

Hotel d'Angleterre. Rome.

My dear Mamma

March 2. 1866.

On Thursday we left Terni and after five hours of railway at the rate of 12 miles an hour, with long stoppages at every station, reached Rome. The rail goes through pretty country, the latter half through the valley of the Tiber. A few miles from the city a glimpse of St Peters is seen, then the rail makes a sweep, ~~on~~ cuts through the walls and comes in to a "Central Station".

We went to the Hotel de Minerve and dined at the table d'hôte at which I should think 150 sat down, chiefly foreigners. Next morning as we did not like the hotel, we shifted to this one, getting our baggage cleared at the Dogana on our road, as we had not been able to get it the evening we arrived.

It was a troublesome and expensive process and we were kept waiting nearly an hour.

I got your three letters at the P. R. and had to pay a small fortune on them, 10[?] on each. Papal States to England and vice versa is 11[?] and you had only put on 6[?] for Italian postage, so the other 5[?] was charged double. Yesterday we went and saw the

Coliseum and antiquities about there, Arches
The Coliseum is the finest ruin I have yet
seen there is something very grand about it
and it ^{is} quite perfect enough to show what
the place must have been. Then we went
off and visited St Peters, equally grand
inside and outside. The inside is wonder-
-fully clear from all screens or other inter-
-ruptions so that one can get a good view
of it. The Piazza in front is magnificent
with its double curve of quadruple columns.
Rome is one of the few places that has
surpassed my expectations. The prevailing
feature at present is the number of French
soldiers everywhere in the city, sentinels, and
soldiers lounging about everywhere, and the
French tricolour floats in every street.
Last night we went to see the Coliseum
by moonlight, an order from the French au-
-thorities is required as sentinels are on guard
there day and night, and at night no one
is allowed in without an order. When we
got there we found thirty or forty carriages
waiting outside for the people who were "doing

it inside. A young French soldier took our pass with a "Merci, Monsieur" and the whole thing was like going into a theatre. The night was warm and clear and the moon full; the old Coliseum instead of looking deserted and gloomy, was far better filled than in the day time, nasal twang predominating amongst the voices.

At dinner one gentleman suggested that it was a service of danger to visit it after dark, but if French soldiers can keep a place in order, there were enough about to keep off all the robbers and brigands in Italy; as to the last mentioned gentry, though there can be no reasonable doubt as to their existence somewhere in Italy, I suspect they are oftener talked about than seen; I have heard of no authentic instance of their existence anywhere north of Rome except in the single case where a diligence was stopped near Mungiatella about a month ago, and all those men engaged in that case were captured shortly after; at Genoa and Florence people talked of

the dangers of a journey to Rome; in Umbria and here all such ideas are laughed at but the country about Naples said to be "very dangerous"; I dare say there they laugh at the idea similarly. In Umbria a great many of the men carried guns and looked villainous enough, but were ~~not~~ probably bent on nothing worse than killing small birds, at which they seem to be remarkably successful, if one may judge from the fowling shops.

The Italians north of Florence seem to me to ~~be~~ be a much finer and handsomer race than those living south of Florence, but whoever called the Italians a noisy race was surely wrong and none that I have seen use their hands as much as the French or northern Germans. This morning we went off and saw the Forum, St. John Lateran, the Pantheon and the Terme of Caracalla, the latter a vast ruin, you will probably find pictures of all these either in the Students' Gibbon or the old folio book of plates under one of the card tables.

This morning we also saw Trajan's Column, the Egyptian obelisk baptised by Constantine (qu?) and a host of minor and more fragmentary remains; about the Forum and Coliseum are the principal arches, wonderfully perfect. Ancient Rome seems to have been some 15 or 20 feet below the level of the present streets and most of the remains are in walled round excavations like bear-pits, so one looks down at them instead of looking up and thus loses much of the effect. The weather is splendid, warm and cloudless the streets gay and Rome said to be "full".

Miss von S. is soon going home, the Clarks children are going to school and she does not intend going on as governess at present. All at Dresden seem to be flourishing again. Columbus' birth place is often given "Genoa", but at Cogoleto there is a house with marble tablet outside saying he was born there, so I stick to Cogoleto.

1 We are in comfortable quarters here and like this hotel, there are two couples here whom we have met before. About 50 sit down to the table d'hôte at 6.30, almost all English; there are at least double that number in the hotel. We have a light, airy double-bedded room (we always have a d.b. room) on the 5th floor in which I am at the moment writing, while Dawson is sitting at the other side of the table smoking and reading ~~a~~ a novel of Hawthorne in which the scene is laid in Rome. They have different money here, Scudi and baiocchi, a scudo is about 5 francs and 100 b. make one scudo. They talk some French in most of the shops, but most travellers seem to know some Italian. For its size, 180,000 inhabitants, Rome is large and not very easy to find ones way about, but there are always plenty of French soldiers everywhere to ask questions of. I have no plans as to future moves yet.

Your affectionate son
Francis E. Prendergast.