the ranks of our fellow-countrymen now so formidably numerous, who acknowledged no God or religious authority. There was no substitute for the Catholic Faith. It was the last hope left to the world and the last hope it would ever get. They had only to look around them to see the self-confessed failure of all other creeds to satisfy the needs of the immortal soul. It would not be content with mere philosophies or political agitation; the schismatic Christianity of the East was melting like glass in the fire wherever it came into touch with Western civilisation. Other denominations openly deplored their lack of membership and silently deplored the modernism that was eating away the heart of those who remain with them. To Catholics no alternative presented itself unless they gave up altogether the hope of eternal life to plunge into the pleasures of the world—to share their delights with the beasts and his despair with the Devil.

The Catholic teacher rejoices in the glorious inheritance. He is a descendant of a royal and a noble ancestry. He is a part of the greatest educational force that history records.

Retreat for Men, Wanganui

A Retreat for men will be held at the Villa, commencing on Thursday, January 21, 1926, at 7.30 p.m., and end on Monday morning, January 25, 1926—three days.

Retreat will be conducted by the Rev. T. G. McCarthy, S.M., Marist Missioner.

Those who intend making the Retreat should apply early to the Secretary Retreat Committee:

M. J. DOWLING,
252 Victoria Avenue, City;
Hon. Secretary.

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