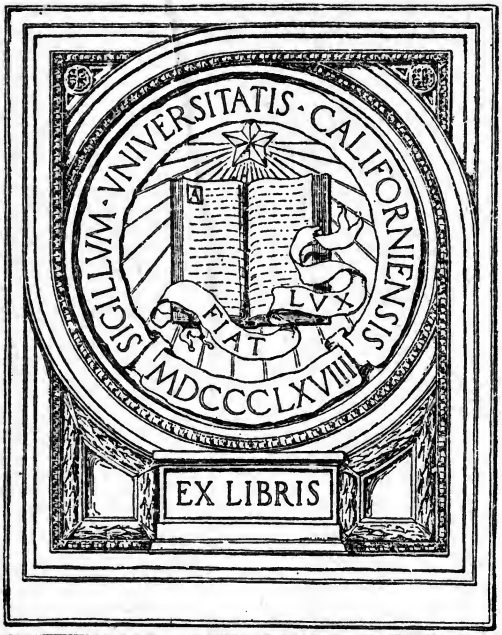
VISTAS IN SICILY

ARTHUR STANLEY RIGGS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VISTAS
IN
SICILY

Negative by W. von Gloeden.

"Sprightly little goatherds, whose heads are the heads of Greek fauns." (Page 12)

VISTAS IN SICILY

BY

ARTHUR STANLEY RIGGS
F. R. G. S.

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TO

MY WIFE

The acknowledgments of the author are due to the editor of The Travel Magazine, for his courteous permission to reprint some of the chapters which follow.

A. S. R.

Massy-Verrières,
France, June 5, 1912.

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INTRODUCTION

Sicily is the rarest flower of the great midland sea. Built up on the North in a series of beetling cliffs, the island slopes gently down through mountain chains and undulating plains to the golden Southern shore. An enormous triangle it is, spiny with lofty peaks — Ætna towers more than ten thousand feet in the air — spangled with flowering meads and dells where Nature loads the air with fragrance; pierced with infernal caverns, whence choking workers extract a large part of the world's sulphur from the palaces of the former gods of the nether world; and fringèd about on every side with the lace-like foam of opal waves. It is rich in beauty and desolation, rich in song and story, rich in architecture, splendid and varied.

To understand the beauty and charm of Sicily, however, it is essential to know something of the island's picturesque and vivid story. We Americans are rarely familiar with it. Strange as it may seem, considering Sicily's importance through many centuries, its consecutive history still remains to be written. Books there are, to be sure, but none attempts to cover more than a portion of one of the most intense chronicles in the world. Thucydides, in his "Peloponessian War," tells in glowing phrases

of the débacle that wiped out the Attic forces and left Sicily supreme. Later still, in the ante-Christian era Diodorus, a native of the island, prepared a flowing story of the Sicily he knew. It has been one of our chief sources of information ever since. In modern times the historians Grote and Curtius have included in their histories of Greece such parts of the Sicilian narrative as are germane to their work; and the English historian Freeman, in a monumental unfinished work, has left us a minutely detailed account of Sicily from prehistoric times to the reign of Agathocles. The Italian Amari, to go yet farther, handles the Saracen period with care and skill, and Gally Knight tells briefly of the dashing Normans and their fanciful architecture. But of the later periods almost nothing of lasting value has been written. Moreover, the books of travel dealing with Sicily are few in comparison with those which tell of other lands, and not many Americans discover, unaided, the paradise they omit from their itineraries.

The most usual mistake made regarding Sicily is that it is a little island, vaguely located in imagination somewhere near Italy and peopled by Italians — its inhabitants, Black Handers, organ-grinders, scissors-men, ditch-diggers and the rest, *mala gente* all. Sicily is near Italy — two miles away, in fact — and it is full of Italians, in the sense that they are Italian subjects. But by heredity, by instinct,

by everything that pertains to racial culture and development, they are far from being Italians yet. The explanation is a simple one. By consulting the map you see that the triangle — with an area of some ten thousand square miles — is not only in the center of the Mediterranean from East to West, but that it is also a great stepping-stone between Europe and Africa. In ancient days, when all the civilized world bordered the Mediterranean, the geographical position of Sicily gave the island an especial political character and importance. And naturally, while it remained the very center of the civilized world, it was a rich prize to be fought for by each Nation which rose to power.

Tradition — as usual — peoples the land first with gods, both beneficent and malign, and then with giants to whom Homer refers in the Odyssey: Laistrygones, Cyclops, Lotophagi. After these "poetic monsters" came the Sikans, Sikels and Elymians, genuine peoples, who may be called the prehistoric natives as distinguished from the historic foreigners. Of the three the Sikels, undoubtedly blood-brothers to the pioneers of Rome and Tuscany, are the most interesting; and a legend has it that they drifted on rafts from the Italian mainland across the channel now called the Strait of Messina, about 1100 B. C. They were permanent and important enough to give the island the name Sikelia, which is still current in our modified form, Sicily.

The first of the historic foreigners to enter were the Phœnicians, the Canaanites of the Old Testament, who lived in Tyre and Sidon and the other cities that lay in the narrow strip of lowland between Mt. Lebanon and the Mediterranean. They spoke Hebrew, as the Israelites did, but their worship was the foul and bloody service of Baal and Ashtaroth. They were the boldest seafaring men in the world; the most cunning traders,— who came to barter the Tyrian purple, the glass, the gold jewelry, and the little images of their own manufacture with the rude and primitive peoples already in possession. The Mediterranean had no terrors for their little barques, and they established trading posts and even actual colonies all along its coasts; one even, Gades of Tarshish — the present Cádiz — faced the ocean itself, beyond the strait now called Gibraltar, where the Pillars of Hercules guard the entrance to the Mediterranean. Phœnicia has left us no means of dating her settlements in Sicily, but we know that they were founded sometime between the coming of the Sikels in the twelfth century and the coming of the Greeks in the eighth.

The Greeks called these only rivals of theirs "barbarians," a name they applied to all who did not speak Greek. Yet this proved nothing as to their civilization, for at this early date the Phœnicians were far advanced in the material arts over all Europeans, including the Greeks themselves, who

learned of them. The most precious acquisition of all was the alphabet, from which every one of the forms of written speech now used in Europe has evolved. The Phœnicians may not have invented it; they may merely have taken it from farther East along with their other material arts. But they were the distributors, the teachers, the popularizers, and as such we owe them an unpayable debt.

The real history of Sicily, as a land playing a considerable part in the affairs of the world, begins with this coming of the Greek, and it is to his presence that the story owes its peculiar and immutable charm. As early as the times of the Odyssey the Greeks had some vague notion of Sicily. Everyone who has read that marvelous poem remembers that the suitors of Penelope threatened to sell the disguised Odysseus to the Sikels; and old Lærtes had a Sikelian slave woman. But no doubt the wily Phœnician traders told stories calculated to frighten away adventurous explorers; so it was quite by accident that the news which brought about the initial settlement reached Greece.

Driven by storms upon Sicilian shores Theocles, an Ionian Greek, found himself late in the eighth century gazing from the deck of his tiny craft upon a strange land. This he explored a little before returning home and there reported it as a good country, with inhabitants it would be easy to conquer. The prospect tempted his fellow-countrymen. They

were colonizers, not traders, and in the next hundred and forty years they occupied most of the coast of Sicily — Trinakria, Three Promontories, they called it — making of the island a second Greek world. Indeed, the city of Syracuse, founded in 734 B. C. by Dorians from Corinth, eventually became the rival and peer of Athens in wisdom, beauty and strength.

Though the various independent cities of Sicily fought bitterly and continuously, their strife seemed only to develop genius and bring forth wonders in architecture, art and letters. The lofty purity of Greek civilization found its highest expression in magnificent temples which for grandeur and simplicity have never been excelled. To-day there are ruins of no less than twenty of these imposing houses of worship in Sicily, all of them of the same style, and many of colossal proportions. The arts of the sculptor and of the numismatist are represented in the museums by metopes which tell graphically of the evolution of the Greek ideal in temple decoration, and by coins which for pure beauty and delicacy have no equals in even Greece itself.

A record of the illustrious Greek litterateurs who came to Sicily as visitors, or to spend the rest of their lives, is a list of immortals: Simonides, Sappho, whom an enthusiastic contemporary called the "violet-crowned, pure, sweetly smiling Sappho"; Pindar, whose quaint lyrics give us much of our

early Sicilian history; and Æschylus, immortal poet and playwright. Small wonder if with such inspiring examples in their midst native geniuses should have risen to great heights. Tisias of Himera is said to have set in order the lyric chorus, and so to have gained his name of Stesichorus. Epicharmus was the inventor of comedy, at least of the special Sicilian type. Some of his plays deal with mythology, many with cookery, and his comedy, "The Wedding of Hebe," furnishes epicures with a list of the Sicilian dainties of his day. Empedocles of Akragas, the most distinguished of Sicilian thinkers, became prominent as a physician and poet. Philistus, and the later Diodorus of Agyrium, were historians of the first rank. The fame of Archimedes the mathematician is imperishable; and Theocritus, also of Syracuse, gave to the world the first bucolics and pastorals ever written — strains so sweet that the very ditties the wandering shepherds on the hills to this day pipe to their flocks are but parodies of the lilting songs he made centuries ago.

The commercially minded Phœnicians gave the Greek colonists little trouble, but when Phœnicia's mighty African daughter — Carthage — grew up, she struggled long and hard for a permanent foothold upon the coveted isle. The crafty Carthaginians chose as the moment for their great effort the time when Xerxes the Persian, with forty-six Na-

tions, was marching against Greece the mother-country, and Sicily could expect no assistance. But "Zeus was too strong for Baal," and both barbarian hosts went down to crushing defeat — some say on the same day — the Carthaginians at Sicilian Himera, the Persians at Salamis. Had it been otherwise, the very civilization of Europe would have been overthrown. The Carthaginians, though defeated, were not beaten. They kept coming; and two hundred years later King Pyrrhus of Epirus had to come over from Greece to rescue Greek Sicily. As he left the island he remarked prophetically: "What a wrestling ground I leave for Rome and Carthage!"

Pyrrhus was right — the wrestling soon began in the first of the great Punic Wars, which ended with the utter defeat of Carthage. But while she was driven out, Rome came in to stay, and by 214 B. C. had swallowed up the whole island. Sicily was made the first Roman province, and experienced all the misfortunes of a "carpet-bag government." For centuries the peace made stable by Rome prevailed throughout the island, and the cities could no longer fly at each other's throats. But as the price of this enforced tranquillity, former great ruling centers like Arkagas and Syracuse began to dry up into almost nothing as provincial towns, intellectual advancement ceased, and during the whole thousand years of Roman administration, Sicily kept

the downward path in every field of endeavor.

In this relaxed and enervated condition, the island fell an easy prey to the marauding Saracens; the condition of the Sicilians, worn down by oppression, explains their feeble resistance. Nothing could kindle a National feeling, and the conquest was marked by only a desultory struggle, in which the fervor of a few Christian devotees dared oppose the Muslim spirit of proselytism. In 965 it was all over. The Saracen had driven out the decadent Roman in the names of Allah and the Prophet, and established his own brilliant exotic civilization. Intellectual activity and agricultural development were fostered, and the Muslim régime, though it was not to have any such permanence as the Roman it displaced, nevertheless developed with a splendor and rapidity that shamed the backward Christians.

Last of all the great molders of Sicily came the Normans, knights who with their keen blades carved a slice out of the Byzantine Empire on the Italian mainland and, conquering the Sicilian Muslims, built up a kingdom for themselves. Sicily's period of greatest glory dawned with their conquest. They developed a splendid fabric of feudalism; and all the arts as well as the more usual graces of civilization stamped the new kingdom for their own. The very Italian language, as Dante himself acknowledges, had its feeble beginnings in the court of the Emperor Frederick II at Palermo. The power of Fred-

erick, who was Emperor of Germany as well as King of Sicily, was a thorn in the sides of the Popes, who at this period claimed the right to dispose of all the crowns of earth. So after Frederick's death the Pope gave away the Sicilian crown to his own trusty defender, Count Charles of Anjou; and he, capturing the island from Frederick's son, Manfred, turned it over to the shameful misrule of his lieutenants. Sixteen years later, in 1282, the French paid dearly for their oppression in the terrible massacre of the Sicilian Vespers, when they were exterminated throughout the island.

Then the Sicilians invited Don Pedro de Aragón, the son-in-law of Manfred, their last Norman king, to rule them; and the Aragonese dynasty, with varying fortunes, lasted until 1409, when it became extinct, and Sicily was attached to Spain and governed by Spanish viceroys. Never did a government care less for its subjects; and when the Spaniards evacuated at the beginning of the eighteenth century, they left the unhappy island almost destitute.

Sicily had long since ceased to be the center of the civilized world; and now, a mere appendage, she was tossed relentlessly from one sovereignty to another in the bitter struggle to maintain the balance of power. From this time onward her story is a complicated record in which France, Spain, Savoy, Austria, and even England herself are almost inextric-

ably tangled. All this time, too, the common people, the backbone and life of the island, groaned under well nigh intolerable conditions. Gladstone, writing in 1851 of the Bourbon government, then ruling Sicily as a part of the Kingdom of Naples, said that its conduct was "an outrage upon religion, upon humanity, upon civilization and upon decency."

But in this, her darkest hour, Sicily was not forgotten. Her insistent appeals for help, and the blood she had poured out in continual protest against the vicious Bourbons, were too loud a cry for the liberty-loving and adventurous spirit of Giuseppe Garibaldi to ignore. With his immortal "Thousand" he answered, and became not merely the liberator of Sicily, but the hammer under whose forging blows the discordant states of the Italian peninsula were welded together into the new and coherent Italy. Thus at last a single man put the period to the island's troubled history, ended definitely her ambitions for individual greatness and made her an important part of a greater and more powerful whole.

So it is clear that there has never been a Sicilian nation, nor has there ever been even a Sicilian language; but every great race that dwells about the Mediterranean at some time has had a part in Sicily's story, and each race in its turn has left an indelible imprint upon language and customs, upon architecture and people. Here one sees a pure Greek

face of classic beauty; there a Saracen gazes calmly upon us out of features which could come only from the burning desert and the infinite starry night in the open; and yonder, a Roman, proud and silent, bends to toil the Romans of old never knew. On many a hill rises the matchless, mellow ruin of a Greek temple, lovely as anything Greece itself can show; and in the cities the architectonic genius and spirit of the races blend in structures dignified and massive, or light and airy almost to the point of being fantastic.

This is Sicily to-day, the home of all beauty, the abiding place of a people as picturesque in character as they are in face and costume; and the sympathetic traveler, living the joy of the moment, as do the Sicilians themselves, comes into possession of much of the unforgettable charm and perfume of this island of delights.

Vistas in Sicily

I

DISCOVERY

SICILY in spring appeared to us like water in the desert. That we knew nothing of the island was a misfortune we shared in common with most Americans. Such vague ideas as we had were derived mainly from long-past schooldays of wearisome geography, and from newspaper accounts of the Mafia, whose members seemed always to be Sicilians. But when, after a stormy fortnight among the volcanic dust-clouds of a great Vesuvian eruption, we determined to escape that choking atmosphere, the royal Road to Rome chosen by the tourists — terrified by the belchings of the volcano — did not appeal to us. Instead, with some trepidation, as explorers entering a wild and dangerous unknown land, we decided upon Sicily. Our baggage packed and in the hallway, we came out to Gregorio, the cabman we had patronized through many a day of work and danger around Vesuvius.

"Where now, milords?" he smiled at us cheerily, noting the hand baggage.

"To the steamer, Gregorio — to Sicily."

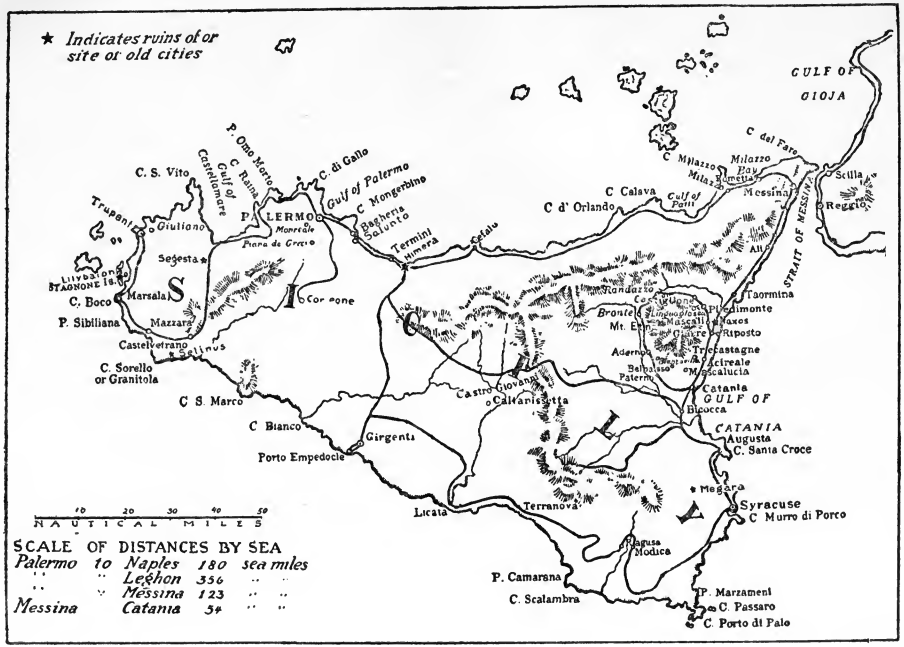
"To Sicily!" he exclaimed, dropping his whip in sheer amazement. "*Santo Dio!* — why?"

The haze of volcanic cinders still hanging thickly over Naples was answer enough, with the added explanation: "We must breathe; we must rest."

"Yes, but —" His emotions choked him. Here was Naples deserted by the thousands of foreigners whom a few days of Vesuvian bellowings had frightened into abject panic. Cabs rusted at the street corners by scores; and now he, too, was to be idle. It was too much! Not even the promise of engagement upon our return could dispel the gloom that had wiped away his smile.

"*Gia!*" he grunted darkly, shaking his head. "If the *Signori* ever return. Who knows, *per Baccho!* Sicilians are *mala gente*, brigands, murderers—"

It was too late to withdraw, notwithstanding Gregorio's cheerful prophecy, and he drove us to the wharf, a mournful figure drooping upon his box — and we sailed on Friday the 13th, at thirteen minutes past six! But whether it was because of lack of respect for either fateful numbers or hoary nautical superstition, or because of skill upon the bridge, the swift and trim little *Galileo Galilei* brought us pleasantly in the glorious dawn to Sic-


★ Indicates ruins of or site of old cities
GULF OF GIOJA
C del Faro
C Milazzo
Milazzo Bay
Milazzo
Messina
Scilla
Reggio
STRAIT OF MESSINA
C Calava
Gulf of Patti
C d' Orlando
Alì
Taormina
Randazzo
Bronte
Mt. Etna
Adernò
Belpasso
Paternò
Giarre
Riposto
Trecastagne
Acireale
Mascalucia
Catania
GULF OF
Brocca
CATANIA
Augusta
C. Santa Croce
Megara
Syracuse
C Murro di Porco
Ragusa
Modica
P. Camarsna
C. Scalambra
P. Marzamemi
C. Passaro
C. Porto di Palo
Licata
Terranova
Castro Giovanni
Caltanissetta
Girgenti
Porto Empedocle
C Bianco
C S. Marco
C. Sorello or Granitola
Castelvetrano
Selinus
P. Sibiliana
Mazzara
C. Boco
Marsala
LIPARI Is.
STAGNONE Is.
Segesta
Trapani
Giuliano
C. S. Vito
Gulf of Castellamare
C. Raina
P. Omo Morto
PALERMO
Monreale
Piana de Greci
C. di Gallo
Gulf of Palermo
C. Mongerbino
Baghena Salunto
Termini Himera
Cefalu
Cor one
Cerda
Lingua Grossa
Mascali
Fiumefreddo
Piedimonte
Taormina
Acireale
Catania
Augusta
Syracuse
Modica
Licata
Girgenti
Porto Empedocle
Marsala
Trapani
Palermo
Messina
Catania
Cerda
Lingua Grossa
Mt. Etna
Adernò
Belpasso
Paternò
Giarre
Riposto
Trecastagne
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C. di Gallo
Gulf of Palermo
C. Mongerbino
Baghena Salunto
Termini Himera
Cefalu
Cor one
S I C I L Y
10 20 30 40 50
NAUTICAL MILES
SCALE OF DISTANCES BY SEA
Palermo to Naples 180 sea miles
" " Leghon 356 " "
" " Messina 123 " "
Messina Catania 54 " "

ily, and an hour later Palermo — the capital — shimmered through the smoky mists veiling its Golden Shell.

