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The Catacombs of Rome

W. H. Withrow



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The present work, it is hoped, will supply a want long felt in the literature of the Catacombs. That literature, it is true, is very voluminous; but it is for the most part locked up in rare and costly folios in foreign languages, and inaccessible to the general reader. Recent discoveries have refuted some of the theories and corrected many of the statements of previous books in English on this subject; and the present volume is the only one in which the latest results of exploration are fully given, and interpreted from a Protestant point of view.

The writer has endeavored to illustrate the subject by frequent pagan sepulchral inscriptions, and by citations from the writings of the Fathers, which often throw much light on the condition of early Christian society. The value of the work is greatly enhanced, it is thought, by the addition of many hundreds of early Christian inscriptions carefully translated, a very large proportion of which have never before appeared in English. Those only who have given some attention to epigraphical studies can conceive the difficulty of this part of the work. The defacements of time, and frequently the original imperfection of the inscriptions and the ignorance of their writers, demand the utmost carefulness to avoid errors of interpretation.

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