

1 from that of Titus. Most of the chambers of Nero were filled up by Titus. They were
2 reexcavated in the early part of the 16th century. We were escorted through the gloomy vaults
3 and chambers by the custodian who carried a quantity of wax tapers which he placed in a sort
4 of candlestick, and fixing it on the end [of] a long bamboo pole, elevated the light to the ceilings
5 (30 or 35 feet high) to show us the remains of frescoes still bright and beautiful though painted
6 1850 years since. Saw the spot where the famous Laocoon group of statues was found and the
7 pedestal on which it originally stood. A great many other matters of interest were pointed out
8 by our guide who seems to be as familiar with the premises as any old chum of Nero or Titus
9 could have been. We believed most that he told us for there were the remains to prove it.
10 Next visited the Church of "S. Clemente." Here we found 3 churches, one on top of the other,
11 the upper one having its floor on a level with the present surface of the ground. The middle
12 church was mentioned by Jerome in 392. Hadrian 1st decorated it with paintings still partially
13 preserved. The upper church built in 1108, the lower church said to have been a pagan temple
14 constructed many years before Christ. We descended into this pagan temple, each carrying a
15 lighted wax taper. Found 4 feet of water with rafts of plank and timber to walk around upon.
16 The arch of the door way leading from the corridor into the temple proper was not over 3 ½
17 feet above the raft. The guide stooped low and passed into the room. He found some of the
18 planks of the raft loose or sank under his weight and he thought it would not do for the ladies
19 to try it. I stooped low and entered the room. Mrs. Van, determined to know all about it,
20 gathered up her dress, gave me her hand and passed into the damp and dimly lighted room.
21 Martha bent and sprung through the opening without difficulty. In the centre of the room is a
22 marble nondescript statue supposed to be an idol. The water being perfectly clear, we could
23 see the base of the pedestal by the light from our tapers. The water was about 4 ½ feet deep at
24 this point. The ceiling of this room was covered with mosaics, portions of which still remain
25 where they were placed over 2000 years since. After remaining a few minutes in this damp
26 place, we passed under the arch and up the stone stairs to the floor of the middle church. This
27 was undoubtedly the grade of this part of Rome at the time it was built, the present grade
28 being 20 feet above. There are many things of interest in the upper church, but I have not
29 space or patience to enumerate them. Drove next to the church of S. Giovanni in Laterano (S
30 John in Lateran) built by Constantine. It was overthrown by an earthquake in 896, reerected by
31 Sergius 3rd 910, and dedicated to John the Baptist, burned down in 1308 but restored by
32 Clement 5th, altered by Martin 5th in 1430, modernized by Pius 4th 1560, and a new front by
33 Galilei 1734. This front is decidedly the best church front in Rome. The portico is 174 feet front
34 and 33 feet deep, the church 408 feet in length. It has nave and double aisles. Massive pillars
35 support the roof and clerestory in place of columns. Niches are formed in these piers in which
36 are placed colossal statues of the Apostles, finely executed of fine white marble. The ceiling
37 over the nave is horizontal, very beautifully paneled and richly ornamented. There are several
38 elegant chapels. In the south transept is a magnificent altar, the canopy supported by four
39 Corinthian columns of bronze. The metal for these columns was a part of Cleopatras barge.
40 The cols. are fluted and about 25 feet long. In one end of the portico is a statue of Constantine
41 in marble, found in the thermae of that emperor. It is of colossal size and does not show its