It was an easy and a delightful voyage, the steamer clean, the sea smooth. But if one is sea-fearing instead of sea-faring, he may go comfortably from Naples by train, via Reggio and the Strait of Messina, only two miles across by ferry. Or, if he be a sea-roving globe-trotter, he may take one of the numerous Mediterranean liners leaving New York the year round, and make the trip without a single change all the way to Palermo; and these vessels are so large and so steady that the trip is robbed of half its terrors to the most timid soul.

But if money is an object, it is better to go by way of Italy, where little commutation books for Sicilian travel, called *tessere*, are to be obtained. Each *tessera* is a small pocket coupon-book sold in every large city, from Rome southward, from February to June. The books contain detachable coupons which entitle the holder to a discount ranging all the way from ten to seventy-five per cent in the cost of transportation, food, lodging, merchandise and amusements in the theaters. They cost ten *lire* (two dollars) apiece; and it is necessary only to fill out a given leaf with the date, the names of the stations to and from which the holder wishes to travel, and to present it at the station to obtain the discount on accommodations in any class desired

Palermo, "the Panormos of old . . . looks straight out toward the rising sun."

on railway trains and steamers. A saving so large may be effected by its use that the transportation cost of the trip melts almost into insignificance.

It seems too good to be true, but there is a reason for it. Count Florio, of the Florio-Rubattino Steamship Company, one of the most public-spirited men in Sicily, to popularize the island as a place of resort, to stimulate local travel in the best months of the year, and so to augment the revenues of both people and island, persuaded the Government to grant special rates on its railways by giving a sixty per cent discount on his own private steamers. Various large stores, theaters, cafés and hotels perceived the reason in his argument, and quickly followed his example. Moreover, as the Annual Sporting Reunion is held in Palermo during the late winter, it was felt — as proved to be the case — that inducements in the way of discounts on the cost of everything would considerably increase the patronage and make the annual games and races much more a feature of the island than ever before.

Curiously enough, for a people so fond of red tape, the Sicilians have not smothered the *tessere* with senseless regulations. The concierge of your hotel can fill out and present the book for you when you wish to leave a city; the railroad ticket agent is not concerned with anything but your signature; and there are no difficulties about photographs as identification. But woe to the person who gives

his tessera to a careless concierge! Half a dozen others may have done the same thing at the same time, and the *tessere* have become mixed. Unless one wishes to forge the usually almost indecipherable Italian name on the little green leaves, no ticket is forthcoming, no matter how fluent the explanation given; and a new book becomes a necessity.

These winter and spring months are ideal for travel in this Mediterranean isle. In every age Sicily's climate has been sung as halcyone, and in the days when Cicero was quæstor under the Roman rule, he did not exaggerate greatly when he said that there is never a day when the sun does not smile at least once. Not even Mentone or the other resorts along the Riviera can boast of a warmer or more sensuous charm than Sicily. January, which is the worst and rainiest month of the Sicilian winter, is very like the first two weeks of May in the northern part of Europe; and a short time later, when travel begins to waken the island, the sun shines clear and hot, an overcoat is wholly unnecessary except in the evening.

Ripe and green fruit and blossoms are to be seen at the same time on the orange and lemon trees, and by April the scraggy old olive trees bend beneath the weight of their dull green fruit, just beginning to blush with purple. The air is full of the scent of myriad flowers, and the railway tracks, sometimes for miles, run between hedges of ge-

raniums — six to eight feet high — whose pungent fragrance fills the flying trains. The summer climate is as mild and salubrious as that of the winter, for even in July and August the average is not more than seventy-seven or seventy-eight degrees Fahrenheit; about the same as in our own Atlantic States. Occasionally, during one of the African siroccos that sometimes sweep across the island, the mercury rises to an hundred or so; but the sirocco is a rare occurrence, fully as apt to occur in midwinter as in summer.

In a climate of this sort the jaded city-dweller, searching for health and rest, finds an ideal environment, and while the hotels are not the equals of the fashionable New York and London hostelries, they are comfortable and moderate in price; and many of them have splendid gardens attached, where one may have tea, or rest and wander at will among the scented bowers. One boasts a considerable aviary, and another, perched at the very edge of a precipitous crag, serves refreshments upon a stone promenade with the blue African Mediterranean right below, and the peaks of the Dark Continent faintly suggesting themselves through the mists of the horizon. Many of the best-known of these hostelries are located at historic spots, where history and imagination can conjure up the past vividly — aided, perhaps, by a too generous dinner. More than one traveler has fought the siege of Taormina

all over again in his post-prandial dreams, and gone tumbling down the nine-hundred-foot slopes with the Greek tyrant, to wake up on the stony floor of his own bedroom!

Notwithstanding, the food is good, except in the more remote districts, where goat's flesh is usually the literal *piéce de résistance.* In many of the hill centers the wine of the country, the *vin ordinaire,* as the French put it, is remarkably pure and good, while for general attractiveness and cleanly condition, the hotels as a class rank very well indeed. Not so much can be said for the servants, for the Sicilian accepts dirt as a thing given of God and therefore not to be too severely quarreled with under any circumstances; yet he does his best to live up to the finicky notions of the foreigner who, to his unprejudiced eye, is so jaundiced. And the Sicilian's best, in his efforts to please the stranger, is a very warm-hearted and genial best indeed, full of cheery smiles, of the utmost willingness to fetch and carry, of entire devotion, sometimes to the point of doing actual violence for his patron.

It is characteristic of the people, indeed, that, having so long served for nothing, they should welcome the chance to serve for their own profit and pleasure combined; and the service is as pleasant to reward as it is to receive. Furthermore, the reward need not by any means always take the form of cash. In Italy everywhere one goes it is always tip! tip!

tip! But in Sicily it is a delight to learn that one often secures as much for a smile and a gracious word of thanks as for a cash gratuity. In fact, tips are not infrequently refused. I shall never forget the expression that crossed the face of a schoolboy to whom I once offered half a *lira*, ten cents, for some trifling service. There was hurt pride in the rich brown eyes upturned to mine as the dirty little paw waved away the coin without a word. Another time, in the course of a detailed exploration of a prominent agricultural school in Palermo, the young priest in charge remonstrated with me, half in amusement, half in indignation, because "you offered my máma money!" To the apologetic remark that it is very hard to know when not to offer money, since everyone elsewhere in Italy expects it, the young philosopher, as cordial and proud as he was abjectly poor, helped himself to one of my cigarettes with a neat word of thanks and replied: "Ah, but here it is different! We are a simple, kindly folk in Sicily, always ready to do whatever we can for the well mannered foreigner. And, friend, when you go out, do not try to corrupt my boys with money," was his parting admonition regarding tips for any of his pupils.

This picturesqueness of character extends to face and costume as well, and in the remoter places the dress and faces of the ancients may be observed, striking a curious note of contrast with the ex-

ceedingly modern and well appareled folk of the larger centers. Only fifteen miles by carriage from Palermo, back in the mountains at Piana dei Greci — an Albanian colony founded during the latter part of the fifteenth century — the peasants still hold during festival time to their rich and exceedingly beautiful costumes of embroidered silken gowns and breeches heavily picked out with gold. And a costume wedding can usually be arranged for the benefit of the interested visitor, who is expected to pay the officiating priest and make a modest gift to the newly married young couple.

But ancient or modern though the costume be, the demeanor of the wearer is almost invariably the same, courteous and respectful — one might even say eager — to give nothing but pleasure to the stranger. And this is true even of the cab-drivers. We had come to Sicily weary to exasperation of the importunities and rascality of the Neapolitan jehus — Gregorio was a smiling exception. To our delight we found ourselves able to take a ride in Palermo, of half a mile or more, in a clean, well-kept barouche, drawn by a well-fed little Arab stallion, for ten cents — and no tip necessary or expected.

The prices for longer excursions were on the same basis, and for weeks we had the services of a cab, a magnificent horse, and the peerless Gualterio, for about two dollars a day, including what to the Sicilian mind was a generous gratuity. And the car-

riage "ran sweetly," as Gualterio assured us it would; nor was it — in his own words — "dirty, like some!" Of course, the Sicilian cabman, for all his courtly manners and engaging smile, his soft voice and his continual appeal to the ladies, with the set phrase "*La Signora vuol' andare* — The Lady would like to ride?" (as she usually did, to the enrichment of the cabby) is not much more to be relied upon for facts, or as a guide, than his brethren in Naples or anywhere else in the world. The first time we saw one of the numberless slender stone towers that dot Palermo from end to end, rising to a height of about twenty feet, covered with fine vines and dripping countless tiny streams of water, Gualterio smiled angelically when asked what it was.

"It is very simple, Signore," he replied instantly. "It is one of the watch towers, built to enable the guards of the royal Château of La Favorita to keep watch over the entire estate at once." It seemed a curious thing that royal guards should combine duty with the pleasures of a cooling showerbath; but when I appeared to doubt it, Gualterio simply pointed at the iron ladder leading from top to bottom outside. "Behold," he said. "Are not the ladders still there by which the guards climbed up and down?" Later we found the structures to be irrigating towers, as useful as they are picturesque, which is saying a good deal. How to make a cabdriver truthful is a recipe one seldom or never

learns. Perhaps there is a way, but his fictions are so harmless and amiable, so entirely diverting and ingenuous, that it seems a pity to spoil a child of Nature with ironclad rules for veracity.

Nor is the cabman the only Sicilian given to hyperbole or metaphor. The tendency is marked in all primitive peoples — a large part of the Sicilians are still primitive — to tell an inquirer the thing they suppose he most wishes to know; and the Saracenic blood in the Sicilian has doubtless left him a certain heritage of poetic imagination and exaggeration for the most utter commonplaces of life. At any rate, this inclination is found throughout the island, and it does not, except to the flustered tourist-in-a-hurry, seem a peculiar drawback or fault. Indeed, it rather adds to the fascination of the people, who appear to fit perfectly into their environs. Wild looking young girls, cherry-and-olive of skin, gossiping about the central fountains of their home towns, bear huge replicas of red Greek amphorai upon their well poised heads with all the grace of Greek maidens. Sprightly little goatherds, whose heads are the heads of fauns, and whose half naked and ruddy bodies are often clad in skins, ramble over the precipitous hills with nimble herds able to crop a living from mere stone-piles; and the fauns, Pan-like, pipe to their goats strains Theocritus might have loved. Swart mountaineers dress like their own rough hills in shaggy clothes topped off by

big rough shawls; and seamen clump about, afloat and ashore, in boots and "oilers," or barelegged. The city folk are equally artless, with their tiny marionette theaters, their homeless meals in the open air markets, their goat-blessings, their innumerable other *feste.*

And the Sicilians are not the only entertaining characters one meets. Sometimes our own countrymen — more often countrywomen! — are not far behind them. At a little mountain hotel, one evening at dinner a vivacious, black-haired, sloe-eyed, young woman with the air of one who comes, sees and conquers, told me in a breath her name, place of residence, father's occupation, and asked for my credentials. I was rather stunned, but one of her companions — there were five of them in all — reassuring me by "Oh, don't mind Dulcie! She's all right," I admitted my identity.

With characteristic American energy the trippers "did" the town in one day, and long before we were ready for breakfast the next morning, drove away in an ancient barouche crammed to the guards with luggage, and drawn by three horses so rickety we wondered at the daring of the five women in accepting it. Dulcinea — have I her name right? — perched beside the grinning driver, her agile hands full of guidebooks, umbrellas and so on, gesturing with the fluency of Sicilian temperament itself, took in everything with a last comprehensive glance, and

commanded the triumphal equipage to move. The hotel manager stood by the door blinking and dazed. Drawing a hand across his brow as the chatter died away in the distance, his lips moved in something that doubtless was a tribute to the "wonderful Americans!"

In another dining room a weighty German, seating himself ponderously, drew from his pocket a sort of dog-chain which he carefully threw around his neck and attached by a spring clasp at either end to his napkin, spread carefully under his expansive chin. By the way, many Germans travel in Sicily; they seem especially interested in its classical history. The caretaker in one of the *latomie* in Syracuse complained: "Most of the people who have been here this year were Germans. Me, I do not like the Germans. They have no pockets! Now Americans are grand. They are all pockets." After we left he may have concluded that some Americans are very German. There are many English, too, for they are everywhere; sometimes interesting, sometimes not.

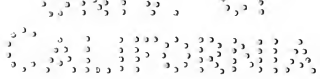
Besides these folk of to-day, legend and fable have peopled the island with myriad nymphs and goddesses, gods and dæmons and heroes, equally interesting. Here in the smoldering caverns of Ætna dwell the grim Sikel gods of fire. There in the lofty central plateau is the very pool beside which Proserpina was weaving her daisy chain when

stolen by Pluto and carried away to be queen of the nether world. High on the peak of an ancient western hill is the dueling ground where Hercules wrestled with King Eryx. And off the eastern shore are the very rocks the Cyclops Polyphemus hurled in his impotent rage at the escaping Odysseus.

But song and story are not necessary to invest the natural scenery with its full share of beauty and importance. The Sicilian Apennines, like forked lightning, zig-zag sharply down from the northeast corner to the central southern shore — the rugged, cloud-piercing backbone of the island. Greek temples, great golden honeycombs of myth and history, tower up from hilltop and swale of emerald spangled with the gold of spurge and buttercup, splashed with the impish fiery tongues of countless poppies; bright groves of orange, lemon, citron, almond and carob trees in both fruit and flower scent the air with almost overpowering sweetness; broad brown fields bear acres of the dull green prickly pears; an occasional huge plot of ground newly plowed, with moist red furrows, waits open-lipped, to receive seed or shoot; and everywhere, acre upon acre, extend the vineyards, low-trellised and green, till from a height the country that the gods loved looks like a huge crazy quilt, folded and rumpled and vivid, dropped from the finisher's hand and left lying where it fell.

Picturesque towns on the very tips of inaccessible crags, walled about and defended by Nature, give perfect pictures of isolation. Other towns, white cities springing up from the golden sands of the African sea, coquette with the emerald waves that lap hungrily at their very doors. And the dashing tunny-fisheries off-shore — the brilliant sunshine glinting on the flapping white sails — the water boiling about the frantic monsters as they plunge and struggle to escape the stabbing gaffs of their captors; the water red and green and black at last, and the long line of huge, gleaming bodies — like titanic Spanish mackerel varnished an opalescent black — strewn upon the white and sparkling beach!

What more could man wish to see?



Monte Pellegrino looms square and massive at one tip of Palermo's crescent harbor.

II

PALERMO

MOST of the passenger steamers come into Palermo shortly after dawn, and in the pleasant, vernal weather of late winter, or in the real spring, the great bay is a waveless sheet of gilded beryl, dotted here and there with small boats so still they seem sculptured, in strong relief against the purple outlines of the cliffs at either horn of the bay. On the right, Monte Pellegrino looms square and massive; on the other horn's tip Monte Zaffarano peers through the vapors, and the bay between their rugged shoulders is pent off from the sea by the slender arms of moles springing outward from the shore. Inside these breakwaters, solemn, black trans-Atlantic liners await their passengers, and flocks of rakish small boats, with queer, high, projecting cutwaters and painted in every dazzling, garish color that fancy can suggest, hop about like so many water-beetles. Prosaic fishing smacks full of rich, soft colors and melting lines idle along to lazily lifted sweeps, or linger beside the mole. And rusty little "cargo-boats that 'aven't any 'ome" contrast sharply with the trim white Florio-Rubattino liners.

Early as the hour is, half of male Palermo seems to come to the dock to shout a cheery welcome as the boat comes in. Throngs of hotel runners and porters crowd the wharves, all clamoring for recognition, each trying to drown out his neighbor's voice; their queer, staccato cries, combative and challenging, sound as if projected from a huge phonograph to float loosely upon the jangling air. Yet for all this eagerness it is hard to find a man not too busy shouting to attend to the baggage. When one is secured, however, he vanishes like a gnome, to return a few moments later with the pleasing intelligence that he has smuggled your trunk through the customs guards, and is ready to perform prodigies with your handbags.

Palermo's modern commercial port is distinct from the ancient harbor of La Cala, now devoted almost exclusively to small fishing craft and rowboats because of its shallowness. Between the two basins projects a blunted little promontory, the reminder of that ancient tongue of land which divided the bay of Panormos of old. On that projecting finger of ground the Phœnicians built their mighty city, which looked straight out toward the rising sun. Yet no one knows what its ancient name was, nor what the citizens called themselves; we know it only by its Greek name of Panormos, All-Haven. And though the Phœnicians have passed completely from the entire earth, and the

Greeks remain a great Nation, this city which the Phœnicians founded is still Sicily's most beautiful and prosperous center, while the wonderful Greek metropoli of Akragas and Syracuse have dried up like mummies within the battered outlines of their once splendid shells.

Palermo has long and deservedly borne the name of La Felice, The Happy. It is a white city with houses of pearl and roofs of carnelian, shimmering with golden sunlight against the dark background of vine-clad hills on the horizon and the rich green of the most fertile plain in the island, that sweeps, a vast natural amphitheater, from the edge of the sea up to the seats of the white gods on the cloud-veiled crags. Splendidly set is the city in the warm lap of its Conca d' Oro, the Golden Shell that blooms with countless orange and lemon trees whose golden fruits flash amid the glossy green of the foliage and give the rolling plain its name. Pink and white almonds, citron, palms, ilex and pomegranate make it a great botanical garden, perfumed with the jasmine of Araby, the geranium, the pallid lily and the rose. The system of irrigation introduced centuries ago by the Saracens still obtains throughout this favored plain, increasing its productiveness twenty-fold. Fringing the city, splendid villas and great beautiful gardens bring a blush to the emerald cheek of the rolling environs. One feature of parks and gardens throughout Sicily that no American

can fail to notice is the lack of prohibitory signs, such as "Keep off the grass." "Do not pick flowers." "No trespassing under penalty of the law." Royal, noble or ordinary, these grand floral and arboreal displays are open to the public practically all the time, yet no one is ever offended by débris left by picknickers, by broken-off twigs or blossoms. The Sicilian knows that an infraction of the rights of the owners would result immediately in the closure of these parks and gardens, and he respects his privilege of entry.

Many who come to Palermo do so expecting to find a typical south-Italian seaport, indescribably filthy, and teeming with guides and beggars — as determined as their native fleas to make a living from the visitor. To all such the reality comes as thrice welcome. They find a city beautiful, teeming with life and color, brilliant and irresistible, its citizens well dressed, orderly and courteous, at least so far as the traveler sees them. They congest the narrow sidewalks in an easy-going, gossiping, arm-in-arm throng never in a hurry and never to be stirred to haste by the polite "*Permesso, Signori!*" of the foreigner. Rather when urged to speed do they stop short to stare in amazement at such a phenomenon as anyone pressed for time.

Handsome shops with alluring window displays line the principal thoroughfares, which run through the city in a huge cross. Clean, convenient trolley

systems vein the capital's face with crows'-feet in thin gray lines; enticingly black and narrow little *vicoli* thread devious ways among the houses, where the curious may wander unafraid, and unashamed of his curiosity and interest. And every alley, every byway and passage is spotlessly clean; while the gardens of the city, scattered with prodigal lavishness throughout even the business section, are beautiful beyond description. At first the senses refuse to take in anything more than a strange, exotic, gorgeous medley of light, color, sounds; an unfathomable jumble of men and animals, of quaint buildings and strange vehicles, of street cries weird but melodious, of the faintly scented brilliant atmosphere — of the half-revealed, half-guessed-at Soul of the City.

Perhaps the two main streets constitute the best monument the Spaniards have left behind them. They may not have cared for Sicily; but for themselves and their convenience and comfort they cared much. So the Spanish viceroy, Don Pedro de Toledo, ran a fine broad street straight from the smiling sea through the middle of the town, and called it for himself, the Toledo. It is now the Corso Vittorio Emmanuele — practically every city of any importance in Italy has testified in this same way to its love for the united country's first king. Crossing this ancient Toledo is the other highway, the Via Maqueda, laid out by another viceroy, the

Duque de Maqueda, a short time later. The curious square — it is an octagon, by the way — where these two streets intersect at right angles, is called by the whimsical Sicilians the Quattro Canti, or Four Corners. The façades of the abutting buildings are concave, and each affords lodgment for statues of a Season, a Spanish King and a female saint — who might be in a deal better company!

