

Hotel d'Angleterre Rome.

March 5. 1866.

My dear Mamma,

To day I found at the P. R. yours of 26th -
also one from uncle Joe dated 27th.

On Saturday we went and saw the Sculpture
Gallery in the Capitol in which are some
of the most famous statues, the Dancing Faun,
a wonderful Bacchus in red marble and
the famous Dying Gladiator, the last most
wonderful, the marble looks alive or rather
dying; poor fellow he has been leaning
on his elbow and been just on the point
of dying for 1800 years, now so I suppose
he will last perhaps as long again.

Then we went and saw the Picture Gallery
in the Barberini Palace, none of these
of great note except the well known
"Cenci". We also ^{saw} St. John's Lateran where
the Popes are crowned, the outside of the
Quirinal and a host of other sights, the
only other remarkable one being the Church of
the Capucins, in it there is a grand Guido
"Michael and the Devil"; underneath the
church is the monks burial place, here
the bodies with the dried up flesh still
clinging to the bones ~~and~~ and dressed in
their monkish robes either repose in hollows

in the walls or are fixed standing up, the place is decorated with bones placed on the walls and sides of the arches, the walls for some feet from the ground have piles of skulls and large bones built up against them and it ^{is} in hollows made in this skull-wall that the bodies of the old monks repose. It is a most extraordinary sight and did not seem to me disgusting in the least.

Yesterday I went to the English Church, the congregation was very large 700 or 800 I should guess and six clergymen officiating. I saw the Unthanks there but have not gone to see them yet. There are American and Scotch Churches besides, several of the latter. In the afternoon we went to the Botanical Gardens (insignificant) and to St Peters to hear Choral Evening service, there was no organ but good voices. The more one sees of St Peters the larger it seems to grow; it is very hard to take in the idea of its vastness, the ant-like appearance of the people in it shows its enormous size otherwise it looks nothing remarkable.

This morning we went to see the Sculpture Galleries of the Vatican and after visiting room after room and gallery after gallery for more than an hour began to think it was a hopeless case to see the whole even by merely walking through, and came away with no very clear ideas of anything except the Laocöon. The size of and extent of the Vatican and its Galleries are enough to alarm the most energetic sight seer.

The hounds meet somewhere ^{near} the city constantly at this season and English and Americans figure largely in all directions. I called on Plowden on Saturday and he desired to be remembered to uncle Jeffrey, but I did not get much out of him. Among the people at this hotel, is a Mr Jeffers (or Mr^s) to whom I sit next at table d'hôte he is I think from Dublin and is amusing and pleasant, Dawson sits next to a Col. and Mr^s Strachey, they seem nice people but I have not conversed with them.

Amongst the names in this hotel list I see that of Mr & Mrs R. Tigue. I know nothing of them except that I have often heard the name mentioned. Yesterday being Sunday we had a "blow out" table d'hôte, wild boar roast (very good), roast beef, game, plum-pudding and a host of minor dishes. It is a good table d'hôte every day and the hotel is deservedly commended by "Murray" and the "Practical Guide" man as being good and reasonable. The Minerve we did not like and Mr Jeffers had left the Hotel de Rome as not being good.

March 6.th Yesterday afternoon we walked out and saw St Pauls a magnificent new basilica church built to replace one burned some years ago. It is said to be the next largest church here after St Peters. The interior, walls, pillars and floor are all of polished marble, the ceiling richly decorated. It is more than a mile outside the walls. We also saw the Arch of Janus, a Temple of Vesta

and a rectangular temple very perfect and now converted into a church; the name of it we could not ascertain.

Just outside the Porta San Paolo is the pyramid of Caius Cestius a very respectable pile of stones to be out of Egypt. In the city near the Forum is the front of a handsome temple of Minerva now occupied as a bakers shop! One of the most curious features to me in Rome are the old Egyptian obelisks brought here I suppose by the Romans as curious antiquities.

After all, the remains of Rome which we see here are probably new as compared to the walls and other remains in those Etruscan cities which we visited in Umbria.

Though we have been taking things easily we have pretty well done Rome now, of the chief sights few remain unvisited; guide books are published which show the anxious tourist how all may be done in eight days, hard work no doubt, but still quite feasible. Some people in this hotel

are steadily and conscientiously working through "Mussolini's Rome", a large book in itself, but somehow we ~~the~~ who take matters more easily seem to see as much. The post^{men} here wear dark green uniforms and colked hats, they do not look at all business-like.

March 7th. Yesterday morning we visited the picture gallery in the Vatican, the pictures are comparatively few but all picked works of the best masters, and so placed and lighted as to be all most satisfactorily visible. However I see no pictures anywhere that please me so much as the Dresden Madonna, and the "Madonna in the Chair" at Florence, both Raphaels. Then we visited the Theatre of Marcellus, a great Colosseum-like edifice with its arches built up and the whole used for shops and dwelling houses, in many of the ground arches are smiths shops the smoke from which has blacked and begrimed the front till it looks like a foundry. Then we went to the Tarpeian Rock - not a good sight, as alteration of level and the houses below

destroy the effect of any precipice that there may be. St Clements was the next place we visited, an old and curious church below which is again an older St Clements supposed to be of the 3^d or 4th cent. and ~~it~~ with fine marble pillars and curious old frescoes, again below this second church they have found the remains of some very ancient Roman building with large uncemented stones, which in default of any record is called "a temple, probably of the time of the Roman Kings". At all events it is very ancient and very curious.

We visited many more churches and minor antiquities, but nothing else very remarkable. At La Scala Church there is a long flight of marble steps ~~at~~ which devotees ascend on their knees saying some formula at each step and kissing it before they rise to the next, while we were there there was a lady in silks and satins, whose carriage was waiting at the door, doing this. It is said that those who do this are absolved from all past and future sins. The steps are well worn by frequent applications of knees.

I posted letters to you on the 29th and on the 2^d.

We get lovely glimpses of the country about Rome and often see riding parties coming in at the gates but the country just outside the walls is not very attractive.

Ancient Rome was much larger than the present city and there are great open spaces inside the walls, now used as market gardens. The walls and some of the gates are very perfect, French soldiers of course are at every gate.

German I have found a useful language in Rome on account of the Pope's German clad Swiss Guard, who keep guard in the Vatican, the Quirinal and elsewhere. They are always very civil and seem glad to be addressed in German. One would scarcely have expected to find German useful in Rome.

I am still without decided intentions of moving, but after receipt of this you had better address Florence, as I suppose I shall go there early next week and when writing tell me what letters you have written so that I may know if they have all come to hand.
Your affectionate son Francis E. Prendergast.