

The foundations of the Cathedral (S. Maria del Fiore, St. Mary of the Flower), the glory of the city (so called from the flower in the arms of Florence), were laid in the year 1298, when the instructions given to the architect were to "make it of such lofty and splendid magnificence that it could not possibly be surpassed." Its square Campanile, encrusted with marble and adorned with sculptures, is considered one of the finest Gothic belfries in Italy. Its beauties and its treasures might be the subject of a special article, and then its glories would not be told.

ROME.

Who can describe the glories of the churches of Rome? To tell of those of St. Peter's alone a volume would not suffice, and well nigh a hundred others demand attention. Of the "Church of Peter" our illustration gives a general impression, but no picture can do it justice or give an adequate idea of its beauty, and it is to be noted, though

its wonders; its first purpose, as of other churches, is to afford the faithful opportunity for devotion, and on the Sunday before the Congress many of its members attended "the Lord's own service on the Lord's own day," and assisted at the High Mass said in one of the many side chapels, with all the dignity of an elaborate ceremonial—lights, incense, beautiful music, the green vestments, proper to the day, of a lovely brocade, and the presence of Cardinals adding to the gorgeousness of the scene.

The church of St. John Lateran, a noble example of a Renaissance church, must next be mentioned. The present church is for the most part eighteenth century, but it retains the title of the older church because when the palace of the Lateran was given by Constantine to the Popes, the first Chapel of the Bishop of Rome was established there. Special features of this church are the mosaic picture in the open air, and the cloisters, which,



Christ at the Column.
Pontius Pilate.

THE SCALA SANCTA
(The Holy Stairs)

Christ and Judas.

the size is so vast, it is never oppressive, because of its wonderful proportions. Throughout is to be seen the hand of Michael Angelo, and the Dome—which was his principal work, though he did not live to see its completion—is a marvel of lightness, notwithstanding its immense size.

The interior awes one with its magnificence, its harmony, and its splendour, the white marble of the nave, and, at the West End, the lovely yellow marble pillars, contrasting so beautifully with the dark golden roof. At the High Altar, which stands immediately beneath the Dome and over the Tomb of St. Peter, only the Pope can celebrate. Above it is a canopy supported on four spiral richly gilded columns, and in front are no less than eighty-nine ever-burning lamps. In the nave, to the right, is a bronze figure of the Apostle, of which the great toe of the right foot is noticeably worn away, the result, it is said, of much rubbing by the faithful before proceeding to kiss it.

But we do not go to St. Peter's only, or mainly, to see

with their arcades supported on twisted columns, are wonderfully beautiful.

Nothing surely appeals to the visitor to Rome more than the Scala Sancta (the Holy Stairs), to be found nearby, in what was formerly the palace of the Lateran, given by the Emperor Constantine, as a residence for the Bishops of Rome. None now remains except the Sancta Sanctorum Chapel at the top of the Scala Sancta—the twenty-eight marble steps brought from the Roman Prætorium in Jerusalem by St. Helena. They are now encased in wood, and may only be ascended on the knees, a precious privilege, since it was up these steps that Christ ascended to Pilate's judgment seat; but on either side are stairs which can be ascended in the ordinary way.

On either side of the stairs are the statues in marble of "Christ and Judas" and "Christ at the Column" by Meti, wonderful presentments of two of the most moving events in the world's history.

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