Our first morning on the Corso we were halted by a terrific outburst of sound from the very heart of the throng.

"What's that?" I exclaimed, swinging my camera into position. "A fight; somebody being murdered?"

But La Signora was not minded to be left a widow in a strange land for the sake of a putative photograph, and halted me. The cry stopped: as we listened it began again. Angry and defiant, bellicose even, it rose clear and strong above the noise of the street, held a moment, faded in slow diminuendo into the beautifully clear note of a great and playful animal baying for sheer joy of his own strength. The sauntering crowds paid not the slightest attention to the amazing volcanic outburst of vocal fireworks; not one of the alluring shops beside us was emptied of its customers; the tiny Sardinian donkeys in the shafts of the gayly painted little carts did not even lift an ear, but pattered gravely onward; and we, moving with the crowd, looked sheepishly at one

"The water-seller, whose bellow has musical quality and charm."

another when we reached the corner. Standing in an angle of two house walls was a little seller of sweetened water, holding his big red amphora by one ear, his gaudy little yellow-red-blue stand bright with clinking bottles and glasses. As we stopped, he stunned us again with his musical bellow, and knowing we would not buy his "*Aaaaacquuuu-aaaa! Aaaaacquaaaaaaaa d-o-l-c'!*" struck a picturesque attitude and posed for us instead. He is there yet — or another water-man is, for it is a fine corner for business.

Along the Via Maqueda and its continuations, the Ruggiero VII and the Avvenida della Libertà, the fashionable *corso,* or afternoon driving promenade of all classes, takes place. The handsome street is an endless chain of moving vehicles of every description. Here a spanking team of blooded bays with silver-mounted harness draws the smart London trap of a young Florio; there a rickety old barouche, guiltless of varnish for many a long year, so crowded with a stout family party of six that its rheumatic springs creak, and the wind-broken old hack who pulls it feels his waning powers severely taxed. A splendid young Arab, full of blood and pride, pulling a new victoria, follows a ducal cart and precedes another overflow meeting, this time a stag party. Flashily dressed young gallants with cigarettes and straw hats *à l'Anglais,* loll back in decent traps and carts, making sheep's eyes at the

demure young girls who ride in maiden reserve beside their silent mothers.

Every Palermitan who can, rides in this social promenade. What matter if his vehicle be but a cheap hired victoria; what if he go to bed supperless; has he not had the supreme delight of playing milord in elegant leisure among the nobility and the rich *forestieri* (tourists) who take the air on the city's stateliest avenue?

It not infrequently transpires that one carriage, one horse and one coachman are owned — and alternately used — by two or three families. The coachman in all probability not having been paid for a year or two, cannot afford to run away; the emaciated steed, not having had a really square feed of good sweet oats for an equally distressing period, could not run away if he would; and if both horse and driver should by fell conspiracy bolt, the faithful old carriage would quickly fall to pieces rather than have any part in the undoing of its worthy owners.

Those of the nobles too poor to own a carriage alone, and far too proud to appear in hired ones, are not too proud to adopt the tactics of their humbler brethren, and go shares in an outfit with other nobles of equal pretensions and as poor as themselves. Only one extravagance marks the common ownership of what might be called these "party rigs." Each count or baron or prince naturally

"There is nothing to equal the Sicilian cart, carved, yellow, panelled."

boasts "arms" as the the insignia of his rank; and these symbols must of necessity embellish his carriage doors, that he who walks may know at a glance the name and fame of him who rides. From this dilemma the Sicilian has contrived an ingenious escape. Each noble has his own set of emblazoned doors. So when the tired horse brings his Highness the Prince back to his "palace," presto! off come the princely doors, on go the ducal or baronial ones, and his Grace the Duke or the Baron rides serenely off in his own private equipage!

Of all the vehicles in the world, there is nothing, however, to equal the Sicilian cart, carved, yellow, paneled with lurid paintings that run the gamut of myth and history. One we saw had upon its panels scenes representing Columbus sailing from Palos and discovering America; a bloody fight around the citadel of Acre; the hermitage of Santa Rosalia; and on its tailboard a vivid presentation of the massacre of the Vespers. These carts are never very large, as carts go; but they are so marvelously wrought, they ought surely to come under the provisions of the law which forbids the exportation of any works of art. Wheels, shafts, axles, the edges of sides and posts and tailboards are all worked into neat geometrical designs, and on the axle is a carving built up clear to the bottom of the cart, a mass of intricate scroll-work and gingerbread, in the middle of which sits the patron saint of the fortunate owner.

"If you expect a cart-driver to tell you the truth, make him swear by the saint sitting upon his axle," is almost a proverb in Palermo. Would there were saints on the cabs, too!

Often the horses's decorations are equally fantastic, with a three-foot cock feather rising between his ears, an apoplectic purple bouquet of yarn upon the saddle, and plenty of shrill little bells at jingly intervals all over. These gorgeous outfits are used for ordinary delivery work, and after working hours the family put chairs in and go for a ride in state. The bit is as queer as the harness: it isn't a bit at all, but a plate of spring-steel strapped loosely over the horse's nose, an horizontal prong projecting on either side. Attached to the prongs, the reins give the driver complete control over his animal, since by pulling them he gently but effectively cuts off the beast's breath. This makes runaways impossible, and besides, is much more humane than a bit of the usual sort.

The city's street cleaning department is not such a joke as it appears. Looks are not its strong point — keeping the town immaculate is. The carts are simply scaly old specimens of these brilliant equipages; and the animals are tiny Sardinian donkeys, as pretty and gentle as any pet lamb, and scarcely bigger. One velvety little gray beauty we saw on the Via Maqueda was undoubtedly heartbroken at having such disagreeable work to do. We

"The city's street-cleaning department is not such a joke as it appears."

talked to him and petted him, but to all our caresses he made not the slightest response, merely hanging his head and suffering his fate silently, like the brave little beast that he was.

Perhaps it is the cleanliness of these streets that makes the people use them as drying-rooms. In Naples they wash in the streets, and hang the clothes from window to window in narrow alleys. But in Palermo the people go much farther — they cover the façades of their very finest houses with linen which flaps in plain sight even during the fashionable *corso* on the broad avenue.

On this same Via Maqueda are the two large theaters. The Mássimo, or Largest Theater, is a splendid structure, well named, for it is the largest theater not only in Italy but in all Europe, a dignified adaptation of ancient Greek ideals to present day needs. A block farther on is the Politeama Garibaldi, with a Roman triumphal arch entrance, and a two-storied Greek colonnade encircling frescoed walls whose polychromatic decorations are so exceedingly Pompeiian they suggest that Palermo may be the birthplace of a new renaissance in Italian art.

The Sicilian of any class is always picturesque, always individual. He could scarcely be anything else if he tried, and the life of the masses in the city is like a show at the theater — a show, at that, in which even the supernumeraries are ever imbued

with due regard for the proper setting and action of the piece. There is no more typical specimen of this condensed picturesqueness than the water-seller, whose bellow has musical quality and charm, as you discover after your first shock. He calls up Egypt and the streets of Cairo. Really, he is the survival of an ancient Arab custom. You find him everywhere, especially among the lanes of the Fiera di Pascua, the Easter Fair, a piece bitten right out of the heart of Coney Island. The Easter season, by the way, is an exceedingly fortunate time to spend in Sicily, because of the multitudinous festivities going on.

For the Fair, great bare sheds spring up overnight in the square beside the Mássimo, mushroom-like — a sunstruck Babel of crazily built and decorated shops and stalls and booths where everything imaginable is to be bought, from tinware and toys to rosaries and vegetables. About the booths eddies a jovial mob, pushing, chattering, playing practical jokes on one another, eating candy and the dubious Sicilian equivalents for frankfurters and kraut. Bands blare out fitful, horrible music from the roofs or windows of small sheds curiously mounted with painted legends or astonishing pictures in which the lack of perspective is the most prominent feature, unless it is the artist's entire disregard for the principles of anatomy. "Barkers" in plate armor manufactured out of ancient

"'Barkers' in plate-armor . . . in the Easter Fair, a piece bitten right out of Coney Island."

kerosene tins from which the odor has by no means departed, vie with ridiculous clowns and short skirted dancers in proclaiming the attractions of their rival marionette and "minstrel" shows. And everybody wants to pose. Indeed, the Sicilians have a good humored mania for getting in the way of the camera, even when they know they are not wanted there and will never see a single copy of the picture.

I leveled my camera at one queer stall, and instantly the people sprang together solidly, completely obscuring the booth, each man crying to his neighbor: "*Aspett'! Aspett'! Il fotografo!*" In vain I pleaded. In vain Gualterio shouted and threatened and argued. The merrymakers laughed, and nodded, and stood like statues. In the confusion an important policeman stepped up, saluted respectfully, and said: "Excellency will be kind enough to move out into the street again. He is attracting citizens, and blocking the entire square."

Then he began unhurriedly turning over the human kaleidoscope.

III

A NIGHT OF DISSIPATION

PALERMO is chimneyless. Hovels and palaces alike have no fires, except for cooking, and among the poorer classes very little of that is done at home, the people being steady patrons of the *cucine economice*, or "economical kitchens," especially of those in the vicinity of the great public markets.

Anxious to see these typical aspects of city life in tabloid form, we had our own dinner early one evening, and told Gualterio to take us through the poorer quarters, to show us the people getting their suppers, both at home and in the old market. Obeying literally, he drove us through countless *piccoli vicoli* or narrow alleys, dark little canyon-like slits between the houses.

Strange shadowy forms flitted about under our horse's very feet; black doorways gave yawning glimpses of deeper gloom beyond, lighted only by a tiny candle; here and there we passed vague silhouettes — a hungry man standing, hat on, before a table or sideboard gulping down his meager dinner, or a woman, Rembrandt-like, knitting, mending, reading, or amusing a child, in soft relief against

the murk of the interior. Sharp cries from the driver warned away the children sitting in the street, so narrow that the wheels of our carriage scraped the house walls on both sides while going through; women knitting slipped their chairs momentarily back into the doorways in order to let us pass. Street lamps at long intervals twinkled feebly, and after six or eight such streets were traversed we emerged into the glare and brilliance of the slightly depressed Piazza Caraccioli, home of the Fiera Vecchia or Old Market.

Halting the victoria on one side of the square, we wandered about on foot among a bedlam more picturesque than, and fully as noisy as, the Easter Market. To describe the scene adequately is impossible — no one who has not seen it can gather more than the vaguest idea from any printed description of this vivid cross-section of lower class Sicilian customs.

Dazzling light and pitchy darkness alternate sharply, with no intermediate nuances of softer shadow, and the hurrying people rush hither and yon like so many busy ants. Adding to the confusion of the scene, the peddler and vendor shout out their wares: "Water!" "Olives!" "Artichokes!" "Fish!" A chorus of lesser cries swell into diapason invitations to buy all manner of things one does not wish and can not possibly use, and there is much good natured chaff for the *fore-*

stieri. Men, women and children by the score are everywhere, some eating where they stand, some carrying food home.

Small pails of gleaming charcoal bear upon their heads great kettles of boiling artichokes. Steam and aroma from the cooking meats and vegetables; the smoke of lamps, candles and torches and burning fat and grease in the frying pans; escaping gases from the ranges in the "economical kitchens," from the charcoal fires, and from the coal stoves; the innumerable smells of fresh vegetables, meat, fish, both salt and fresh, cut flowers and goats, with an additional tang of cheap wine, gushing from big casks into pails and bottles in the open shops, mingle in a composite odor by no means as unpleasant as might be thought.

The whole scene is a delight to the eye. Here is a good sized wine shop, its front entirely open, showing two rows of casks and an imposing array of copper bright as the sun; yonder a vegetable store completely covered with onions suspended in long strings, bunches and wreaths, decorated fancifully with green leaves and little rosettes which afford a background of decidedly striking type for an image of the Holy Bambino, itself of onion color, and barely discernible among the rustling strings of bulbs over the door.

Beside us a tiny restaurant, its front all gas-range, yawns enticingly, while opposite glows the

"Vendors of fried entrails . . . squat beside their baskets."

"The people are steady patrons of the Economical Kitchens."

fiery eye of an artichokeman's tiny charcoal fire. Vendors of fried entrails and stomachs squat beside their frying pans and baskets, perforated ladles in their hands, exactly like our frankfurter men; while water-men with their highly colored stands full of clinking glasses swing along, bellowing cheerfully.

Great gaudy signs in blue, red and yellow proclaim the prices of empty eggs, strung on threads, or impaled upon wooden spearlets, and stuck up over the front of a shop. Evidently the Palermitan distinguishes as we do between "eggs," "fresh eggs" and "strictly fresh eggs," for the price varies considerably. However, the careful buyer we watched trusted not in signs or portents, but weighing each egg carefully as he bought, placed a dozen or more of the fragile things in his coat pockets despite the throng. Why a purchaser never comes home with an omelet in his clothes is a mystery, for we found it exceedingly difficult to work our way through the crowd. Yet, when I questioned the egg-seller he declared that no one ever broke an egg.

A man with a pretentious stand like the American quick lunch counters stood behind a narrow smoking counter full of hidden fire, bearing a frying pan on top. On his left a bowl of strong shredded cheese faced other dishes of butter and rolls. He was a very popular caterer, too, for while we stood watching him a number of customers came up, giving an order in the peasant dialect which we could not

understand, and the proprietor with a deft turn of his hand split a roll, covered it liberally with a rich thick layer of shredded cheese looking like tooth-picks, placed upon that a few scraps of the meat he was cooking below, and deluging the whole with a spoonful or two of boiling grease, served up the tit-bit to his eager customer. In Sicily the butchers sell the offal and entrails of slaughtered animals, which in America are turned over the soap manufacturers or thrown away. The kitchen-man who buys them cuts up the stuff, boils it in its own fat, and sells it in the reeking buns at a penny apiece. The sturdy Sicilian seems to enjoy and thrive on this horrible mess, and even the children come toddling up to clamor for their share.

Macaroni of all sorts, curled, fluted, twisted, frilled, chopped into squares and lead pencil lengths, woven, braided into shapes numberless, decorates several of the stalls. Other booths sell candles; others, shoes; still others, nothing but cheese. Cobblers are everywhere, although it seems impossible — in a town where so many people go barefoot — that one-tenth of the shoemakers, who work from six o'clock in the morning until nearly midnight, can find anything to do. Notwithstanding this external poverty, however, there are in the houses of the very poorest in practically every section of the town sewing-machines, whose tireless treadles throb and pulse by day and far into the night, the seamstress

bending over her work lighted only by the spasmodic flickerings of a little candle.

Tiring after an hour or so of the bustle and confusion and glare, we set off again. In and out we wound, as in a dream, peopling the streets with imaginary rascals ready to rob or kidnap, until at last in a small open square we came to the brilliantly lighted wineshop and café of *Sainte Rosalie*, whose proprietor, himself partly French, thus Gallicizes the name of the town's patron saint, and at the same time adds distinction to his café in the eyes of lower class Palermo. We stopped curiously, and the proprietor, immediately forgetting his patrons, invited us to get out and inspect the place.

Filling almost one entire side of the large front room is a huge stove built of mortar-covered brickwork, upon which bubbled a couple of cauldrons, one full of goats' stomach, the other containing scraps of something or other. Both smelled good — but how they looked! Opposite the stove hung meat which had been fresh that morning; piles of vegetables completely filled up the counter and various tables. All the coppers and cooking utensils were spotless, and marvelous to relate, there is a real chimney, and running water, both hot and cold. Sometimes you see a house which has a genuine iron cooking stove — but it stands in the parlor and the stovepipe is thrust conveniently out into the street above the closed lower half of the front door.

The café is divided into two parts by an arch, and no curtains being hung, the diners can see perfectly how their food is being cooked. Leading us through into the *Sala di pranzo*, the proprietor, with a sweeping bow, waved us into two chairs at a table beside two native couples who were taking their belated suppers. The peasants greeted us frankly and pleasantly, the women smiling, and the men doffing their caps with a hearty "*Buona sera, signori!*"

Not knowing exactly what was expected of us, we ordered *vino e pasta*, supposing we would receive some sour, fiery fluid, and the bad Sicilian bread. Instead there was set before us a large flagon of reddish-brown, rather heavy dessert wine, a little too sweet to be palatable to Americans, but nevertheless delicious. Clean though coarse napkins and glasses accompanied it, and delicious almond sweetcakes in far greater quantity than we could eat. The price of this refreshment was so ridiculously small that we wondered at first whether Boniface had not made a mistake.

Our trip through the market and the *piccoli vicoli* thus pleasantly finished, I told Gualterio to take us to the theater.

That anyone would be willing to miss a minute of pleasure he must pay for was incomprehensible to his simple mind. Draining his beaker at a gulp, he nearly dropped the glass in astonishment.

"The Holy Bambino . . . barely discernible among the rustling strings of onions over the door."

"*Ma — signore! É troppo tard'! Ora si finisc' il prim' atto!*" he exclaimed. "It is too late! The first act is surely over!"

"Oh, I did not mean the fine theaters where the rich people go, but a little theater, a theater of the people — where you go when you have an evening to yourself."

A curious expression came over his face, but making sure that we knew what we were talking about, he drove rapidly to the door of a dirty and dilapidated looking house in a small side court. Though we did not expect marionette shows to be given in a very splendid auditorium, we were scarcely prepared for this, rather hesitating to enter.

The door was divided, the lower half closed, the upper open. Inside hung a short, flapping black curtain, while about the door loitered a little group of street urchins who dodged up when the doorkeeper's back was turned, to peep eagerly into the slit of brilliance that revealed the stage between the upper edge of the half-door and the bottom of the curtain.

As we, too, peeped, Gualterio whispered that here was a theater whose audience numbered the very poorest and the humblest in the city, adding apologetically: "Perhaps it is too poor for Excellency. I have been here and enjoyed the performance, but Excellency is accustomed to the fine theaters, and the Signora may not like this very well."

On the contrary, that was exactly the sort of theater we did wish to see. The glimpse we got through the open door of the auditorium however, was not reassuring; and furthermore there was not a woman present. I knew all about the custom of the Sicilian theaters, which announce two different sorts of plays —"To-night for men;" "This is a play for ladies." Naturally, seeing no sign of the more particular sex, I jumped at the conclusion that this must be a man's night. But disturbed by our conversation outside, the doorkeeper-proprietor and at least half of the audience politely arose and insisted that we should enter. With some misgivings we did so, paying two cents apiece for seats. Afterward I learned that the impresario had charged us exactly double what anyone else paid.

The seats consisted of a few hard wooden benches without any backs, and the one reserved place in the entire theater — which was a room perhaps thirty feet square with two galleries some five feet above the floor on both sides — was a single broken-backed kitchen chair perched upon one of the benches in the middle of the house. The only well dressed man in the room, who occupied it, gallantly sprang down at once, and with a delightfully courtly bow and smile assisted the protesting Signora to his place. The audience numbered about forty or fifty fisherman, peddlers, a cabman or two and a miscellaneous collection of as jovial looking pirates as

ever scuttled a ship or slit a throat. But for all their appearance, they behaved exactly like American opera-goers, and the stir that our entrance made set every tongue chattering at a lively pace.

The stage stretched across the end of the pit at a height of perhaps three or four feet above the floor, and on a rack of some kind at the left of the place where the footlights should have been, was a quantity of wilted green vegetables. Thinking of what happens to inferior actors in the rural districts here, I inquired with some anxiety if the vegetables had been laid aside for that purpose. But the man to whom I spoke, missing the joke entirely, replied with the utmost simplicity: "Oh, no, Giuseppe laid his pack there because it was too big to place between the seats."

How homelike it would seem to the weary street hawker in New York, could he but stop at the theater on his way home, and occasion no remark by leaving his left-over stock in trade at the feet of the actors for the time being.

As soon as La Signora was ensconced upon her uncertain "reserved seat," the men who sat beside me on either hand began to explain the play in what they probably considered words of one syllable. The fancily dressed young man at my right seemed impatient at the remarks of my white-haired left-hand neighbor, who smelled strongly of tar, and whose sixty years and showerbath dialect made him

both attractive and unintelligible to me. Both men talked at once and at high speed. In the meantime everyone else all over the house was talking cheerfully; and the play was proceeding as calmly as though there were no interruption. Between the two explanations, neither of which I could understand, I had considerable difficulty in catching the words of the play, which was being read by a gentleman whose lungs must have been rubber and whose throat brass. He stood back of the proscenium somewhere and bellowed or whispered in fine frenzy at every dramatic point, as the marionettes performed their astonishing evolutions.

