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(1860)
May 30

PERSONAL LETTER from W. C. Schaumburg in Rome, Italy, to
his friend, Paul Declouet at home in St. Martinville, La.
Rome, May 30, (1860)

Dear chum,

Here I find myself writing to you from the great eternal city of the
Caesars! Does it not seem like a pleasant fiction? I can hardly realize that I
am in Rome at all for I have spent so much of my short life in dreaming of this
Niobe of Nations that it is really hard to convince myself that this is not another
of my day dreams lengthened out, of course. You want to know how I enjoy my
trip - well, you all ready know how much pleasure I anticipated so it is only
necessary to say that all my hopes have been more than realized, my grandest
speculations dimmed by actualities. Rome, to me, is still the grandest city of
the world but alas not for what she is but what she was. It is too true that she
stands "crownless, childless in her love". It makes my heart bleed
to see her so degenerated to look upon the house of the man next only to
Washington, in my opinion, see it the above only of hords of beggars
and muriards of flees as is also what remains inhabitable at least, of the palace
of the Caesars. It is now midnight and I have just returned from a moonlight
visit to the "Coliseum". Alex (your brother), Miss Chambers, Miss Bridges,
Miss Hartston, Mr. and Mrs. Rison, Mr. Bridges my mother, sister and
myself found the party. I've seen it in the day time once before - thought it
magnificent - But when the rising moon begins to climb

Its arch, and gently pauses there
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night breeze waves along the air
The garland foust which the gray walls wear

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Like laurels on the bald first Caesar's head

When the light shines serene but does not glare.

As it did tonight - then is the time to see it in all its grand and gloomy splendor!
I never imagined such an enormous structure. It holds or did hold 100,000 people - who came to witness the gladiatorial conflicts, the martyrdom of early Christians which took place in this vast arena. It is now the greatest monument ancient or modern in the world - even now after it has been robbed of marble slabs, columns of granite, marble, alabaster, enough to build some five or six of the finest palaces in Rome. Then imagine what it must have been when Capitol and saw "before me the gladiator lie" the original statue found in the ancient Roman Forum - the one spoken of so glowingly by Byron. I saw also the original celebrated Venus de Medici which I must acknowledge throws every other female form, real or statuetic I ever saw far into the shade and yet with all its voluptuousness, there is so much modesty embodied in it that it fails to excite a single sensual passion. We saw there too the "thunder stricken muse of Rome - She Wolf" in Bronze - a very fine thing. We saw too many pieces of the best statuary in Rome besides the very excellent picture gallery where as some of Guido Reni's, Titare's, Rubens, Raphael's, Michel Angelo's best pieces. Next we went to the villa Riosetti where they have a frescoed ceiling. It is the world renowned "Arvia" by Guido Remi, one of the best paintings I ever saw. To tell you of all the places we go to and the things we see would take reams of paper. But when I come back to America then I will give you enough of my descriptions. I've been to see every thing almost of interest, either from its intrinsic merit or connection with history in Rome already.

Monday we will commence our excursions. First we will go to

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Tivoli, a very interesting place historicaly for its lovely cascade and other scenery. It takes one whole day to go there and return. Tuesday we will go to Albano and Trascati. I have been to many studios of painters and sculptors, the best of the latter are Gibeous, Miss Hosmer and Rogers the first an Englishman, the last two American. I bought two very pretty pictures today for a hundred Saudi (dollars). One is Conegio's Niagdaleni, and the other "Linda, the pearl of Savoy". I think of getting two more - one Guido's Annuciation" and the other "Hope" a beautiful female figure standing on the sea shore, both cost \$300. We leave here for Florence Wednesday 6th of June. We will be there some ten or twelve days, then go to Venice and stay a week, then to Milan and through Switzerland then to Vienna, Berlin, Dusden, Germany, Holland. Then to England and Scotland and Ireland by Calais and Dover, then back to Paris and leave for home on Adriatic of 23rd of October. Alex is very well and seems to enjoy himself very much.

I wrote to Jim Clark the other day. If I do not get a letter from you very soon I will not write again. You should not wait for me to write before you can write to me.

If you are still at school do not allow this letter to go round to all our boys as the letters generaly do. It is too mean and the only excuse I have to offer is that it is 1 1/2 o'clock at night and I've been out sightseeing all day. I am as tired as hell. Give my love to all. Respects to old Bill and Lady. Tell Buck, Sam, Carter and all my friends I'd like to hear from them. Good bye, write soon and often and direct to W. C. Schaumburg, care of John Munroe & Co., No. 5 Rue de la Paix, Paris, France.

W. C. Schaumburg

(1860) P. S. Alex is asleep. I asked him if he had any message to send and he
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(con't.) answered with a snore that would have wakened old Caesar.

Handwritten in English. Original on file at Dupre Library at the University
of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, La.