

**MORNINGS AMONG THE JESUITS
AT ROME: BEING NOTES OF
CONVERSATIONS HELD WITH
CERTAIN JESUITS ON THE SUBJECT
OF RELIGION IN THE CITY OF ROME**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649652099

Mornings Among the Jesuits at Rome: Being Notes of Conversations Held with Certain Jesuits on the Subject of Religion in the City of Rome by M. Hobart Seymour

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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M. HOBART SEYMOUR

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THE NEW YORK
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1901

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Mornings among the Jesuits at Rome.

INTRODUCTION.

In committing the following pages to the press, it is felt that some few words of introduction are required, to account for their origin and to explain their nature.

Having visited Rome, not only to gratify and indulge my taste for the arts among the most exquisite sculptures and the most beautiful pictures, the greatest miracles of art in the world—having visited that city not only that I might look at the ruins—the glorious ruins, of the temples, and baths, and palaces of the conquerors of the world, and to wander among those scenes where lived and walked the heroes of the past, but also and chiefly that I might see and study the true genius of the Church of Rome, and judge for myself as to her nature and character, I felt it to be my duty to avail myself of every means in my power to obtain information on the subject.

Two sources of information immediately presented themselves. One was derived from my own means and opportunities for personal observation: I therefore carefully attended all the various services of the Church; was a watchful observer at every procession; attended every exhibition of relics; was at every

church on all unusual ceremonials; attended every place at which the pope or the cardinals were expected; took my place at every ordination, at every funeral of cardinals or bishops, at every reception into a nunnery, at the celebration of every festival—in short, at every thing that could give opportunity for judging of the true nature and character of the system, as exhibited in its outward manifestation of services, ceremonials, and festivals; and I am bound to acknowledge the debt of gratitude which I owe to some members of the Society of Jesuits, and to some lay gentlemen of Rome, for the extreme kindness and courtesy with which they facilitated the prosecution of my object, securing to me access to places where otherwise I could not have been admitted. The results of my observations thus made have already been published in my account of “A PILGRIMAGE TO ROME.” The second source of information was not so dependent upon myself, but was opened to me by circumstances as unexpected as they were gratifying. I allude to the opportunity of close intercourse with the members of the priesthood, by which I might learn their opinions and feelings, and receive their explanations of all that was passing around me. It arose from the following circumstance. During my constant attendance at all the services of the Church of Rome, I was observed by a Roman gentleman who held office in the papal court; and, being acquainted with him, he remarked one day to my wife that I seemed much interested in these things, and asked whether I would not like to make the acquaintance of some of the clergy. Having learned from her my wishes to that effect, he called some

days after to say he had been with his personal friend the Padre-Generale—the Father-General of the Jesuits, and had mentioned to him my wish to enter into communication with the clergy, and he seemed to intimate that this was sure to convert me to the Church of Rome. He added that the father-general had directed two members of the order to wait on me, to give me any information which I might desire. These gentlemen came in due course. They soon presented me to others. They introduced me to the professors of their establishment, the Collegio Romano, and thus a series of conversations or conferences on the subject of the points at issue between the Churches of England and Rome commenced and were carried on, as occasion offered, during the whole period of my residence at Rome. A portion of my notes of these conversations constitutes this present volume of “MORNINGS AMONG THE JESUITS AT ROME.”

I dealt with all frankness with these several gentlemen as to the object of their visit. They were under the impression, which they were at no pains to conceal, that I was disposed favorably toward their Church; that I was one of those Anglican clergymen who neither understand nor love the Church of England, and who, in a restless dissatisfaction and love of change, are prepared to abandon her communion for that of Rome, and who only wait a little encouragement, and perhaps instruction, before taking the last step. I was very careful to undeceive them, stating that I should be most happy to confer with them on the differences between the two churches, but that I could not do so under a false color; that I was devotedly