The puppets were handsome armored figures about three feet high, clothed in glittering plate and chain armor, accoutered cap-à-pie, their shields properly blazoned and their surcoats faithful models of the garments worn by the ancient knights. Marching, filing and counter-filing, they made addresses to the accompaniment of stiff, clattering gestures, fought duels of deadly outcome with clashing weapons and rasping wires in the glare of half a dozen smoky oil lamps, and moved about easily, manipulated by the expert hands of operators who were standing in the wings. Every little while a human hand would burst into view, grotesquely gigantic compared with the puppet whose fate was in its keeping.

The play was one of the familiar favorites, repre-

The Politeama Garibaldi, one of Palermo's two greatest theaters.

senting the endeavors of invading Moors to convert Christian Sicilians to Mohammedanism, but the author was somewhat mixed in his history. Beside the Sicilians and Moors he worked in Frenchmen, and before the play was over, the story was that of a struggle between the two Christian nations, the Mohammedans obviously forgotten. The wicked, wicked Frenchmen were, of course, defeated, and their bloody schemes met with the noisy condemnation of the little crowd, while their opponents, the ancestors of these same street boys and hucksters and fishermen, won as hearty approval.

In the interval between the fourth and the last acts I had a chance to inquire of my neighbors why there were no women present. Both men regarded me with astonishment, and the younger answered first.

"Women? Women in the theater? Why, the theater is not good for them. I never bring my woman!"

Evidently a foreign woman was different, and none of the audience seemed to regard it as strange that one should be among them. As we came out into the fresh night air, Gualterio was apologetically solicitous, a little nervous as to the success of his experiment in bringing us to this particular theater. But our manifest satisfaction with our night of dissipation speedily reassured him, and all the way back to the hotel he sang *canzone* to his chunky little Arab out of pure joy and thankfulness.

IV

CATHEDRALS

IT has already been pointed out that the Easter season is an especially good time to be in Palermo. On Easter morning the great Court of the Lord before the Cathedral is a surprising picture. Upon the heavy stone balustrade enclosing it sixteen massive saints meditate benignly in the scented air. The great gray cement yard, flowers all colors of the rainbow, marble Santa Rosalia — patroness of Palermo — the huge church itself: all are bathed in the most brilliant sunshine imaginable. Words and pictures alike fail to give any adequate expression of it. The noise and unrest of the busy Corso are forgotten in this magic precinct; smiling, happy men, women and children stream through the yard, picturesque in their holiday attire; while from the windows drones the chant of the Mass, like the buzzing of a swarm of kindly bees hovering over the flowers. The white glare of the Egyptian desert is never more blinding than a Silician spring morning radiance.

Though the service calls, religion in Sicily takes small heed of the antics of foreigners, and if one

The blending of different architectural forms in the Palermo Cathedral gives it charm.

chooses to stay outside in the courtyard and take photographs, it causes not the slighest comment. The main charm of the Cathedral lies in the curious blending of its different forms of architecture — Arabic, Norman, Gothic; which produces a dashing and almost whimsical effect in its fine arcades, its rich friezes and battlements, its interlacing arches, and its airy turrets outlined against the blue sky. Two graceful flying arches connect the Cathedral with the campanile or belfry which, as is often the case, is separated from the Cathedral proper — in this instance across the street. The vast structure as a whole is the very epitome of Sicily's many sided culture and art during her high tide of glory, the Norman period. A witty Englishman has fitly remarked that the badly restored and whitewashed interior, however, is of the "railroad station type."

In the south aisle chapels, though, are the excellent tombs of the kings, the grim and silent last homes of the marvelous Frederick, that "Wonder of the World," of Henry VI, The Butcher, of Constance the Broken-Hearted, and of others. A great crimson porphyry sarcophagus holds the dust of King Roger, of whom it has been well said indeed that he was "one of the wisest, most renowned, most worthy, and most fortunate princes of his time" (Freeman). Kneeling Norman nobles carved in white marble upbear the simple, boxlike mass of porphyry upon their armored shoulders. What an

expression of the homage of the people! The simple inscription, in Latin, reads:

IN QUIET AND PEACE, ROGER, STRENUOUS DUKE AND OF SICILY FIRST KING, IS DEAD IN PANORMOS, THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY IN THE YEAR 1154.

So it would seem that we are not the first people to discover "the strenuous life!"

And King Roger's life was certainly strenuous. But it was nothing at all compared to the career of his father, who landed stealthily in Sicily by night with a handful of trusty knights and men-at-arms, captured Messina before breakfast, and stormed on through the island, felling the Saracens like so many saplings. The Norman conquest was distinguished throughout by the most impossible feats of both personal valor and consideration; the island was ready for Roger to knit together and administer when he succeeded his father, and played the rôle of lawgiver and organizer to his fiery parent's conquests. And young Roger rose even higher than his father. Where he had been Count, Roger made himself not only King of Sicily, but ruler of a considerable part of Southern Italy as well. What manner of man he was is shown by an ancient mosaic still on the wall of the church of the Martorana, a remarkable example in itself of Norman-Sicilian art. Notwith-

"A great crimson porphyry sarcophagus holds the dust of 'Roger, Strenuous Duke.'"

standing the tremendous temporal power of the Popes in those days, this descendant of the vikings refused to be crowned by the papal legate, and the mosaic represents him placing the diadem upon his head with his own hands.

The Martorana church was built by the King's High Admiral, Giorgios Antiochenos, a versatile gentleman indeed, who amused himself while on shore leave or duty by building bridges and churches, importing silk weavers and generally playing the constructive and highly intelligent official, whose good works have long outlived himself.

Throughout the island it is eminently proper to keep the key of a building as far away from its door as possible — it is the *custode* of La Martorana who gives open sesame to the Scláfani Palace. As you drive over, he ticks off its history on his bony fingers with the precious key: Built in 1330; afterward a grand hospital; to-day a barrack for the Bersaglieri or mountain riflemen. Practically the only remaining evidence of its former grandeur is a tremendous fresco attributed to a long-forgotten Flemish painter, on one of the walls of the courtyard. The fresco, measuring some eighteen feet in height by about twenty-two in length, is called *Il Trionfo della Morte,* The Triumph of Death, and its name is fully borne out by its grisly realism, as the white horse and his ruthless skeleton rider trample down those who wish to

live, and ignore the wretched who plead in vain for release from their misery. With the latter group stands the painter himself, palette and mahlstick in hand; it is said he was taken ill while a guest in the palace. Perhaps the painting commemorates his feelings during that unfortunate experience.

It is frankly ugly — there is no other word to express it — yet it still clings to the white wall and produces an astonishing effect, especially when one remembers that it is a faithful expression of the religious feeling of the epoch it stands for. While we were studying it, a well-fed American-in-a-hurry, evidently a person of importance Baedekering through Sicily, rushed into the court, asked abruptly if that were the great picture, thrust both hands into his pockets and, with feet wide apart, appraised it a few moments in patent disgust. It costs about a *lira* and a half — something like thirty cents of our money — to see the fresco. Pulling out a handful of loose change to pay the custodian, the stranger glanced first at his hand, then back at the painting.

"Thirty cents! Thirty cents — that's exactly what it looks like!" he exploded, and was off before we could get our breaths.

That Palermo had queer taste in the old days is indicated by the Scláfani fresco; and further evidence is not lacking in the crypts of a Capuchin monastery, a short distance outside the Porta Nuova.

The vaults, long ago used as a burial place by the wealthier families of the city, contain at present some eight thousand embalmed bodies. This subway full of mummies is divided into several sections, the men and women segregated from each other and from the monks and priests, who have a gallery apart. Some of the bodies are in coffins or caskets of various sorts, but many have been hung up by the neck in cords like hangman's nooses. Some skulls are entirely fleshless, while others are partially covered. Hands whose fingers have shrunk to black bits of petrifaction hang loosely from rotting gloves which now appear several sizes too large. Heads have slipped back to stare up at the cobwebbed ceiling, turned sidewise with most diabolical leers, moved forward as though to combat the visitor. Not a single skull is expressionless, even if devoid of flesh. Some are jocose, some piously sad, some morose, some menacing and grim.

Within the artillery barrack a little farther out, is a ragged tower some thirty feet high that represents the ancient villa of La Cuba. An Arabic frieze about the bare exterior suggests the residence of some haughty old Emir of Palermo. The iconoclastic archæologists, however, have shattered the popular belief by deciphering the inscription to prove that no Saracen ever lived there, but that the mansion was erected in 1183 by the grandson

of Roger, King William II, "The Good," of whose reign one chronicler of the period wrote: "There was more security then, in the thickets of Sicily than in the cities of other kingdoms." Modesty, though, could scarcely have been the most conspicuous of that monarch's many virtues, for the inscription reads: "In the Name of God, clement, merciful, give heed. Here halt and admire. Behold the illustrious dwelling of the most illustrious of the kings of the earth, William II."

Tired out one night after a long day following the hounds through the forests outside Palermo, this same King William II, "The Good," lay down to sleep on a hill overlooking the city. And in his sleep, he dreamed: Out of the glades floated the shining figure of the Virgin, mysterious and inspiring, telling the awestruck monarch that the church he had sworn to build for her must be erected on that very spot. Slowly the dazzling vision faded, and when he awoke William named the hill Mon Reale — Royal Mount — at once beginning to prepare for the most splendid church in Sicily, a house of prayer worthy of both its divine patroness and its royal founder.

In 1174 the actual construction began, and eight years later, thanks to the pious aid of the King's mother, Margaret of Aragon, the Duomo of Monreale was solemnly consecrated. It was, however, unfinished outside, and to this day its barren

"The Monreale Cathedral rises like a fortress before the town."

exterior hints nothing of its interior magnificence.

Around the Cathedral sprang up a populous little city of jammed-together houses along constricted, hilly streets, and eight centuries have not changed the town appreciably. It is possible to ascend by tram this crested slope upon whose brow the Middle Ages still reign. Unfortunately, the cars are not personally conducted to stop at the best viewpoints, so it is better, though more expensive, to take a cab.

Once in a while in Europe the recognition of class distinction grips an American with a strangle-hold. That day in the Monreale tram it seized me, when a fat, overdressed middle-class woman of forty or so began to give herself more airs than a duchess. With her little son, she was taking up room enough for four ordinary people, when a spotlessly neat old peasant woman, with a decent murmur of apology, sat down in the half-vacant space alongside. The bourgeoise flared like a Sans Gene, jabbed at her parcels brusquely, and told her loudly not to intrude upon her betters. It was then that I wished for a second-class car, to save the old woman from such gratuitous effrontery.

The Cathedral rises like a fortress before the town; its main doors — between two massive square towers, giving upon a dusty little square — are rich bronze leaves full of low-reliefs from Old Testament history. The first impression on entering is of a dazzling blaze of golden light, beating upon and

beaten back from golden walls with stunning effect, in which the details of design and ornamentation, for all their clarity and importance, are so marvelously subordinated that they but add to the glowing display. Though the superb glass mosaics cover an area which Baedeker — with "Made-in-Germany" accuracy — declares to be 70,400 square feet, the lower walls are all pure white marble, with an upper border and slender bright-colored bands which run perpendicularly through the spotless white like the embroidery upon a holy robe. The vast nave and aisles are light and airy. There is complete absence of any artificial decoration — no tawdry, meaningless images, no hideous ex-votos to distract the eye. Harmony is the keynote of every inch of the decorations; from pave to rooftree there is not one inconsistent or jarring note.

The great dome of the main apse is completely filled by a bust of the Christ in the same glittering, marvelous, indescribably mellow glass mosaic that covers thousands of square feet upon the walls. It is the face of the man traditional, the visage of one whose appearance has been handed down from father to son since the beginning, the likeness of a founder, a prophet. And the still, solemn wonder of it fills one like the recurrent chords of a great and stately harmony. It is the one feature that stands out high above the blinding golden haze.

"Not a jarring note"— and yet, who that has

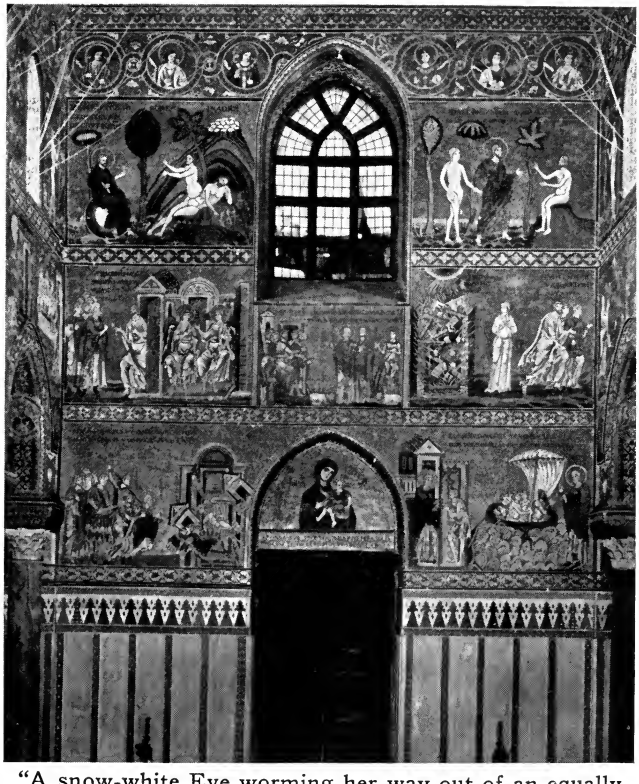
seen those forty Old Testament mosaic tableaux on the upper walls can help recalling his first start of amazement at their literalness. They speak a dialect of art; they translate the Bible stories that the uneducated medieval mind could not read, into something that everybody could understand. A snow-white Eve worming her way out of an equally pallid dreamer's side, and afterward decorously introduced by God Himself to Adam, is startling enough. But how about Noah, draped by a modest son, while in the vinous slumber brought about through a too generous testing of the liquid sunshine of his own vines? No details of these ancient histories was too insignificant or too broad for the artificers to weave lovingly into their master-work; and nothing could better illustrate the pure simplicity of the medieval mind to which anything Biblical was holy, and fit for presentation to all the world.

One of the most noticeable features of the Duomo is the clearness and delicacy of every detail. In St. Mark's in Venice, time has blurred and defaced almost everything and the better part of the mosaics is crumbling into soft decay; but here in Monreale the delineation is so vivid and sharp, each color so soft and pure in tone, it seems as though the master workman had laid down his tools but yesterday to pronounce his *chef d'œuvre* complete.

We are apt to think of cloisters as gloomy, for-

bidding places, where half frozen monks with blue lips and hair shirts shiver about their religious tasks and wish — if they are human! — they had never been born. Of course, there are such cloisters — but not here in Monreale, where the glorious sunshine bathes all that is left of the monastery King William erected for his Benedictine monks beside the Cathedral. Pleasant cloisters these, warm and blooming and fragrant with ozone and the perfume of the flowers. And very pleasant, indeed, very much worth while, must have been the lives of the jovial Benedictine brothers during the high and mighty reign of William the Good! Even after seven hundred years the silent arcades are lovely, filled yet with slender columns about which climb ribbons of mosaic and garlands of living vines to set off the different capitals — the finest examples of twelfth century carving in the world. Every capital is different, and almost every one tells a story. The visitor can unravel for himself ancient legend or Bible story, picking out old familiar figures here and there in the mellow marble; or if he chooses, he can meditate upon the curious fact that the Normans were producing this glorious work in the island of the sun long before Giotto was born.

Monreale's streets are rugged and steep, but very clean and decent. The Monrealese, instead of naming their Corso for Italy's first king, have named it for the town's most famous son, the seventeenth



"A snow-white Eve worming her way out of an equally pallid dreamer's side is startling."

century painter Pietro Novelli, whose studies of the monks are moving figures, clearly establishing him as the foremost materialist Sicily ever produced. On the Corso is Grado Salvatore's three-boy-power macaroni factory, a queer, rambling, black sort of a cavern, lighted only by the front door. A macaroni-machine looking for all the world like Benjamin Franklin's old hand printing press occupies the front on one side; and Salvatore himself sits in the little blue and white tiled sink before it, fanning and snipping the wriggly paste as the boys twist the screw and force it out in long strings. On the other side of the partition is a cluttered-up salesroom where every imaginable shape of macaroni and spaghetti decorates the shelves. Behind all is the mixing-room, joyously dark; and you may handle the doughcakes to make sure they are pure and clean! No matter if your hands are very dirty, after your sightseeing; the good folk of Monreale will take no particular harm after what they have doubtless experienced at other hands. None the less, as a general thing the interior of a Sicilian paste shop compares favorably with that of an American bakery, and the workers themselves are quite immaculate, with soft, clean, pink hands like a woman's.

After it comes from the press, the macaroni is cut into six-foot lengths and hung up outside the shop to dry in the sunshine. By the time it has

collected sufficient dust and germs to make it stiff — two or three days are usually long enough — it is cut into package lengths and sold. In Southern Italy it often occupies a good part of a roadway, or even hangs over a busy coalyard; but in Sicily both its manufacture and sale are cleaner and more wholesome; and the macaroni made in Termini is famous for its quality. Whether it is something in its manufacture, or some subtle quality of the flour from which it is made, the Sicilian *pasta* seems generally to have a flavor and a delicacy lacking in the Italian variety.

The three juvenile assistants — boys who had the haunting native eyes of soft yet gleaming brown dusk, lustrous as old Marsala wine full of the sun — did not seem in the least to mind the drudgery of turning their endless screw. But while we were handling doughcakes in the black backroom with genial Salvatore, they stopped "twisting the twist" and somehow managed to spread the news throughout the entire village that there were strangers within their gates; and a crowd of small boys, beggars, and others who seemed to have no occupation gathered at the front door, demanding vociferously that they be photographed, chaffing each other and us, and arranging themselves according to their own ideas of a picturesque group.

While there was no stately ceremony to welcome us, the freedom of the town was clearly ours after

that picture taking. Nobody asked for so much as a copper penny, and gruff, cheery voices called after us heartily: "*Buon viaggio! A rivederci, signori!* Good-by! Come back again!" And Monreale has been branded as a town "whose beggars are very importunate!"

Bad as the Sicilian beggars are supposed to be, we experienced less annoyance from them throughout the island than from their pertinacious brethren of Naples and the mainland generally.

At the brow of the hill is a terrace garden, the "Eden Restaurant"— where by all means you must take tea. The little establishment amuses rather than disappoints; and though it scarcely justifies its grandiose title, it commands a view that no doubt suggested the name to its proprietor. Falling away from its feet, the hill cascades down in great billows to the cool green and orange sea of the Conca d'Oro. And when the trolley car turns the shoulder of the hill, in Palermo — misty and dun in the gathering dark — lights like jewels flash out in scintillating ripples that spread and widen and sparkle as you race down the dusty mountain road, leaving medieval Monreale silent and spectral behind.

V

PALACES AND PEOPLE

"PALACE" in Italian is a flexible and generic term, and the examples of "palaces" one sees in Sicily give an entirely new sense of the elasticity of the Italian language, and the freedom with which the people use it. *Palazzo* means really any building or structure of any sort where wealthy, a noble, or a royal family lives now, or ever has lived; and some of these structures are as remarkable for their disreputable appearance as others are for their beauty and richness, resembling nothing in the world so much as American tenement houses. One such is unforgettable — a dingy white, square, four-storied building with green shutters and a large central doorway, owned and occupied by a titled and wealthy family whose members move in the highest society throughout the island. The ground floor is taken up entirely by stables, the servants, and rats as large as kittens. The mezzanine floor above is given over to two insurance companies, whose signs cover a considerable part of their story. Above, the really noble family lives in stately fashion.

It was when idling up the Nile that we first met

the older son of the family. Becoming friendly on desert and river, the Sicilian confided in me his desire for a northern alliance, readily admitting the difficulty of reconciling his fiery temper with that of any wife he might choose among his own people.

"I'd like an American," he declared, shrugging, "but if I can't get her, I'll take an English girl. With cool northern blood in their veins, my children might well show the virtue and strength which has made you Anglo-Saxons what you are. You see, here in Palermo I am a wealthy man. I am 'Your Grace,' 'Your Highness.' But in New York or London or Paris I am only one of 'those poor Sicilians.' I should like to marry a wife whose income, together with mine, would enable us to live as becomes the nobility in those cities."

