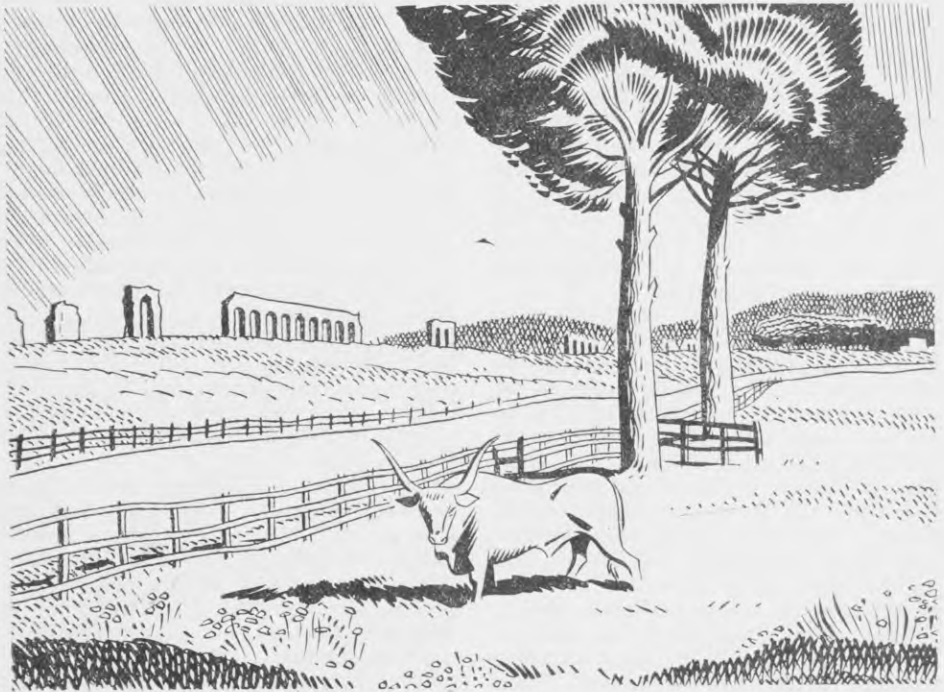


student, there is no denying the immensely imposing effect of such sumptuous Renaissance basilicas as St. Peter's. Standing in the vast apse you look down the immense nave to the great bronze door at the threshold, an eighth of a mile away. The altar is built of precious marble, adorned with mosaics, encrusted with priceless gems. So perfect are the church's proportions it is difficult to feel its size. You read the text on the interior of the dome and can hardly believe that each stroke of the letters is taller than a man.

The air is hushed, but the silence is alive. The light is not dim and ineffectual, but soft and high and rich as floating gold. Masterpieces of sculpture mark the resting-place of Pontiffs and kings; one such graceful monument was

erected by George IV to honour the memory of the fateful Stuarts. Down the nave an arcade of Corinthian pilasters and stupendous arches carry the eye on to the wonderful vaulted ceiling which seems like a second and golden sky. Over the high altar Bernini's magnificent canopy soars up to a height of 95 ft.—a hundred tons of wrought bronze taken from the roof of the Pantheon.

It is fitting that these places once rent by the death cries of Christian martyrs should be for ever thus enclosed and hallowed by public acts of religion. For Rome is principally the setting for a religious drama, the background against which are daily enacted the sacred rites of the Christian faith, ordered with a solemn ritual, made joyous with holy song.



The Roman Campagna : Country through which our armies must march to Rome.