

## SOME CHURCHES OF ITALY.

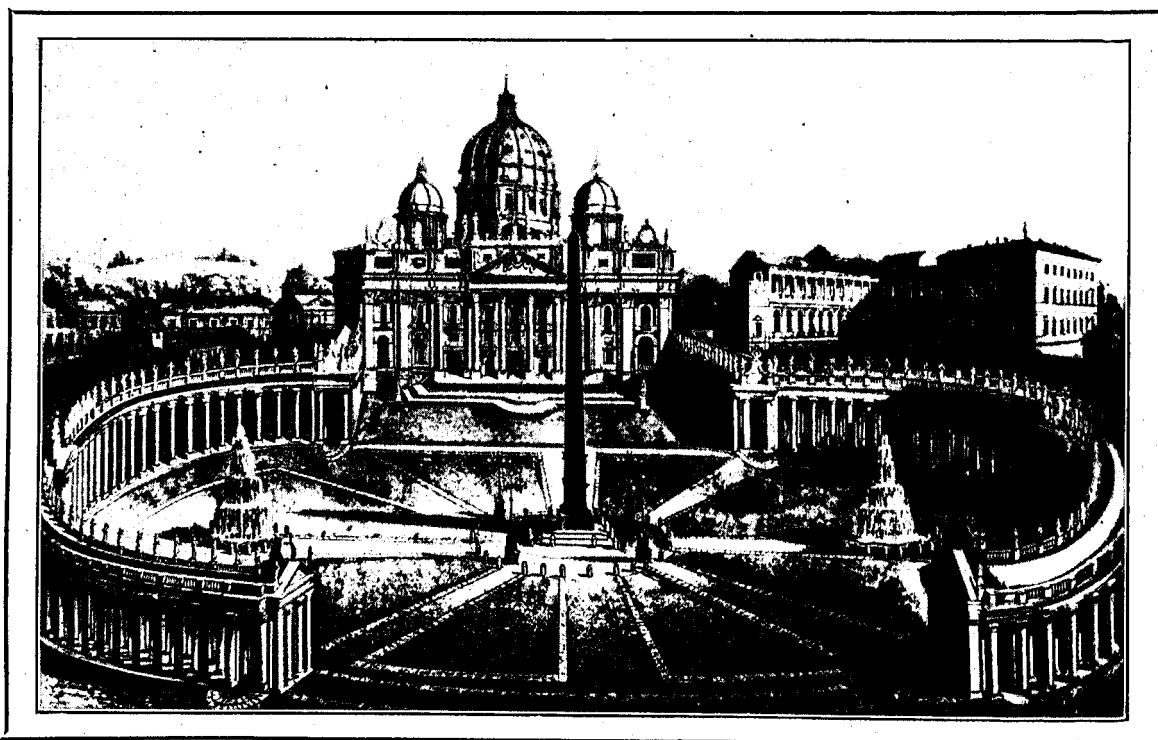
In visualising Italy, or even one or two cities—Florence or Rome—and in attempting to pass on to others what has been such an indescribable delight to oneself, one realises how impossible it is to see, in a short time, this marvellous land and its loveliness of nature and of art. Churches, pictures, sculptures—a life-time would not suffice to study them completely or to absorb their history; and to attempt to realise the glories of Italy in a few days is nothing short of heartrending, to attempt to describe them an impertinence. Nevertheless, British nurses attending the International Tuberculosis Congress in Rome, with their capacity for endurance, their energy and determination, did manage to see more than most passing travellers would have done in double the time.

While, therefore, we grieve that there is so much that we did not see—that we may never see—we have returned

But time presses and we come to earth again, and pass out into the celebrated Piazza del Duomo, where there is a fine equestrian statue of Victor Emmanuel II, whose magnificent National Monument in Rome, now associated with the tomb of Italy's unknown soldier, has already been described in this JOURNAL.

### FLORENCE.

Florence, a city of saints, and it must be owned also of sinners, albeit magnificent ones, was next visited. The number, the beauty, the interest of her churches makes us feel, with the Queen of Sheba, that the half was not told us. There were giants in the earth in those days, to conceive, to plan, and to carry into effect such beauty. The most celebrated is the Church of Santa Croce, the history of which is interesting, for it dates from the year 1228, though it was then only a small church, built on a deserted and unhealthy swamp. These conditions attracted the followers of St. Francis of Assisi, vowed as they were to extreme



ST. PETER'S, ROME, AND THE VATICAN.

with enlightened minds, stored with memories exquisite, glorious, and ineffable.

When we consider what inspired the poets, the musicians, the artists, the sculptors of this favoured land, we realise that their greatness found expression in the magnificence of the churches all over Italy, and that through the centuries deep religious fervour and shining patriotism inspired most of the noblest music, pictures and sculpture.

### MILAN.

For many travellers in Italy a night spent in Milan affords an opportunity to see its famous Cathedral, and its exterior, with no less than 2,300 statues, makes an appeal to them. For ourselves, its chief interest lay in its Gothic interior, the beauty of which is unsurpassed, and surely unsurpassable. The lofty arches of the nave, pointing heavenward, seem of too ethereal a loveliness to bear the weight of the heavy masonry which they support, and they are repeated in the double aisles and transepts, till one seems as one gazes upwards, to be so carried away by their mysterious beauty that one's feet scarcely touch the earth.

poverty and self denial, but the surprising result was that the Florentines were so moved with admiration for these Franciscans that they drained the swamp and enlarged the monastery, and then proceeded to build the glorious church, where now are buried so many of Italy's illustrious sons and daughters that it is acclaimed as her Pantheon. It is in the cloisters of this church that there has been placed a memorial by an English sculptor to an English woman—Florence Nightingale.

Among the great ones buried in the Church of Santa Croce are Michael Angelo—who died in Rome, but was laid to rest in Florence—and Rossini, who died in Paris; Dante, Cherubini, Machiavelli, Garibaldi, and Mazzini are also among those commemorated. The superb marble pulpit has five bas-reliefs representing scenes in the life of S. Francis of Assisi, and at the East End are no less than eleven chapels, one of which forms the Sanctuary. In the Medici Chapel, over the door, "Christ and Angels," by Luca della Robbia, and over the Altar, "The Virgin," are of a beauty to be remembered.

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