I made as diplomatic a reply as possible, but I am very much afraid that the gentleman left me feeling that Americans are after all a cold and unappreciative people, though he did express a desire to continue the acquaintance in Palermo. When we reached that city, we learned from various sources of the aggravating inhospitality of the romancing nobility, one of whose favorite pleasantries consists of ardent solicitations to foreigners to call, and the presenting of cards which, upon scrutiny, are found to bear either no address or only the Italian legend for "General Delivery."

Nevertheless, to our surprise, he called on us the

morning after his return from an extended trip through the Holy Land, and learning that we intended to leave the next day, insisted that we drive out with him that afternoon. About three o'clock we were informed with great éclat that "His Excellency the Egregious Lord X —" did us the honor to await us. Ready at the door to bow us out to the emblazoned barouche with its black-liveried coachman and lackey hovered an unsuspected congregation of obsequious hotel employés. Many of them we had never before seen; none of them had hitherto deigned to notice our daily peregrinations in Gualterio's coach of state. But now that one of the dear nobility they reverence almost as much as in medieval times recognized us socially, we were quite plainly persons of consideration. Our splendor, however, was short-lived. We had time only for a swift visit to a handsome club with extensive grounds, to the Caffè Massimo for a taste of its famous green-almond ices, and to the Giardino Inglese for a glimpse at its botanic charms, for we had an engagement for tea at the American Consulate.

It had not taken us long to arrive at the conclusion that Consul Bishop was a very Bishop of Consuls, and it was due to his kindly interest and hints that we enjoyed considerable intimacy with the life of the people, and also had a good opportunity to see under actual conditions not only the delights of

being a foreign representative of the United States, but also the drawbacks of such a position. Incidentally, it is, generally speaking, both wise and pleasant to introduce one's self at the Consulate immediately on arriving in a foreign city where a stay of any length is comtemplated. In case any untoward incident should arise later, such acquaintance with the consul would prove of inestimable advantage, and would save unpleasant and wearisome investigations of one's right to American citizenship and his character. And if the consul prove, as is now generally the case, a man of parts and charm, the result will prove most happy for the visitor who desires to see and know the best the city can afford.

The royal residence in Palermo, rising from the Piazza Vittoria, the highest point in the city, is scarcely more remarkable than many of the private *palazzi.* Ordinary as Palace and Piazza are now, in medieval times this was the fortified citadel: a place of arms and chivalry, of turrets and bastions, of fortresslike buildings forming the defensive key to the city. But little have Time and the barbarous restorer left. First comes an arcaded court, then two flights of marble stairs, and then room after room, tastelessly over-decorated. One marvels at the dullness of royalties who could so slavishly consent to the stuffy vulgarity of these apartments, when before them was a model in the room declared to

have been King Roger's own. Its mosaics have faded not a whit in the long centuries; design and color hold soft and true to the walls, and this kingly chamber in its dignity and splendor shames the tawdry display of the monarchs who came after. Time spent in such rooms is wasted.

The Cappella Palatina, or royal chapel, is a tiny temple richly embellished with marvelous mosaics, but so smothered by the encroachments of the formless Palace that half its beauty is lost for lack of light. It is not even a structure by itself, but a part of the main building, which King Roger added about 1132 in honor of Saint Peter, to whom he dedicated it. Perhaps, because of its position, or perhaps by design, the nave and aisles were left almost unlighted; but seventy-five feet above, the architect pierced the dome with eight apertures, to flood apse and chancel with a glorious nimbus of sunshine, which finds a fit mirror in gleaming walls inlaid with golden glass.

The illumination is, however, confined entirely to the choir save for an hour or so in the morning, when the sidewalks glow with the genius of their artist creators — and fade as one watches into shadowy old tapestry. At first it is a darkly mysterious place, indistinctly peopled by spectral figures on every side. Then slowly, as the eyes habituate themselves to the gloom, out from the mellow background lean strong, stern figures. Saints and angels pray, plead, wing their way across the walls;

"The Cappella Palatina . . . a tiny temple richly embellished with marvelous mosaics."

patriarchs and prophets act out the stirring chronicles of the Old Testament and New. High above the choir and tribune, halved by the circumambient light, a majestic, supramundane figure, cross-crowned with the diadem of supreme sacrifice, holds forth the Book upon whose snowy page blazes the royal message in golden letters that need no flame of fire to bid them shine — *'Εγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόςμου*: "I am the Light of the world."

The single-mindedness of medieval artists is always astonishing. Anything from the Bible was apparently meet for the walls of this sumptuous house of prayer, which, instead of being a mere bit of florid decorative architecture belonging to the King, is a vivid pictorial history. Very realistic is the scene at Lazarus' tomb, where a man, with head turned away, holds his nose with one hand as he tilts the tightly swaddled body to an upright position. A little farther along, on the same wall, the artist represented Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist in a dark stream which flows past in snow white ripples. John is sheltered by a section of bright olive-green wall, and at their feet cherub heads peep through the wavelets. All the figures, though very stiff and formal, as might be expected of work in such intractable material, are admirably done, and the faces in particular are expressively stern and reposeful.

Restoration has not harmed the chapel, and both

it and its decorations and furniture remain intact — the magnificent mosaic pulpit, in the Lombard style; the giant candelabrum beside it, about fifteen feet high, a superb piece of pure Byzantine sculpture with a wealth of mythological details, which strikes a strange pagan note in this Christian church; and the stalactite ceiling, carved wood of the best period of Saracenic workmanship, much after the style of the ceilings of the Alhambra at Granada. The Saracen glorified it with magnificent star-shaped coffers, geometrical designs, Cufic lettering — his religion allowed him no image of anything in heaven above or the earth beneath — and the less prescribed Norman placed his saints and virgins in the divisions of the stars. Yet the work was done with such rare skill — so thoroughly were the Saracens artists first and Mohammedans afterward — that nowhere is there a clash of motive or execution. It fills one with the delight of the East, the subtle perception of masses of color shaded and mellowed by time.

That, unfortunately, cannot be said of Palermo's other royal residence, the little Summer palace of La Favorita, built by the Bourbon King Ferdinand IV under the shoulder of Monte Pellegrino, and evidently his conception of a Chinese nobleman's residence. Striking a jangling note of color in the landscape, it stands boldly forth a great rubricated initial upon the green and gold of the smiling Conca d'Oro. Surely there never was such another freak

of royal fancy! In their search for the bizarre, King Ferdinand's architects and decorators succeeded in cramming into one architectural nightmare the styles of a dozen realms and epochs; and the result is a queer hodge-podge of no artistic value, but of mirth-provoking interest to the traveler. Only Mr. Kipling's famous phrase can describe it — "A sort of a giddy harumfrodite!"

In the King's suite, Japanese artisans may have decorated the bedchamber, some forgotten artist from hundred-gated Thebes the ceiling of the anteroom, and then with supreme disregard for these exotic effects, the royal humorist — if he were such! — must have turned over the beautifying of his dressing room to a commonplace decorator of modern times, and permitted him to do his worst.

The dining table, a huge circular affair, is the *piéce de résistance* of the whole palace. Nothing queerer — or more entirely up-to-date and practical — has ever made its appearance in the most recently constructed American houses. Standing upon a massive cylindrical shaft that runs straight through to the kitchen in the basement, the table is a sort of combination dumbwaiter-quicklunch counter. At each place a silver tray, imbedded in a small shaft, connects below with the main trunk, and these trays, operated automatically with the larger central charger, answer djinn-like by serving a whole course

at once, smoking hot, when the royal host rubs the button at his place. Slow eaters might find it somewhat disconcerting to turn from conversation back to — an empty black hole before them! But perhaps King Ferdinand was not a joker.

Every room has some freakish combination peculiarly its own, some in Turkish, Arabic or Pompeiian motives, and one huge reception salon in hand-painted silk with Chinese mandarins in full ceremonial costume upon the walls. Above all are the luxurious smoking and lounging rooms, and of course, a wide, tiled veranda on each floor affording sweeping views on either hand.

To the Sicilian in his blissful ignorance, La Favorita appears a masterpiece, the people generally regarding the *château* with the reverence of simplicity. Indeed, poverty and ignorance are the mainsprings of life for a majority of the people. Nor is ignorance confined to the masses. A Sicilian doctor in Palermo, himself graduated from one of our greatest universities and therefore an exception to the rule, told me in all seriousness that a majority of the "society people" of the capital could read nothing more difficult than the daily papers. "They often forget how to spell their own names"— you don't wonder much at that when you see some of the names! — "and their notions of first aid in sickness or injury are barbarous and medieval. When my wife and I first began to practise in Palermo, we tried to help

the people with clubs and societies of a semi-educational nature. But we had to drop it all. You can't begin education with the adults."

This was recognized a century ago by one of the foremost patriots of Sicily, the Prince of Castlenuovo, who was one of the prime movers in lifting his island out of the medievalism of Ferdinand's régime. Out in this region of the suburbs — known as *I Colli* (The Tops), and dotted with splendid villas — and not far distant from Ferdinand's Favorita, the Prince established a model farm, kitchen garden and dairy where the boys of both rich and poor families are taught by experts how to get the most out of the ground without having recourse to the antiquated methods of their forefathers. And if one may judge from the attitude of the young students and the eagerness with which they display their knowledge, the big Institute is still proving most successful.

The boy who showed us about said proudly that when he finished his schooling he was to be overseer of a big plantation up country, much like the one spreading around us. America had no attractions for him. In his own words: "My father has taught me to love Sicily very much, *signore*. He makes much money in his business in N'ova York. But I will be patriot. I stay here. I study. By and by I can help my poor country to grow rich!"

Gardens and boys are interesting, but the stock-

yards of the school are a revelation. Goats and kids, sheep and lambs, magnificent bulls and kine and soft-eyed, frisky little calves have each their separate yards, all immaculate; and in the neat brick addition to the cow-stables is a model piggery comfortably full of grunters, who seem to appreciate quarters where a fresh handkerchief dropped in an occupied pen can be recovered quite unsoiled. The school dairy is as complete as it is wholesome and clean; but you are not likely to go far outside until another phase of the milk industry appears — a donkey carrying large jute panniers full of goats'-milk potcheese, or *ricotta fresca.* The whey oozing from the bags and the donkey's sweat gather a crust of dust over all. Don't manifest a talkative interest — unless you wish to have the peasant merchant urge you to try "just a taste, *signori!*"

Among the splendid estates of *I Colli,* the Villa Sofia is one of the finest, and the genius of its creator, a wealthy Briton named Whitaker, shows what may be accomplished by perfect taste when man and Nature work together harmoniously to draw the most and best from the breast of the warm and generous earth. Villa, by the way, is almost as flexible a term in Italian as palace. It means not merely a house for summering, but grounds as well as mansion; and many of the houses quite equal the so-called palaces. Another estate worthy a visit is the Villa of the late Count Tasca — this is out Mon-

reale way — who laid out the grounds as an experimental agricultural station, and who was one of the first men in Sicily to farm on a scientific basis. But he dearly loved royalty, too. On the "basement" door of the house a bronze tablet impressively records with a wealth of adjectives the fact that Queen (Dowager) Margharita once took luncheon here with the delighted owner, and that ever since the premises have had an added value and charm because of her Majesty's visit.

Occupying the monastery of the suppressed and exiled Filippini monks, the Palermo Museum — a vivid epitomization of all Sicily's various periods and renascences of art and culture — is given a distinct character of its own by the crumbling though palatial home housing it, worthier far to be called a palace than many of the *palazzi* of the nobility. You are apt to be disappointed on entering, however, when the courteous guardian of the gate informs you that you will be "permitted" to leave your cameras with the incumbrance clerk across the entrance hall. In vain you plead, catching sight of some of the untrammeled beauties of the first courtyard just beyond. But the guard is uncompromisingly honest; you enter in without so much as the moral support of a sunshade.

The little court is a veritable wild Eden. Flowering vines drip down over the edges of the walls and twist about the pillars; a single prickly pear rears

its fat donkey-cars above the cornice and glories in the sunshine; great bursts of foliage clothe in green the joints of the corners. In the center of the courtyard a low stone fountain basin full of brilliant plants affords a picturesque foothold for a sixteenth century Triton drinking deep from a conch. And over on the left, just beyond the archway that gives an entrancing vista of the second court beyond, a tender vine wreathes completely about the tragic column topped with a cross of iron from the Piazza dei Vespri, in which it once stood to mark the spot where some of the French who fell in the massacre were buried.

Sidewalks and columns, cornice and roof are a museum in themselves, decorated with quaint bits of ancient and medieval architecture, some actually built in as parts of the cloister, others arranged in artistic abandon about the shade-dappled walks. But why puzzle out ancient inscriptions on crumbling marbles when the second court beckons, like a coquettish woman, from the stern lines of the archway? Shake off the persistent employé who offers to be your mentor, and pass through into a tropical palm garden where the luxuriance of the foliage almost hides the antiquities. No attempt has been made to curb the riotous propensities of the plants. Palm tree and shrub, flowers in beds and rows, vines and creepers give the brilliant court the air of a Spanish patio. But you have really come to see

the antiquities, and gradually getting back your sense of proportion, you look about.

Directly before you is a queer, somewhat battered thing of dark stone, looking more like a bathtub than anything else. It proves to be a sarcophagus; one of the rare prehistoric Sikel monuments, of inestimable value in studying the customs and culture of the vanished people, whom the Greeks so effectually absorbed that the only trace we have of their mode of life is in a few such scattered pieces as this from the tombs, though even these are often of doubtful authenticity.

Papyrus reeds, descendants of the paper-plants imported into Sicily long centuries ago by some forgotten Arab, rear their puffball heads from the fountain, a little grove of living feather dusters. Who knows but that the thrifty Saracen caretaker may have used them to dust out his immaculate mosques and public baths?

So varied and comprehensive a collection as the Museum contains has required consummate skill and taste to arrange coherently, and throughout the entire building the director, Professor Salinas, has done his work so admirably that each group's significance is fully apparent. In the various halls are quaint old pictures and triptyches so ugly that their very repulsiveness spells the perfect expression of the art of their time, marvelous coins which gave Sicily the reputation of leading the world in numismatics

during the Greek era, and most important of all, the metopes.

Carven slabs from the temple friezes — what a story they tell of the primitive and ardent culture of the early Greeks perched upon their twin hills at Selinus, beside the sounding deep! One whole hall is lined with them, arranged symmetrically in series, speaking even to-day with the voice of that mystic lore which, to understand, reveals ancient Sicily. And though individual carvings excel them in precision and beauty, as a series denoting the exact progress of Greek Sicilian art from its crudest to its most perfected form, the metopes are unsurpassed.

Moreover, these metopes from the temples of Selinus recall a story so tragic, so amazing, that comparisons fail and mere words avail little to picture its horror. Selinus was still young, and the wealthy and expanding Selinuntines were still engaged in building their tremendous temples in 409 B.C. when Hannibal Gisgon with his Carthaginians fell upon the city with a ferocity that is even yet appalling in its details, butchering the inhabitants ruthlessly, and expunging the city from the book of the living. But Hannibal was in a hurry. He had no time to spare to destroy structures of such problematical value as unfinished temples, since he purposed to avenge the defeat and death of his grandfather, Hamilcar, at Himera on the north shore of the island. Giving

the temples and the desolate city over to the owl and the locust, he hurried northward, flushed and confident. So it was that the partially completed homes of the bright gods remained until the shock of earthquake hurled them crashing down into chaos.

Centuries elapsed in the silence of desolation before the metopes, which Freeman so aptly calls "the choicest offerings Selinuntine piety could offer the immortal gods," were picked carefully by the archæologists from the ruins and ranged upon the plaster walls of the Museum, showing the evolution of the art from the weird, uncouth shapes of the earlier metopes to the finished later shapes of gods and heroes and men. Yet so rapid was the development of the sculptors that within a century the first metopes had become curiosities, and the later work so superior it is hard to realize it was produced in the same age. And one cannot but wonder what might have been the fullest flower of this strong, budding genius at Selinus, had not the insatiable African smitten it with his blighting breath of war.

One palace that has fallen upon evil days, after as picturesque a past as any building in the island can boast, is the lofty home of the Barons of the Chiaramonte. In the fourteenth century, during the Aragonese period, these and other nobles became so powerful that no systematic administration of Sicily by the government was possible, and the palace — usually called Lo Steri — is an excellent manifesta-

tion of the Chiaramonte power. Grim and stiff outside, it still preserves within something of the magnificence of the days when knights in armor clanked through its lofty halls and ladies in quaint head-dresses and billowing skirts peeped through the folds of the arras and tapestries to watch the wheels of intrigue and government go round. Many a dark tale could these old halls tell. Andrew Chiaramonte, the last of his line to rule, was dragged hence to the block in 1392, and the palace became the court, with justice taking the place of chicanery. Later on the Spanish viceroys made it their official residence, and in 1600 it became the seat of the dreaded Spanish Inquisition. In the inner courtyard is the private chapel, where no doubt many of the Inquisition's bitter and fruitless tragedies had their inception. The whole structure smells of blood. To-day, as the Dogana, or Custom House, it is as useful as ever — and for the Sicilian importer no doubt still a palace of most unpleasant inquisition.

King William the Bad, King Roger's son, and father of William II, the Good — who built the Cathedral of Monreale — called his favorite palace in Arabic La Zisa, the Beloved or the Splendid. It is of distinctly Moorish character — bare walls unrelieved by projecting decorations of any sort, with Oriental doorways, pointed-arch windows, and a heavy battlemented frieze. In King William I's

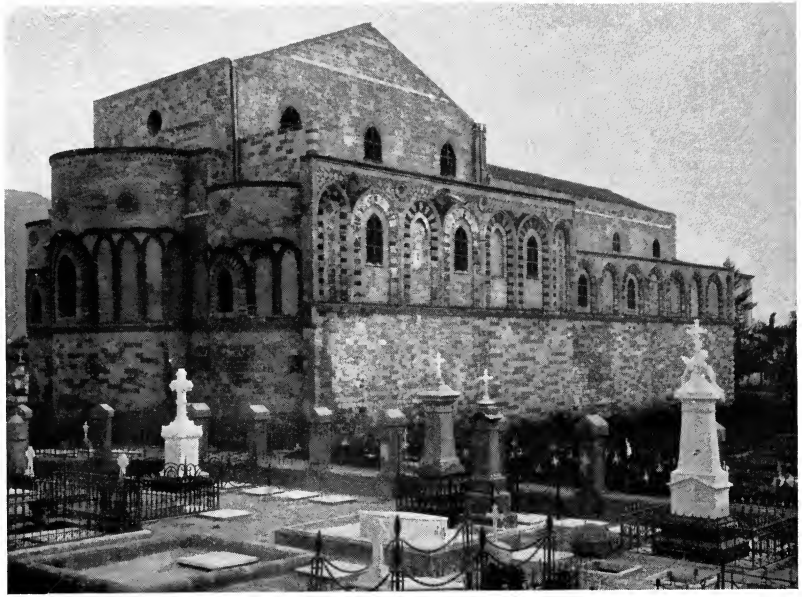
time the palace eunuchs were almost as powerful as they were at Constantinople, and most of the palace officials were Saracens, which is perhaps one reason for the architecture of the structure. William himself lived the idle, sensual life of a voluptuary, and toward the end of his reign, with Oriental indifference, shut himself up in his splendid house and refused any bad news.

It is not hard to see in the mutilated grandeur of the main hall why he fell a victim to the insidious charm of the East, for more than any other place in Palermo this chamber breathes of "Araby the blest." The ceiling is a great stalactite vault: a little fountain still bubbles down over steps of mosaic; and it runs across the floor through square pools exactly as do those other similar fountains in the Alhambra at Granada. Only the frescoes on the walls are modern, replacing ancient panels of marble which once embellished the villa. No — there was one other modern touch: a flock of tiny white wax ducks, belonging to the caretaker's little daughter, bobbing serenely about in the rippled pool!

VI

THE PLAIN OF PANORMOS

A SHORT distance outside the Porta Sant' Ágata — one of the southern gates — on the edge of the rolling Conca d'Oro, is the Campo di Santo Spirito or cemetery, a lovely greensward full of curious tombs and graves and vaults. Its chapel is old and bare, a relic of the Cistercian monastery established on the same spot in 1173 by Archbishop Walter of the Mill, the English mentor of King William the Good. Doubtless the Archbishop had much to do with the King's goodness, since his father was William the Bad.. When the church was restored in 1882, the greatest care was taken to preserve at least the spirit of the prelate's design, with the result that among these Sicilian graves under the matchless blue of the Sicilian sky there stands an English church of the Middle Ages. Close beside it on the 31st of March, 1282, just at the tap of the bell for evening prayer, began the terrible massacre of the Sicilian Vespers, while in the city near by the great bell of San Giovanni boomed out the knell of all the Frenchmen in the island and the downfall of the heartless House of Anjou.



