

François Halard

I have now been here seven days, and by degrees have formed in my mind a general idea of the city.

We go diligently backwards and forwards. While I am thus making myself acquainted with the plan of old and new Rome, viewing the ruins and the buildings, visiting this and that villa, the grandset and most remarkable objects are slowly and leisurely contemplated. I do but keep my eyes open and see, and then go and come again, for it is only in Rome one can duly prepare oneself for Rome.

It must, in truth, be confessed, that it is a sad and melancholy business to prick and track out ancient Rome in new Rome; however, it must be done, and we may hope at least for an incalculable gratification. We meet with traces both of majesty and of ruin, which alike surpass all conception; what the barbarians spared, the builders of new Rome made havoc of.

When one thus beholds an object two thousand years old and more, but so

manifoldly and thoroughly altered by the changes of time, but, sees nevertheless, the same soil, the same mountains, and often indeed the same walls and columns, one becomes, as it were, a contemporary of the great counsels of Fortune, and thus it becomes difficult for the observer to trace from the beginning Rome following Rome, and not only new Rome succeeding to the old, but also the several epochs of both old and new in succession. I endeavour, first of all, to grope my way alone through the obscurer parts, for this is the only plan by which one can hope fully and completely to perfect by the excellent introductory works which have been written from the fifteenth century to the present day. The first artists and scholars have occupied their whole lives with these objects.

And this vastness has a strangely tranquillizing effect upon you in Rome, while you pass from place to place, in order to visit the most remarkable objects. In other places one has to search















