

ROBA DI ROMA

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Roba di Roma by William W. Story

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WILLIAM W. STORY

ROBA DI ROMA

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ROBA DI ROMA.

BY

WILLIAM W. STORY.

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FOURTH EDITION.  
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IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN & HALL.

NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON & CO., 413 & 445 BROADWAY.
1864.

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PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

IN the present edition, the chapters on "The Evil Eye" and "Saints and Superstitions" have been omitted, and several others, such as those on the Colosseum, the Aqueducts, and the Good Old Times, have been materially altered.

I have expressly avoided the discussion of questions relating to politics and religion, not because I have not very strong opinions on them, but because my book has another scope, and I could do justice neither to myself nor to these subjects in treating them thus incidentally. My chief object has been to describe what is characteristic in the common life of Rome; but I have not felt thereby debarred from all subjects of a serious character, even though they should involve some slight historical sketches. The Ghetto, the Colosseum, and the Fountains, Aqueducts, and Baths, owe one of their great charms to associations with the past, and it would be difficult to give an account of them without touching upon matters of history and archæology. To scholars, the information contained in these chapters is superfluous; but to the main portion of travellers it will not, I hope, be uninteresting; and it is for this reason that they have been retained, though all except that relating to the Ghetto have been much compressed and modified in form.

An author is not a good judge of his own work, and, to confess the truth, in making the deductions spoken of, I have felt much in the condition of the fabled miller and his ass; for whatever one has advised me to reject, another has, with equal urgency, desired me to retain. I should, however, be very ungrateful not to express my warm thanks for the kind spirit in which my book has been received. The generosity of the public has cheered me in the unin-

teresting work of revision, and induced me to spare no pains, which might render it more worthy of the favour already bestowed upon it.

A number of misprints occurred in the previous editions, which were necessarily incidental to the printing of foreign words and names. Those which I had no opportunity of revising and correcting, even in the second edition, I have now endeavoured carefully to set right. But I cannot hope that none will occur, since no book was ever without them. I only desire that they may not be put down to the ignorance of the author, as it is impossible for me personally to revise the press.

One word, also, I wish to say, in regard to this book, both in its present form and as it previously appeared. Nothing in it is at second-hand, unless so stated. The places, people, and scenes described, I have personally seen. The books that are or were quoted I have personally examined and read, always in so far as related to my subject, and generally throughout. It was far from my intention to parade a pretended erudition in citing books with which I happened to be familiar; but, to guard against any such accusation, I have, in this edition, struck out nearly all the references in the notes.

At the same time that much has been omitted, some additions have been made relating to the customs and life of the common people in Rome, and these, I hope, will not be thought to be without interest.

W. W. STORY.

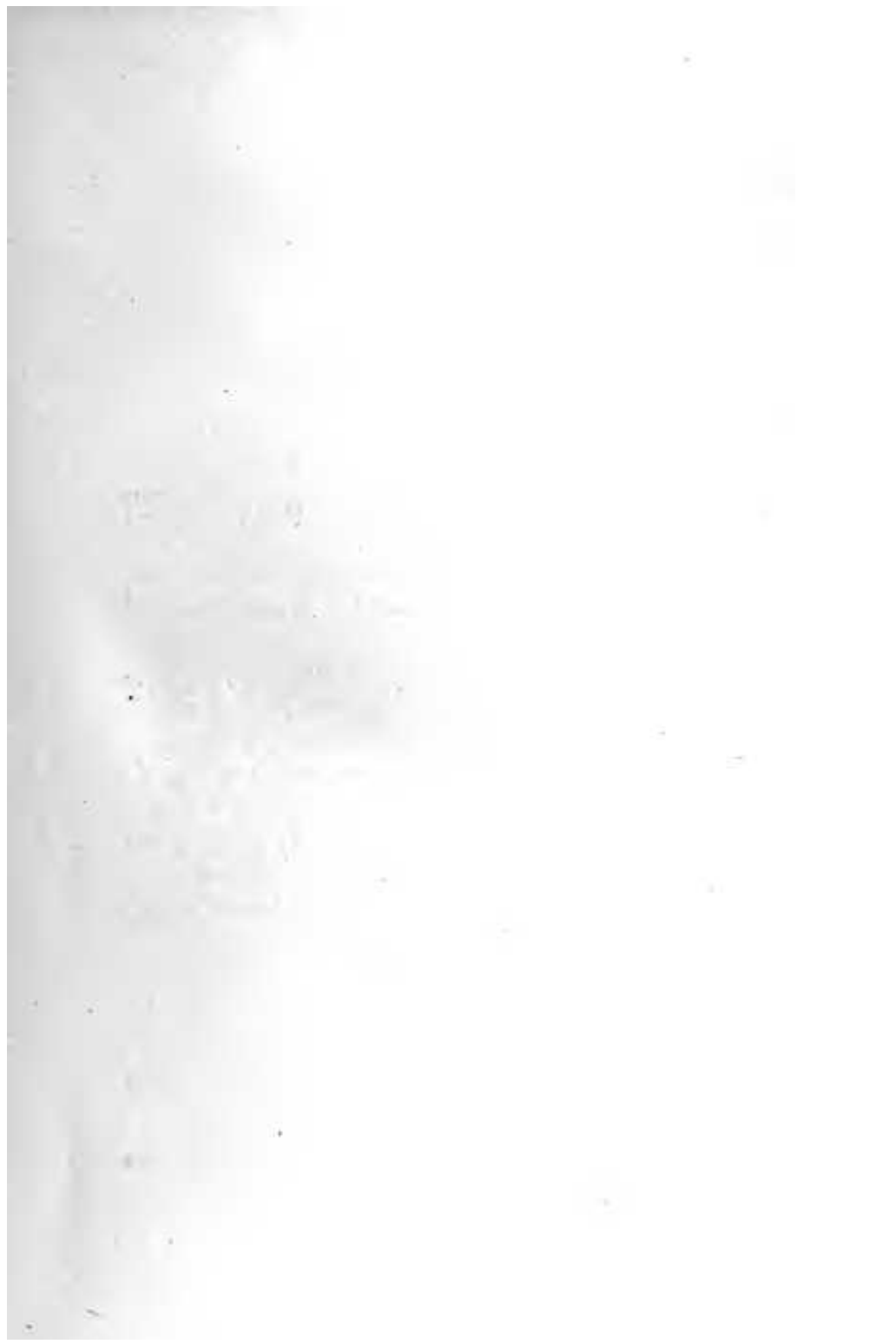
Rome, Nov. 1863.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE substance of a few of the earlier chapters of this book has already appeared in the "Atlantic Monthly." But these have been since re-written, enlarged, and, it is to be hoped, improved. The remainder, and far the greater part of the book, is now printed for the first time.

The title, "Roba di Roma," will be intelligible to every one who has been in Rome. Mr. Millhouse, in his dictionary, defines "Roba" to be "goods, wares, things, articles, property, chattels, estate; stuff, lumber; a robe, gown, dress." Yet this definition, extensive as it is, is inadequate. We have no term so comprehensive in English. "Roba" is everything—from rubbish and riff-raff to the most exquisite product of art and nature. This book is filled with "Roba,"—and I hope that it contains very little "Robaccia," which Mr. Millhouse defines to be "trash, trumpery, and stuff."

Nov. 1st, 1852.



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