The bells of the church of the Holy Spirit boomed the knell of the French in the Sicilian Vespers.

Many of the French who perished in that orgy of slaughter have been buried here.

This massacre has often been declared a premeditated rising, but it was really a popular spontaneous outbreak which began at the vesper hour on Easter Tuesday. The church of the Santo Spirito was then a favorite place for worship, and the people on this occasion were moving quietly between it and the city when some two hundred Frenchmen appeared among them, and alarmed the natives greatly by their more than usually offensive remarks and bearing. In the throng was an attractive young Sicilian woman with her lover. Unprovoked, a French soldier addressed an insulting remark to her. Her escort naturally resented this, and instantly all the bitter ignominy and the wrongs the patient islanders had endured at the hands of their French oppressors boiled over. Though practically unarmed, the Sicilians attacked the French so fearlessly that of the two hundred present, not a single one escaped. The church bells sounded a wild alarm, and yelling "*Morte ai francesi!* Death to the French!" the blood-maddened mob streamed back into town, killing on sight, storming palaces and houses, and dispatching even those Sicilians known or suspected to have friendly relations with the Angevins. Brief as the struggle in Palermo was, no less than two thousand French perished; and the brand the Palermitans had kindled swept its fiery way through the island until every

Frenchman was either dead or a fugitive. And though the War of the Vespers that followed this summary vengeance lasted for years, the rule of the House of Anjou was over so far as Sicily was concerned.

Farther out from the city the beautiful precincts of the old Minorite monastery and church of Santa Maria di Gesù ramble along the steep side of one of those emerald hills that bound the Conca d' Oro. Long pebbled paths lead up from the gate through cool green vistas dotted with stately trees and headstones; and, with a pride which is the more curious in a Minorite — whose pledges are of humility and poverty — the monk who lets one in explains that this cemetery has never been used by any except the wealthiest of Palermo's noble families. Many of the graves are decorated with huge wreaths of artificial flowers in dishpan-like tin cases, glass-covered and frequently containing faded photographs of the deceased, the men appearing very stiff and uncomfortable in their best clothes, tall collars, and derby hats. Some of the " pans " are a yard in diameter by about eight inches deep, the wreaths draped with plentiful streamers of black upon which are stamped in gold letters suitable inscriptions and the names of the departed.

The monks were chanting sleepily in a choir gallery as we entered the sacristy of the little church, to examine some interesting unfinished cartoons upon

the walls for frescoes never executed — our guide an amazing friendly young brother whose face was a replica of Giotto's unforgettable fresco of Dante in the Florence Bargello. Fra Giacomo, he called himself; and his interest in the world generally, his simple attitude of dangerous curiosity in everything not connected with the cloistered life, made us think of Hichens' sorry hero — if hero he could be called! — in the "Garden of Allah." Neither he, nor any of the other monks with whom we came into contact anywhere in either Sicily or Italy, had the spiritual austerity that is so marked a characteristic of the Spanish monk; nothing at all of the bearing or atmosphere that instantly stamps a man as either genuinely consecrated or fanatic — according to the eye with which he is seen.

This lack of spirituality came out strongly when, wholly ignoring the service going on, Fra Giacomo dragged a confessional with a dreadful clatter across the tiled floor to serve as a camera-stand from which he insisted that I photograph the poor, bare little altar with its tawdry image beneath in a glass case. At each outburst of the rasping din, the monks aloft — seemingly quite undismayed by the sacrilege — kindly sang with greater zeal that they might not hear our profane noises.

From the monastery a zig-zag path leads to the very top of the hill, where two once highly venerated female saints had an altar and a hermitage on a

fine bit of bluff overlooking the Conca d'Oro. Here the country unfolds below like a huge military map, the roads written with white ink, the sea in sapphire, the Conca d'Oro in emerald and topaz, and the city in agate. Far in the distance, beyond Palermo, Monte Pellegrino looms soft and vague, its square shoulders half hidden in bluish haze, with the sea fading so delicately into the sky that often the horizon line is lost. Nestling among the lemons in the foreground are large chimneys, the sign visible of an irrigation system nearly a thousand years old, of Saracenic origin. Hills and plain alike murmur with flowing water, for wherever the Arab went he turned barrens into gardens, planted and tended and improved, and devised irrigation systems so complete and permanent that — considering his resources and the times — our own watering schemes in the West seem puerile and scattering. To-day in the Conca d'Oro about an hundred steam engines pump up water from artesian wells and subterranean rivers, while conduits and water-wheels utilize every drop that issues from the springs. So fertile is the soil that this irrigation has increased the yield from seven to one hundred and fifty dollars an acre.

There seems to be something in the atmosphere of the Gesù, some subtle ether of sympathy, perhaps, that makes the visitor's presence on the hill known to all the children round. At any rate, they pop out of the earth, and as you come

down from the hermitage at the very top of the steep to the main buildings, you are pretty certain to hear a scratching noise on the low stone wall at one side of the road. Naturally you look over. At the cleft upper end of a long pole a spray of lemon blossoms scrapes along the rough wall; at the lower end, some twenty-five feet below in a grove, an attractive child clamors to you for "*Due soldi mangiare* — Two cents, to eat!"

As we were leaving the monastery, "Dante's" interest in worldly affairs came out strongly once more. Pointing to my camera, he asked plaintively: "Have you a plate left for me?"

I let him choose his own pose and his own background. With the skill of an artist he selected a stone step flanked by lofty cypresses, and taking out his breviary immediately lost himself in meditation which required some imagination to consider holy. The photograph made, he spoke again, his wistful expression intensified.

"Now will you please register the package? Many tourists have been here and taken pictures, several of myself. They all promised to send me copies. I know they did so," he sighed regretfully, with a charity which would have been ludicrous had it not been so childishly unaffected and sincere, "but I never got a single one. Oh, but the mails are bad here!"

Genial Gualterio, for all his eagerness to serve us

to our best advantage, could not forget his own advantage once in a while, and cheerily singing on his box, drove us far out of our way, at last drawing rein before the mouth of a large cavern which appeared to be full of very dirty children whose hands were full of very dirty bones. On the other side of the road lay a pool covered with green slime. I was getting out with my camera when Gualterio stopped me abruptly. "Oh, no, *signore*, there is nothing worth examining; but I thought you might like to see the Giants' Cave, which is full of old fossils, and the Mar' Dolc'!"

No visitor is likely to be thirsty enough to drink of the "sweet water" that reminds him of Gunga Din and his goatskin bag. It is to be hoped, moreover, that the slimy pool is only the overflow of the Mare Dolce (Sweet Water), most famous of the Conca d'Oro's innumerable springs. Neither is one likely to speculate in bones of doubtful authenticity. So the only thing to do under the circumstances is to be just as cheerful as the cabman, and drive back to the ruins of the old Saracen-Norman stronghold of La Favara, whose splendor was famous during the Middle Ages, for there Frederick II, greatest of all kings of Sicily, held royal court. The brilliant court has vanished, and the castle itself is a crumbling wreck, a mere dank stable and storehouse, dark and ill smelling. Yet merely to see it recalls Frederick's striking personality and character. And

it is to be remembered that he was not merely Emperor of Germany and King of Sicily, but King of Italy, Sardinia, Apulia, Burgundy and for a while of Jerusalem. His connection with that city and with the Sixth Crusade forms one of the most picturesque and pleasant incidents of that fierce and warlike age. Speaking Arabic fluently — besides several other languages — he was able, through sheer force of character and winning personality, to negotiate treaty after treaty with the Saracens peacefully, winning the Holy City itself without striking a blow, and remaining its king for a decade during which peace instead of bloodshed was the rule. His army even contained a picked body of Saracen troops which he made his personal bodyguard. There was nothing, in fact, in either the intellectual or the political life of his age which this man, described by the Latin chroniclers as *stupor mundi*, "wonder of the world," failed to grasp and and master thoroughly. And in all the whirl of his incessant activities at home and abroad he found time to be a poet and scholar, to encourage learning in all its branches, and, most important of all, to articulate and reduce to written form the crude Italian speech of the day.

If you care for an experience out of the usual in this smiling island, stop on the Bagheria road at the church of San Giovanni dei Lebrosi or, as some Americans call it, "The Leprosy," in the midst of

a settlement of tanners. Here you are attended by three women, each flourishing a large key, all dirty and unkempt, and a barking, snapping, currish crowd of begging children. One of the three women unlocks the door of the alley at whose inner end the church stands. The stench is almost stupefying, the air thick with vapors. The second woman opens the door of the church, one of the oldest Norman structures in the island, now painfully restored with obtrusive brick and whitewash, and the third proves to be the keeper of the sacristy. Still another huge key now appears — this time in the hands of a surly man, who insists on showing you out another way, through an orange grove, though your carriage is in plain sight at the foot of the lane. These evil-looking children and caretakers are the most pertinacious and insolent you will encounter anywhere in the island. Has the fetid atmosphere anything to do with their crabbed humor?

In this plain of ancient Panormos, as both city and district were once known, there comes vividly to mind a curious battle scene. To-day we experiment with automobiles and aeroplanes as instruments of war: more than two thousand years ago disaster overtook the arms of Carthage because General Asdrubal placed his reliance in the then new-fangled elephant auxiliaries. Rome, for all she was conquering the world, trembled before these "great gray oxen," as the legionaries called them.

However, the Consul Metellus, who commanded inside the city, directed his attention effectually first of all to these splendid targets moving ponderously and disdainfully up against him. Pain-maddened by a ceaseless shower of darts and arrows, the great beasts shook off their helpless drivers and charged furiously to and fro, trumpeting, goring, trampling, wild engines of destruction which did more mischief to the Carthaginians than to Rome; and before night fell over the field of slaughter, the Romans led captive more than half of the hundred and twenty once dreaded Titans that had been Asdrubal's reliance, but which had cost him the battle.

Continuing toward the city along the road called the Corso dei Mille, over which Garibaldi and his immortal Thousand marched to victory, we pass close beside the old Ponte d'Ammiraglio, built some eight hundred years ago by King Roger's Grand Admiral Giorgios Antiochenos. In those days it spanned the swift Fiume Oreto, but now the fickle water has chosen another bed, leaving the massive stone bridge high and dry, and looking very useless and absurd in an open field.

Entering the town by the Garibaldi Gate — the liberator is even more frequently honored than the first King — we follow Garibaldi Street to the Piazza della Rivoluzione, in which a queer, old, bent, apparently half-intoxicated figure of the crowned Genius of Palermo marks the spot where the first

revolutionists gathered twelve years before the Thousand captured the city. Near by in the Piazza della Croce dei Vespri is the monument in memory of the French massacred in 1282, and buried here beneath a single marble column surmounted by a cross and surrounded by a railing of lances and halberds. At the corner of the square, built in a housewall, is a single fifteenth century column, marking the site of the palace in which Governor St. Remy, who was the lieutenant of Charles of Anjou at the time of the massacre, lived and is said to have been besieged.

From the railroad station a broad street, the Via Lincoln, leads to the bay. Gualterio volunteered the information that the street, "la Via Lin-col-ni," was named for a "great Sicilian patriot who was shot long before we were born!" It would have been a pity to disillusion him and rob Sicily of so great a figure, so we kept a smiling silence.

Beside the bay is an exquisite little park with broad lawns, splendid trees and paths laid out like the spokes of a huge floral wheel; one of the most perfect gardens in Sicily. It is called Villa Giulia, in honor of Donna Giulia Guevara, wife of the viceroy, Marcantonio Colonna, who founded it in 1777. The gardener's little boy, a cherub of soft black eyes and winsome smile, afforded another striking proof of the beneficent effects of education upon the children. Announcing proudly that he was learn-

"The 'Poor Man's Promenade' stretches away toward Mte Zaffarano, dim and misty."

ing to be a gardener himself, he flitted from flower to flower like an amorous bee, fondling, smelling, praising each burgeon in turn, and naming the plants with a perfect flood of Latin botanical terminology.

It was in this lovely park that Goethe spent a great deal of time during a Sicilian sojourn in 1789, reading Homer and seeing the Villa's beauties with so sympathetic an eye, he wrote of it that it looked like fairyland and transported him into ancient times. His *Italienische Reise* is particularly enthusiastic on Sicily, and he sums up the island's importance with a glowing tribute: "Italy without Sicily leaves no image in the soul — Sicily is the key to all."

In clear weather a large raised terrace at the southeast corner of the Villa affords a peep at distant Ætna's hoary crown. But if the weather be too hazy to see the Titan, the nearer view compensates in great measure for the invisible volcano. To the southeast the "poor man's promenade" stretches away in a misty vista toward Monte Zaffarano. The fishing boats tie up here, and the fishermen and their families make merry over their early suppers at open-air tables in the dusty, unpaved square that extends inland from the broad and level beach. In the other direction the broad Foro Italico or Marina, a handsome, tree-lined esplanade circumscribing the edge of the bay, with Monte Pel-

legrino rising massive and dominant at the other end of the town, miles away, affords a striking contrast. This is the "rich man's promenade," and here, in summer, Fashion makes its evening *corso.* Half Palermo sits in its iron-bottomed chairs sipping at the ices and cool drinks for which the cafés are noted, and smoking countless *sigaretti,* while the other half rolls lazily by in its carriages of state.

From the Villa Giulia a line of old palaces marks the landward side of the Marina all the way down to the foot of the Corso, at its other extremity. Many of them belong to nobles whose names are woven deep into some of Sicily's most important history. Down near the Porta Felice — the Happy Gate — a little wooden pavilion juts boldly out into the sea, a combination library and tearoom, whose presiding genius is an English gentlewoman, charming of speech and manners. No pleasanter way of resting after a hard day's work sightseeing can be found than to sit here over cups of steaming Ceylon, while the sea shimmers an iridescent opal, ruffled with streaky little ripples of protest for the approaching night. And afterward what more fitting than to reënter Eden by the Happy Gate — the Porta Felice — named as a memorial of the Lady Felice Orsini, wife of the Viceroy who built it. Happy Lady Felice, to have such a monument — and *porta felice* in truth, looking one way out over the sparkling sea and the other upon the city beautiful.

VII

AROUND THE ISLAND

FASCINATION and Palermo are synonymous; the subtle charm of the city works into one's very blood. Day after day and week after week roll by, until with a start of surprise that is akin to consternation one realizes that unless he has a year to devote to the island he must seek fresh vistas soon or leave Sicily, having seen nothing but the capital. Regretting is as vain as it is foolish. The only thing to do is to go!

Until you do, you have no idea of what the *tessere* — those amazing little bargain books — do for the Sicilians. Not only do they bring foreigners with money to spend, but natives of every class and station, unable to travel at other seasons of the year, flock to the ticket window with the *tessere* in their hands; and many of them who ordinarily would travel third class make a *festa* of their trips by buying first-class accommodations with the aid of the rebate.

There is no Pullman system in Sicily. The first arrivals at the station take the best seats, and hold them against all comers. If you do not like cheap

tobacco, and do like air, it is a good plan to reach the station early. All this we learned by experience; so we were ready to leave Palermo some time before the train was, and secured a little stateroom called a *berlina*, in the front of the car, whence an unobstructed view on both sides is to be had.

Scarcely is the capital left behind than it is completely forgotten in the astonishing floral display that flashes past — an unending motion-picture in vivid colors. For miles the track runs close beside the sea between deep floral hedges. Crimson geraniums from five to eight feet in height blazing with color, pink wild roses, sweet-scented white locust blossoms, spiky prickly pear, the yellow striped spears of the agave, and pink and lavender morning glories vining among and over them all give one the impression of being hurled through a giant hothouse. But here is no cultivation. Sicilian Nature, with prodigal lavishness, is alone responsible for the brilliant pageant. At the feet of the taller plants burgeon scarlet poppies, low, earth-nestling lavender cactus blossoms, and legions of dazzling buttercups. More poppies among the grass and grain contrast with whole acres of heavy-headed deep crimson clover, in which the hungry cattle wade to their knees.

On the landward side of the railroad undulate the hills in soft nuances of green, speckled and flecked with ever-changing light and shade. Farm-

houses massively built of rough unshaped stone, because the stone is there and mortar is cheap and the labor costs nothing, stand at long intervals among the golden grain square and squat, each with a heavy Normanesque battlemented tower. The poorer houses barely show their roofs or towers above the dense groves of lemon or orange. Sometimes part of a white wall appears through the bushy tree foliage, which is varied by occasional wide stretches of vines on low, far-reaching trellises, over which stands a slim-bodied palm, an alert, lonely sentinel.

The sea shimmers like glass in the gay sunlight, and even from the rapidly moving train the bottom is visible, sometimes ten or fifteen feet below the surface. White stones and deep purple patches of weed lie like pearls and amethysts imbedded in the heart of the cool emerald. Tiny reefs, far from their islets, and big, jagged rocks show their teeth at the ragged coast line through fringes of snowy foam. Ever shifting car-window prospects float by on the wing, and before you can fairly appreciate one, you pass another.

Around a curve, the train dashes into a big fishing village, a sturdy hamlet of nets and boats, of men in bare legs and knitted caps with tassels, of houses packed together on the side of a steep hill, struggling upward like lame sheep; a town of tiles and whitewash huddled together under the protec-

tion of a dozen stalwart-steepled belfries — Termini Imerese, busiest of Sicily's provincial towns, famous for its macaroni. Here were the celebrated hot springs of Himera, where, legend says, Hercules bathed after his great wrestling match with King Eryx. It is said that the water from these springs gives the macaroni its characteristic flavor. And here Agathocles, the Peter the Cruel of Greek Sicily, was born.

A few miles east of Termini the railroad leaves the shore, and turning southward enters the valley of the Torto, to begin climbing the rugged backbone of Sicily; the watershed between the ancient African and Tyrrhenian Seas. We might be in another country and clime, so different is the scenery as we puff on southward, the way bordered on either hand by the ruins of medieval castles and by little mountain towns still living in the Bronze Age. Near Lercara, forty-eight miles from Palermo, the sulphur mining district begins, where the mephitic gases from the smelting furnaces have poisoned and stunted vegetation and herbage, giving everything a ghastly mummified look, besides polluting the keen mountain air with an unmistakable brimstone flavor.

At Aragona-Caldare Girgenti first appears, seven miles away, surely "a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid." Yet to-day it is no more like the ancient Greek Akragas, founded twenty-five centuries

ago, than the dried sponge is like the live one. All that is left of this richest and most splendid of Sicilian metropoli is huddled within the confines of its former acropolis, high on the top of the hill. The greater city, which spread clear down to the temples that fringe the abrupt southern edge of the plateau, has vanished completely, and the bright homes of the gods, crumbled into mellow ruin, stand alone beside the shattered wall, in the midst of the everlasting beauty of hill and plain.

In its palmy days — which began after the battle of Himera and lasted until the Carthaginian siege — Akragas was so wealthy and so filled with splendor that the record is almost incredible. The Akragantines' flasks and body-scrapers, for use in the baths, were of gold and silver, their beds of ivory, their feasts and celebrations magnificent. At the wedding of the daughter of Antisthenes, one of the two leading citizens, there were eight hundred chariots in the wedding procession, every single citizen was feasted, and the whole city seemed ablaze from the smoke and flame of the innumerable bonfires. Even more noted was the hospitality of Gellias. His slaves stood always at every gate of the city, to bid all who came thither welcome as his guests. Once, indeed, he even entertained — clothed, lodged and fed — five hundred cavalrymen and their horses. And, as Freeman says, these men, Antisthenes and Gellias alike, were

neither tyrants nor lords nor oligarchs, but simple citizens of the democracy.

The main source of the city's wealth was her trade with Carthage, especially in the grape and the olive, neither of which grew in Africa at that time. Evidently, though, the grapes were not all sent to Carthage, for Timæus tells us that a house in the city was nicknamed the "Trireme" because some young men of fashion got very drunk there one night, and imagining they were in a reeling, rolling ship at sea, began throwing the furniture overboard to lighten the laboring craft. When the generals of the Commonwealth came rushing in to quiet things down, the drunken boys mistook them for gods of the raging sea, and prayed them to calm the storm!

Empedocles, one of Akragas's most famous sons, laments that his fellow townsmen "gave themselves to delights as if they would die to-morrow, while they built their houses as if they were going to live forever." Little did these luxury-loving folk think that the very barbarians whose trade was so enriching them would at last grow envious and snatch back by force the wealth they had built up for their neighbors. Empedocles, by the way, is one of the most picturesque characters in the whole story of Sicily. A political leader and an engineer who did wonders for the sanitation of the city, he refused supreme control when he might have had it,

and proclaimed himself a sort of primitive socialist early in his career. But later in life he seems entirely to have forgotten his previous socialistic theories. Dressed in a purple robe with a golden girdle, brazen shoes, and a Delphic wreath for his thick hair, he wandered from city to city proclaiming himself, in the words of one of his own poems, the *Katharmoi*, "An immortal god, and no longer a mortal man."

Nearly a sixth of Sicily's sulphur is exported from Porto Empedocle, Girgenti's ancient haven, six miles distant. From the station platform one sees all around reddish-yellow and gray hills covered with small dumps and pierced with scores of drives, dotted with little shanties and pricklied over with chimneys where the miners are delving and smelting. On the sidings near the depot scores of flat cars are heaped high with huge pressed cakes of the sickly greenish-yellow sulphur, while the roadway leading to the freight-house is fulvid with powdered brimstone, and the atmosphere faintly suggests things infernal. In the city museum the antiquarian may study the tile stamps of the Roman period — Girgenti was Agrigentum then — for impressing the sulphur cakes before they solidified.

Outside the station every train draws a barking crowd of *facchini* (porters) and hotel-runners, from whom you escape into an hotel omnibus. We chose

a tiny, rickety, low-roofed vehicle, which had developed rheumatism and gout in every complaining spring and joint. Delighted to secure the only first class passengers who had come on that express, the driver whipped up his three emaciated nags and we started on the long, circuitous, heart-breaking climb up the steep hills to the citadel above.

The bus was scarcely moving when a face appeared at the rear door, not of the usual hotel porter who rides behind, but of a Murillo cherub, brown-eyed and dark, with a lurking smile so ingenuous and charming that one must have been stony-hearted indeed not to succumb to the spell of his innocent sorcery.

The hotel on the Via Atenea — the only street in Girgenti worthy the name of a thoroughfare — proved a seedy, disreputable looking establishment, giving upon the narrow way in a black hole into which we plunged, to find a pair of winding, cold stone stairs in the rear up which we stumbled to the second story office. But the drawbacks of this inn — and there are better ones in town — were fortunately most of them on the outside. Our room was really comfortable, and the luncheon considerably better than we dared expect, though the dessert, in a dirty glass cake-dish, consisted of oranges, nespoli, or Japanese medlars, large raw broad-beans, and something that looked like celery but proved to be *finocchi*, or fennel, one of the staple foods of the

people, apparently a natural source of concentrated paregoric.

When the porter announced that our landau was waiting after luncheon, we questioned the ability of the three mangy, half-starved horses — the same team which had brought us from the railway station — to drive all the afternoon over the amazingly steep and hilly roads; but assured that these very animals had been doing the same work for "twenty years or more" we started off congratulating ourselves on escaping the guides, unnecessary nuisances.

As we stepped out at the little antique Gothic church of San Niccolà, the cherub suddenly appeared before us.

"Hello! Where did you come from?" I inquired.

The lad only shook his head, but the coachman, whose face was all one broad grin, waved his whip at the rear of the carriage. "*A dietro* — On behind!"

It was true. For miles that child had clung to the rear axle in the choking dust for the sake of a little silver. With an air of modest assurance he introduced himself —"Alfonso Caratozzo, *signore.* I am just twelve years old. For six years I have been the best guide in Girgenti, and all the grand foreign gentlemen are much pleased with me. I can show you everything."

Alfonso's large claim was fully justified by his conduct of our affairs, his poetic appreciation not

only of the beauties of the scenery but of his own dignity and importance as counselor and pilot of the *forestieri americani* — and no one who wishes a guide can do better than to inquire for Alfonso the Wise!

Never was the mixed civilization and pagan ancestry of the Sicilians of to-day brought more vividly to our attention than in this little church of San Niccolà. The attractive girl custodian was a perfect young Saracen Sicilian, black-eyed and raven haired, with big gold and coral earrings. Beside her Alfonso, as purely Greek as she was Moorish, looked every inch a faun. The girl knew what stories she had to tell very well. Alfonso, however, evidently bored by the history of ancient Akragas from the day of its founding, whispered: "Pay no attention to her, *signore.* She tells this to everybody!"

Shades of Diodorus — what should she tell!

Near by stands a little Roman building dating from the second century B. C. Somehow it got the name of Oratory of Phalaris, though it certainly was not in existance in Phalaris's time. How strange that such a building and such an idea should be associated with this most widely advertised of Greek tyrants! Of all the disputed stories told of him, that of the brazen bull is most widely known; and without his bull, Phalaris would be no more than an hundred obscure tyrants in other Greek cities. The

legend declares that an artist named Perillos made a monstrous hollow brazen bull in whose shoulder was a door through which the victim could be thrust. When the fire underneath heated the diabolical invention, the cries of the sufferer, issuing through the nostrils, sounded like the roarings of the enraged animal. The tyrant, with a proper sense of humor, immediately tested the efficiency of the image upon its luckless inventor Perillos. In later times apologists denied these stories; but Pindar, writing within a century after the death of Phalaris, summed up Sicilian public opinion of that day very tersely in the lines:

> *"Phalaris, with blood defiled,*
> *His brazen bull, his torturing flame,*
> *Hand o'er alike to evil fame*
> *In every clime!"*

Very different indeed are his praises of Theron of Akragas, one of the greatest and best of the Greek tyrants, with whom he was contemporary. The Second Olympian Ode is perhaps the most fulsome. Cary rendered it:

> *"Theron for his conquering car*
> *Shall spread a shout of triumph far and wide;*
> *True to his friends, the people's pride;*
> *Stay of Akragas and flower*
> *Of many a noble ancestor;*

They, long toils and perils past,
By the rivers built at last
Their sacred bower, and were an eye
To light the land of Sicily.
And I will swear
That city none, though she enroll
A century past her radiant scroll,
Hath brought a mortal man to light
Whose heart with love more genial glows,
Whose hand with larger bounty flows,
Than Theron's."

It was during the reign of Theron that the city, approaching the height of its prosperity and pride, joined forces with Gelon and the Syracusans in defeating Hamilcar's Carthaginians in a tremendous battle at Himera. The victors took an immense number of the defeated soldiers captive, and Theron began to rush forward epoch making municipal improvements. The slaves, being only human, could not last forever, and they were worked hard while their strength endured, toiling in the stone quarries, building the city wall, excavating a huge fishpond, and commencing the construction of the magnificent temples along the southern rampart.

"Tyrant," by the way, in that age of civilization, did not necessarily mean a brutal, oppressive or fire-breathing monster. Indeed, some of the tyrants were among the best rulers Greek Sicily ever had. As Freeman says, "tyrant" meant a forceful

usurper, a man who raised himself to the supreme authority when kings and kingship were not only unlawful but were not even the fashion.

Of the six glorious temples — among the most brilliant achievements of the most brilliant period of Greek freedom in Sicily — only two remain standing, at the verge of the hill, limned in all their marvelous Greek severity and simplicity against the tender landscape. Overhead burns the cobalt sky of Sicily; around them burgeon crimson poppies, delicate buttercups and spurge, and other flowers innumerable. Flute-voiced birds swing and sing in among the olives, in air languid with the perfume of the almond in bloom.— And in the clear sunlight of the South, the temples themselves glow with a golden radiance that must surely be a faint reflection of the fires of the immortal gods.

Models of Doric simplicity, these temples consisted only of a windowless shrine for the god, surrounded by an open colonnade, the whole covered by a gabled roof. Their design was at once the result of the climate and of Greek civilization. The religion was intimately connected with devotion to the State; hence the homes of the gods, who were both the patrons and companions of the people, were public buildings, their porticoes open to the daily life and commerce, the intercourse of the citizens.

The Greek religion was beautiful, rarely beautiful. But exclusive, mysterious? No! Its rites were

simple — choral hymns, rhythmic dances, ceremonies executed by the citizens themselves. And the priests guarded no occult sciences, as did the Egyptians; kept to themselves no written hieroglyph unintelligible except to the initiate. They were laymen, married men with families, soldiers, merchants, men engaged in every walk of life.

Marvelous architects, those old fifth century Greeks! To give their low and heavy buildings greater charm than was possible with mere straight lines, they made their columns gently swelling; smaller at the top than at the bottom. At the corners of the edifice they even sloped them slightly inward. They bent the foundation upward a little in the middle, and did the same thing with the long line of the entablature above. Yet it would seem that they were given to gilding the lily. They covered the rich golden travertine of which the edifices were built with a thin coat of white stucco or mortar, upon which were painted striking ornaments in many brilliant colors. It is hard to believe that the temples when painted could have been as magnificent as they are to-day; yet they must have been — who are we to impugn Greek taste!

The Temple of Concord, because of its use in the Middle Ages as the church of Saint Gregory of the Turnips, is one of the best preserved pagan buildings in existence, all of its thirty-four giant columns still standing. It makes a picture of beautiful and

The Temple of Concord "was used in the Middle Ages as the Church of St. Gregory of the Turnips."

serene old age that loses nothing by comparison with the eternal youth of its surroundings. House of peace it has been called, and house of peace it still is, after the storms and wars of more than fourteen centuries have ebbed and flowed about its massive base.

The *custode*, a garrulous old soldier, insists on your instantly taking the view from the architrave above the cella, which really is magnificent. But you are not ready for that just yet. Why must these caretakers always tease you to do something when you don't want to! Glimpsing the fat little red book in your pocket, he smiles sardonically. "Ha! You wish to be let alone?" he exclaims. "Ha! You believe the book of a German, not the word of a Sicilian. But does the book tell you the Christians who turned this temple into a church were the first Sicilians to embrace the Faith? No, *signore* — but you believe your German book. Very good, believe it!" and he stalks away, secure in his precious tradition.

From the Temple of Concord the road ascends gently, parallel to the ancient wall, until it reaches the southeastern angle of the precipitous plateau, occupied by the so-called Temple of Juno. Below it on the east flows the San Biagio, zigzagging in a southwesterly direction to join the Drago torrent, with which it enters the Mediterranean at the old harbor of Emporio. Perched upon this lofty cliff,

nearly four hundred feet above the sea, the temple commands a wonderful view.

This structure is in far less perfect condition than the Temple of Concord, only twenty-five whole columns standing, while everywhere the mellow golden stonework is marked with peculiar dull, bloody stains supposed to be traces of the fire set by the Carthaginians in 406 B. C., in their endeavor to burn the city. The tradition seems to have little foundation in fact, for on other ruins, parts of the old Greek wall, and even on some of the rocks of the vicinity, the same strange stains are frequently visible, and appear to be a natural property of the stone, possibly due to its exposure to the weather.

Here I sent Alfonso away on an errand, and another small boy guide hung about us until we entered the holy of holies. Springing upon a shattered block of marble which he said had been the altar where the huge statue of Juno had once stood, he took an absurdly constrained position, and cried: "Look, *signore* — Juno stood here — just like me!"

One of the most alluring ruins is the fragment, called for want of a better name presumably, the Temple of Castor and Pollux. Embayed in a grove of olive and almond, resting upon a veritable carpet of flowers among which climb tangled vines, rise four stately columns, silhouetted sharply against the dazzling sky, and supporting a honey-colored

fragment of entablature. And though the archæologists declare the columns to have been taken from two different edifices and arbitrarily joined, this detracts not a whit from the grace and beauty of the restoration and its surroundings.

Olympian Jupiter it was who had — as befitted the king of the gods — the largest temple. Indeed, after the vast temple of Diana at Ephesus, this was the largest Greek shrine ever built. Now all there is to be seen is a vast formless heap of cut stones in a living sea of brilliant yellow bloom. Unafraid, these star-eyed flowerets lovingly enfold shattered column and pediment, creep up into the sacred close of the cella or sanctuary, and kiss the huge prone figure of one of the thirty-eight titanic Atlantides or caryatides, about twenty-five feet in height, which are believed to have supported the entablature. The colossal edifice measured about three hundred and seventy-two feet long, at least one hundred and eight-two wide, and probably about one hundred twenty high.

And these are not all, by any means. There are more ruins of temples, within and without the walls, more interesting to explore than to read about; there are Christian catacombs and tombs; the megalithic wall, and the Porta Aurea, the Golden Gate that looks straight out over the golden southern sea. And there are also some very interesting antiquities on view in the Museum — but beware the

specious vendors of relics who hang around the temples and the hotels. The Greeks of twenty centuries ago did not stamp their products, "Made in Germany!"

All along the way are vast numbers of peculiar white lumps on grass and leaves and walls, clinging like burrs to even the fruit and treetrunks.

"They are snails, Excellency," explained Alfonso, "and very good to eat. After it rains they grow big and fat. Then they are very sweet."

Springing down from the box, the child tore a fat snail from the wall, and hopping up again, cracked it open skillfully with his teeth, drew out and ate the quivering mollusc. Waving his hand toward some more large specimens on the wall, he asked: "Excellency would like some too?"

"Excellency has just had his luncheon," opportunely interposed the driver. "Snails are not good for dessert."

Within the acropolis again, we dismissed the landau out of pity for the wretched horses, and rambled about on foot. Before reaching the Cathedral we passed Alfonso's home, where he introduced us to his family with all the éclat of a noble presenting friends at court; and poor as these Sicilians were, we found among them all — father, mother, aunt, cousin, three sisters and a brother — no lack of that inborn courtesy which distinguishes the Latin peasant.

Collectively the family showed us the church of Santa Maria dei Greci, in which are supposed to be incorporated the scanty remains of the principal sanctuary of either Zeus Atabyrius or Minerva, while some urchin, locked out and so deprived of all opportunity for tips, playfully stoned the church door. The Cathedral is more interesting, though the apse is over richly stuccoed, covered with scrolls and cherubs in gold and white. One of its chief treasures is a madonna, painted by Guido Reni, though not comparable to his best work. In the sacristy is a really fine old white marble sarcophagus of the Roman period, bearing reliefs of the myth of Hippolytus and Phædra.

But nothing within is comparable to the view from one of the windows at the sunset hour. It recalls the Biblical prophecies of Canaan with the chalky roads for the milk, and the gold of the daisies, mustard and marigolds for the honey of this Promised Land. The chief charm of the scene as the hills lie weltering under the fading glory of the sinking sun are these same milky roads, flowing through the verdant swards and vales. In the background the ugly, prosaic sulphur pits, dumps and chimneys make splashes of harsh modern color in this world-old landscape. It is a scene unforgettable. Slowly, gently, the soft rosy-bluish evening haze creeps up the hillside; bit by bit the purple shadows deepen, the soft harmonies of tender green melt into the

blur of the background, and only the creamy highways stand out distinct.

Not so very many years ago this entire region was unsafe because of the brigands. Now one may go anywhere about Girgenti with perfect security. Nevertheless, a pair of Carabinieri — they always travel in pairs, by the way — gorgeous in all their glory of black and scarlet, with cockaded cocked hats, were always somewhere within range when we were outside the city proper. They seemed to take as keen an interest in the ruins as we did, though temples must have been an old story to them.

Alfonso spoke to one of these kindly familiars whom we passed, struggling to make his greeting as careless as the familiar "Hello!" of the American streets. Good humoredly the Carabiniero answered him, and as we went on, the boy remarked with innocent egotism: "You saw him, *signore?* He is my friend. You are with me, and he would let nothing happen to you. It is good to know the police — as I do!"

VIII

THE ROAD TO SYRACUSE

TO the northwest of Girgenti the country is honeycombed with sulphur pits and it is not very hard to credit the ancient myth that the gates of Hades opened here. After the train leaves the trunkline of the railway at Aragona-Caldare, tunnels and sulphur mines make up most of the scenery. This entire district has a smitten look, and on the bleak rolling plains and rugged hills are dreary towns whose chief charm, as they flit past in a continuous gray motion picture, lies in their historical suggestions. The most important and flourishing city we pass is Caltanisetta, the center of the sulphur industry, which produces more than half a million tons annually. The mines are most of them primitive in the extreme, and machinery is practically unknown, while in many of them fuel is so scarce and costly that the operators burn the raw sulphur itself in their *calcaroni* or smelters.

Shortly before reaching Santa Catarina Xirbi, the junction town where the tracks join the Palermo line, we have our first glimpse of Mt. Ætna, its snowy cap hanging in the distance like a low white

cloud. Small gorges and tunnels follow in rapid succession, and the train pants upward in tortuous curves through the barren valleys, until we look up at Castrogiovanni, the Enna of the ancients. It lies in an almost perfect horseshoe on a precipitous rock, and so surrounded by nearly perpendicular approaches, so walled in by Nature with beetling crags, that none of its innumerable ancient besiegers was ever able to storm it. Treachery — and once starvation — did for it what armed assault never could. Livy rightly called it "a city inexpugnable," and it probably is so yet, for it has recently been strongly fortified after the most approved modern style. The ascent is by a road which — well, try it for yourself. But the town, once reached, pays for the climb in its magnificent views. It is the navel (*umbilicus Siciliæ*) of Sicily, and from the loftiest tower of the former citadel there sweeps away a mountain cyclorama such as not even Switzerland can excel — Ætna, peaks without number, range on range and tier on tier, melting into the haze of heaven. Towns, thousands of feet in the air, cling desperately to the steep, unfriendly sides, or perch precariously on the tops of needle-pointed mountains. And on the South, beyond hills and plain, dimples the ultramarine of the African sea.

For centuries before the adventurous Greeks colonized the hill, Enna was the principal home of a

Sicilian goddess, the patron of natural fertility and of the harvest, whom the Greeks identified with their own Demeter, and the later Romans with Ceres. Not a stone of her temple is left, and we can do little more than speculate upon its site, said to have been where the old citadel now stands. About two hours to the south by carriage is that once lovely little lake of Pergusa, where Pluto met and straightway stole the lovely Proserpina to be the queen of his dark realm. It was then a district so fair that Diodorus said the hounds often lost the scent of their quarry, so rich was the fragrance of the flowers. But alas! the spot is blasted now. Gone are the splendid shade trees in whose branches the singing messengers of spring carolled; gone all the beauty of Pergusa, now but a dirty little pond, where peasants steep their flax. But at least we can think of it still in Ovid's words: "A spot at the bottom of a shady vale, watered by the plenteous spray of a stream that falls from wooded heights; where Nature decks herself in all her varied hues, where the ground is beauteous, carpeted with flowers of many tints."

Ætna appears again soon after the entrance to the valley of the Dittaino is passed, and beckons with such insistence that the train hesitates only a moment — at the station for Valguarnera Assoro — right before the railway restaurant. It is a tumbledown little shack with a big sign: *Ristor-*

ante G. Galliano. If you are on good enough terms with the Signor Conductor, he may wait long enough for you to have a sip of the excellent country wine and a taste of the "beautiful goat" the redoubtable Galliano purveys to such as can pay his very modest price. A few miles farther on is the station for Agira, which occupies the site of one of the very oldest Sikelian cities, lying back from the railroad, up in the hills. Later it was the birthplace of the historian Diodorus, who gives a picturesque account of his native village.

Half an hour later the railway emerges from the hills upon the plain of Catania — so productive of grain that from the very beginnings of local history it has been known as the granary of Sicily — and leaving the main line at Bicocca, puts Catania and the great volcano behind, heading southward for Syracuse. Fine crops appear around the famous Lake Lentini, Sicily's largest inland body of water, varying from about nine to twelve miles in circumference, according to the season. It is a dreary tarn, looking so like a big mud puddle or a meadow overflowed by stagnant salt water that it is easy to credit the tales of the mephitic vapors and exhalations and fevers which have made it the scourge of the neighborhood.

Evidently the Sicilian railroads provide no drinking water for the employés in wayside stations, for as we stopped the combination telegraph operator,

baggage smasher, ticket agent and general utility man ran out to the locomotive and tapped the brass faucet in the tender for a drink. There is a big water-wheel a few miles farther on, arranged exactly like an Egyptian *sakiyeh*, and no doubt a survival of the Moorish wheel installed in that very well centuries ago. The apparatus is very simple. A horizontal wheel is geared loosely into a vertical one by big, clumsy wooden teeth. Over it projects an arm to which some patient draft animal is hitched. A long grass rope carrying an endless series of pottery jars or buckets completes the outfit by running over the vertical wheel, and all the water that does not splash back into the well flows into an irrigating pool and the ditches. The mule who worked this particular wheel acted as if he too were a Moorish survival, unaccustomed to modern inventions. Anyway, he tried to bolt when the engine shrieked. His plunging blindfold gallop sent the water flying in all directions, giving his peasant master a much-needed bath and earning the poor beast a beating, the blows of which could be distinctly heard as the train sped on. Around a curve Mt. Ætna appears again in all its majesty, filling up the entire background, looming more than twice as large as familiar Vesuvius. Its lower slopes are green and the upper reaches snow covered, split like a sore lip, with dark curves, queer bumps and sharp little corners of uplifted skin. Above them poises the soft black,

slightly indented cone, canopied by a ridiculous tuft of cottony smoke no bigger than a handful at such a distance.

Agnone is a hedge of yellow daisies, a deep pasture full of reddish brown kine, a farmhouse of stone with thatched shelters for the animals in the midst of rich cultivated lands. A mile away gleams the sea, a dull turquoise green flecked with windy ripples and dotted here and yon with white —"Silver sails come out of the west." The tall timothy on both sides of the track, and other fields planted with oats and spiky cactus, seem mere picturesque settings for countless fiery poppies. Sheep by the hundred bolt in terror from the wild shrieks of the locomotive, preferring to run straight ahead on the track as long as they can possibly keep out of the way of the engine. Bold headlands here and there lower their stubborn crests for a few yards to give the flying train instantaneous vistas of wet sand gleaming far below, like blades of golden sickles edged with silver filigree.

In rapid succession these rugged scenes slip behind, and we run along the shore past salt farms and their windmills; then a boldly jutting island, brave with forts and churches, rising out of the sea like Venice — Augusta the picturesque, modern survivor of Xiphonia, scene of many a fierce battle and bloody conquest.

Augusta was founded in a most picturesque way

by Emperor Frederick II. The town of Centuripe up in the hills, having roused the imperial ire by its sedition, was effectually razed. Then Frederick punished its people still further by driving them all into this spot and commanding them to stay *there* and be good. Perhaps its stormy birth in a measure accounts for Augusta's stormy history. The most spectacular affair it ever witnessed was the tremendous naval duel between the fleets of France and Holland in 1676, when Admiral Duquesne defeated the Dutch Admiral De Ruyter, who afterward died of his wounds in nearby Syracuse. Following the coast closely, we flit swiftly past the Hyblæan Hills, eager to stop for some of their historic honey, but relentlessly carried onward by the insensate iron horse, that knows not nor cares for the sweets that rival the product of Hymettus.

All the way from Augusta the track borders the shore of the Bay of Megara, where anchored Nicias, Alcibiades and Lamachus, the Athenian generals who came to attack Syracuse in 415 B. C. with a fleet so vast that men paled merely to see it whiten the horizon. But to-day, instead of the tents and sails of invading hosts, you see evaporating-tanks and windmills, and snowy piles of salt dotting the rugged shore in serried ranks. Rushing across the neck of the promontory of Thapsus — now called Magnisi — we skirt Trogilus Bay, where the conquering fleet of Marcellus the Roman lay two cen-

turies after the Athenian *débâcle,* cross the old Dionysian wall, sweep around the bold headland, and stop at Syracuse.

Don't be disappointed in Syracuse by what you see of the dirty little provincial town that yawns sleepily at you between the railroad station and your hotel. Suspend judgment until you reach the Greek Theater, and from the top row of seats carven into the eternal rock, look out over the gracious panorama below. Beyond the sparsely settled vineyards and groves covering what was once the Greater Syracuse, lies the city of to-day on Ortygia, an oyster-shell full-heaped with pearls, in a sapphire setting of twin harbors and glittering sands. The alchemy of golden sunshine transmutes whitewashed tenements into Greek palaces, fishing luggers into stately galleys of war, and prosaic modern peasants into the soldiers and citizens of a happier and more stirring day. And as you stand breathless with the wonder of it, history unfolds itself in memory, with something at every step to drive that history home, be it Sikel, Greek, Roman, Saracen or Norman. The ruins of the mighty fortress atop the inland hill breathe of the Age of Tyrants, and to follow the herculean walls of Dionysius around the deserted plateau fills one with awe and wonder anew, for the work seemingly has been performed by a race of giants. Below, yawning in the seacoast of Achradina, dim caverns invite the ex-

"From the top row of seats in the Greek Theater look out over the gracious panorama below"—Syracuse.

plorer's rowboat. There are the Street of Tombs to search for relics — though most likely you will find only a few scattered bones; the Castello Mariaces on the tip of Ortygia, full of Byzantine memories; charming walks to and through the quarries, the famous *Latomie;* the astonishing catacombs and the Anapo trip. A score of other delightful excursions the visitor can take, providing he is not driven forward by the exigencies of a cut-and-dried itinerary, that wickedest and most specious of all excuses for not seeing enough of a country really to enjoy it!

The mother colony was founded in 734 B. C. on the little island of Ortygia, named for the quail the Greeks found there in great coveys. From its very beginning the benignant gods smiled upon Syracuse, and it prospered so rapidly that within seventy years it was founding colonies of its own. Under the tyrant Gelon, son-in-law of the great and good Theron of Akragas, and later practically co-ruler with him of all Greek Sicily, the era of Hellenic supremacy began, with Syracuse in the van of progress. Indeed, Syracuse was of such paramount importance that sometimes its history is mistaken for the history of Sicily. Tyrants good and bad rose and fell; democracy overthrew tyranny, and tyranny overthrew democracy. Demagogues — the word means literally "popular leaders" — rose to stir the people to action against the government or the

tyrant — and sometimes threatened to become tyrants themselves. Seeing how easy it was to sway the rabble with hot words, men of every class began to practice public speaking; no young man's education was complete without it; and oratory first became an art in Sicily.

From the island of Ortygia the city spread up the hilly mainland in four new boroughs — Achradina, Tyche, Neapolis and Epipolai — making a mighty pentapolis; a community which was not only the foremost of all the Greek cities in the island, but much the greatest in physical extent of all the Greek cities in the world, and for a time the greatest city of Europe as well as of Greece. This naturally made Athens jealous, and in 415 B. C. the pent up force of Attic wrath loosed itself in a tremendous blast against Syracuse. But Athens' traditional enemy, Sparta, sent the island city help, and the Athenian arms went down in one of the most appalling defeats of all history. After this vivid chapter, governments and tyrants rose and fell again as before, deliverers came and conquered in the name of the people, and passed, and at last the young giant Rome stepped in with brazen legionaries and put a period to the brilliant story.

To-day, as in the beginning, the city is on Ortygia, the houses crowding together behind the old walls like birds on a roost, and you wonder why, when there was such ample space on the shore,

the people huddled together so. The streets, moreover, are amazingly shifty. On foot you set out to explore the town and encircle it by keeping as close to the walls as possible — a matter of a mere hour and a half, with plenty of time to idle by the way. According to the maps this should be no great feat, but try as you may, it seems impossible to lay a true course, and becoming discouraged after slipping off one street four or five times, you abandon yourself to the vagaries of these astonishing high and byways — they fade into one another without sign or signal, they vanish on front doorsteps, end after half a block in blind alleys, terminate in bastions which lead one to suppose that the sea must be below on the other side, only to turn up somewhere else in most mysterious fashion, and not always running in the same direction as their beginning.

There is little that is up-to-date about Syracuse. To a great extent it lives in medieval seclusion and its people are simple, genial folk so wholly out of touch with the world that whatever is essential for comfort or convenience is proper in public. On one street, for instance, I saw the economical wife of a small shopkeeper wash her baby's only frock — a slim little red calico — and button it to dry over the bulgy part of a lamppost, which looked choked and uneasy as the tiny slip fluttered in the wind. Meantime the *piccola signorita* disported herself amiably in the street — and all her

frolicking in the dust could not hurt what she wore.

Near the center of the city stands the Cathedral, a queer combination of battlemented Moorish castle, ancient Greek temple and modern Christian structure. Nearly thirteen centuries ago Bishop Zosimus of Syracuse began the work of turning the ruined temple — built early in the sixth century B. C.— into a Christian church, filling in the peristyle with a solid wall in which some of the Doric columns are still visible. The Saracen invaders turned it into a mosque in the year 878, and for two centuries *muezzins* chanted the names of Allah and Muhammad from its walls. With the Norman conquest in the eleventh century the building again became a Christian house of worship, and though the earthquake of 1693 destroyed a part of it, the damage was soon repaired and it has ever since remained the diocesan church of Syracuse. Like many of the often restored cathedrals of Meridional Italy, its interior is barren and uninteresting, but its exterior, with Greek entablature and columns, Saracenic frieze and battlements, and hideous Renaissance façade and portico is unique among Christian churches.

There seems some doubt among the archæologists as to the deity worshiped here in pagan days. It was formerly ascribed to Diana, but the authorities now generally believe it was the shrine of Min-

erva, though Cicero's glowing description of the Temple of Minerva (Athena) places that structure in a location apparently different from the site of the present Duomo. The orator says he saw a temple on whose apex was ". . . a great brazen shield overlaid with gold, which served as a landmark to sailors on entering the port. The folding doors of ivory and gold were also adorned with a marvelous golden head of Medusa." Most of these magnificent treasures were stolen. The Roman prætor Gaius Verres, a gentleman with a highly cultivated taste in works of art, stripped Syracuse — and all Sicily, in fact — absolutely bare of everything the Roman armies had overlooked. And when at last he was brought to book for his crimes, he fled into voluntary exile with his plunder rather than face the scathing invective of Cicero.

The archæologists' dubiety regarding the name of the temple has no room in the minds of the street arabs, however, who vociferously proclaim it the "*Tempio di Diana*," and will not suffer you to leave until you have paid for this volunteered information.

Diagonally across the Piazza Duomo is the externally unimposing Museum. Its collection, however, is both interesting and intelligently arranged. It covers the civilization of Sicily from the bone and flint implements of the extinct prehistoric Sikels, through the transitional Greek period of the

metopes from Selinus, to the splendid coins and vases of the city's supremacy as an Hellenic center of culture and art. In fact, the profile of Arethusa, on coins signed by Evanetus and Kimon, is considered the most exquisite Greek head known to us. In those days coin-makers were artists of the foremost rank, accustomed to signing their work, like painters and sculptors, and these two, Evanetus and Kimon, have left us a noble set of coins in which the Greek conception of divinity appears at its best. The most beautiful marble is a Venus Anadyomene, discovered in 1804, and preserved almost intact save for the head and one arm.

Not very far away there are ruins of another and very remarkable Greek temple, formerly called for Diana, but now generally considered to have been dedicated to Apollo — the archæologists seem to have a grudge against the virgin huntress! There is not much else that is Greek, but as you wander through the narrow streets, scattered bits of mediæval architecture appear in the most unexpected places, like the splendid Sicilian-Gothic and Saracenic windows of the Montalto and Lanza palaces, all the richer and more wonderful because of the surroundings from which they look down upon the squalid streets and out-at-heel people. The later Palazzo Municipale, or City Hall, is a fine example of the architectural spirit of the seventeenth century, its type that of a private palace, a baronial

"In those days coin-makers were artists of the foremost rank, and signed their works."

mansion rather than a public building. During this period great attention was paid to ornamental ironwork for decorative purposes upon the façades of buildings; and all about us are delicate and satisfying window balconies, some of which plainly testify to their Spanish origin.

The first of the Greek settlers brought their home legends with them to Sicily, where they found a friendly soil, attaining their fullest perfection in the sympathetic hands of the Latin poets. Some of the most beautiful weave through the story of Syracuse, and the most delightful walk in the city — one you will want to take often — leads you straight along the edge of the Great Harbor, on a wide, tamarind-bordered esplanade, with the town wall rising behind, to the picturesque, papyrus-fringed little pool accounted for by one especially gracious tale, and called the Fountain of Arethusa.

Long centuries ago — so runs this immemorial fable — there bubbled up out of the beach of the Great Harbor a crystal spring. And close by, in the briny waters themselves, another little fount gushed forth, pure and sweet. The airy Greek fancy could not pass by so remarkable a coincidence, and the Syracusans quickly came to believe that the twin springs were the gentle nymph Arethusa, the well-beloved of Artemis (Diana), and her river-god lover Alpheus; that Arethusa, too impetuously wooed by Alpheus on the island of Ortygia in Old

Greece, had been graciously changed by Artemis into a spring, and taking the long, dark journey under the Ionian Sea, had escaped to the sunlight again in the newer Ortygia in Sicily; that Alpheus, not faint-hearted, had changed himself to her own watery shape, and following hard and fast, had missed her by the merest trifle only, bubbling up in a second spring in the waters of the harbor close beside his beloved. But Poseidon of the sea was mightier than nymph or river-god. Shaking his mighty bed one day, he burst open the wall about fair Arethusa.— To-day her water is salt, not sweet, and no more does her lover Alpheus bubble up beside her in the Bay.

IX

THE HARBOR AND THE ANAPO

ANOTHER of the beautiful legends with which the history of Syracuse is deeply interwoven is the story of Kyana — Cyane — and Aidoneus or Pluto. To run it to earth take a stout green and blue rowboat across the Porto Grande, about two kilometers wide, to the river Anapo. The snapping breeze blows briskly, and the boat tumbles about in lively fashion upon the sparkling sapphire, past the big motionless yachts at anchor and the slow-curtseying sailing craft coming into the docks from the *saline* or salt-works in the marsh below the river.

What a contrast between the harbor of to-day and that of twenty-three or four centuries ago, when not another city in the world could boast so great a port, so populous a harbor! Here swam the merchant fleets of all Sicily, of Greece, of Phœnicia, the navy of haughty Syracuse, the innumerable small boats that darted about between ship and shore — and remember, too, that these were sailing craft,— every one. sea spiders with oars for legs in windless weather. Around the curving line of the

shore for three miles the ships docked, from island tip to rivermouth. Fringing the bay were sloping beaches where they careened and calked and tarred their galleys with slave labor. Shipyards, arsenals, and merchants' warehouses lined its shores. All the activities of a great maritime people hummed about this bay with its margin of city. And all the city's splendor, all her power, sprang from the harbor, and from her control of the waters, exactly as England, two thousand years later, began to rise to her present eminence by virtue of her position and her skill in deep waters.

Only a little imagination is required to picture the salt-boats of the twentieth century as the short, clumsy triremes which on that memorable September 1, 413 B. C., brought about the dramatic climax of the war between Athens and Syracuse. The Athenians' fleet bottled up in the Great Harbor by a line of chained-together galleys and merchant hulks anchored from the tip of Ortygia to the promontory of Plemmyrion a mile south, prepared to force its way out.

All Syracuse and both armies lined the shores, stood up on the seats of the distant Theater, crowded the housetops to encourage the fighters with their cheering and shouts. The rival commanders made their usual orations, exhorting the crews to acquit themselves as men and patriots. Out into the Bay rowed the fleets — Grote tells the story vividly:

"Inside this narrow basin, rather more than five English miles in circuit, one hundred and eighty-six ships of war, each manned by more than two hundred men, were about to join battle — in the presence of countless masses around, near enough both to see and to hear; the most picturesque battle probably in history, without smoke or other impediments to vision, and in the clear atmosphere of Sicily."

At the first onset the impetuous Athenian attack, headed for the barrier, broke through the Syracusan defense, and the Athenians were shouting with triumph as they began to cut the hawsers fastening together the blockading hulks, when the Syracusan triremes closed in on them from all sides, and the action at once became general and desperate. Ship crashed against ship, and vessels once lashed together rarely separated. Though Syracuse could throw only seventy-six triremes of the line against the hundred and ten heavy Athenians, she reinforced her vessels with a perfect cloud of mosquito craft that hovered, stinging and galling, about the equal antagonists. In a measure the action demonstrated the efficiency and value of the small, swift cruiser or torpedoboat of later times, to which the light craft may be considered analogous, never daring to do more than shoot and run, and shoot and run again.

Thucydides makes the peaceful harbor ring and echo again with the surging of the dramatic chorus

of citizens and armies urging on the fight:

"And the great noises of many triremes fallen foul of one another both amazed the seamen and prevented them from hearing what their leaders directed; for they directed thick and loud on both sides, not only as naval art required, but also from sheer eagerness, the Athenians crying out to their fleet to force the passage . . . and the Syracusans to theirs how honorable a thing it would be to hinder their escape, and by this victory to improve every man the honor of his country. . . . While the conflict raged on the water, the land forces had a struggle and sided with them in their affections. . . . For the fight being near, and not all of them looking upon one and the same part, he that saw his own side prevail took heart and fell to calling upon the gods that they deprive them not of safety; and they that saw their friends have the worse, not only lamented but shrieked outright. . . . And one might hear in one and the same army, as long as the fight upon the water was doubtful, at one and the same time, lamentations, shouts that they won, that they lost, and whatever else a people in great danger is forced differently to utter."

Every one of the Athenian fleet and twenty-six Syracusans had gone ashore or foundered, only fifty vessels being left afloat, when the fight ended. Vainly did the Athenian generals plead with their

men to fight again next day with those ships which could be hauled off the beach and made seaworthy; but so terrific had been the chaos, so utterly broken was the spirit of the Attic fleet, that the men refused to go aboard again, and the retreat was soon begun.

Forty thousand men, "like the emigrant population of a city, wandered laden with their baggage away from the coast into a country hostile to them, without any definite goal for the journey, without sufficient supplies of food, without confidence in their ultimate preservation, tortured by fear, lost in speechless or stolid despair, or raging in savage fury against men and gods; . . . but most terrible of all was it to leave on the desolate shore the many wounded and sick, who raised their voices in loud lamentation as their relatives and tent-fellows departed, or clung to the skirts of their garments, and let themselves be dragged along for a brief distance, till they sank prostrate to the ground." *

For days they struggled on, followed, harassed and headed off by the victorious Syracusans and their Lacedæmonian allies, at last surrendering from sheer mental and physical exhaustion, though they knew full well the inevitable result — slavery for every soldier, an ignominious death for every general, the ruin of their country as a world power of the first rank.

* History of Greece, iii, 402; Dr. Ernst Curtius.

Something of all this runs through one's mind as the rowboat approaches the low, glistening line of shore, with the wide, clean mouth of the Anapò in its center. For some distance before we actually enter the river, its pale green current cuts a furrow sharply through the heavier salt brine of the Bay. And it is fresh, not salt, long after it leaves the protection of its native banks. Into its brawling current pull the boatmen, expatiating volubly, not upon the scenery as one would naturally expect, but upon the virtues of their particular craft and the value of their time!

No doubt these boatmen are fair types of the rugged island sailors who so nobly acquitted themselves twenty-three hundred years ago on the sparkling bay. Their deep, expressive eyes, and finely chiseled faces, full of Greek lines, amply confirm the historians' story of their descent. Indeed, a majority of the Syracusans are of the classic Greek type, with little or nothing about them to suggest the later influence of alien races.

Perhaps an hundred yards inside the mouth of the stream, beside a bridge, always stands a bevy of laundresses, stout-hearted, thick-thighed women with massive shoulders and muscular waists, their skirts carefully tucked up above their knees. Around their bare legs the icy water swirls in smart ripples, yet they toil there for hours together, seeming not to mind the cold in the slightest, though

a few old crones on the bank testify mutely in their deformed hands and rheumatic feet to the power of the river gods who thus repay the profanation of their pellucid stream.

Piled in baskets upon the shore and lying in bluish wet lumps upon black rocks are the clothes; and the linen is stout indeed that resists the battering those furious workers give it — a heavy club, a powerful right arm, a rough bare stone in running water which contains not a little sand and never a trace of soap. Indeed, the more pieces one's linen comes home in, the more certain he may be that he has a good laundress!

From the time a boat comes within hail until it disappears under the bridge beyond there is little washing done, the amiable amphibians evidently preferring to watch than to wash. Indeed, the only way to get a picture of them in action, is to threaten to pass by without paying toll unless they work. And then what washing it is! Not far beyond the laundresses is the open plain on the left of the stream, where two mutilated pillars, some ten minutes' or so walk back from the bank, are all that is left of the temple of Zeus Olympus. The temple was built about the beginning of the sixth century, and King Gelon covered the statue of Zeus in it with a robe of pure gold which he made of the precious metal taken from the defeated Carthaginians at Himera; but about a century later Dionys-

ius I took away the robe to convert it to his own purposes, telling the people, with grim humor, that it was "too cold in winter and too heavy for summer."

In the Cyane brook the men work slowly along, poling, pulling by the grasses, halting in little nooks in the banks to let down-coming boats slip by, rowing when they can. The limpid stream twists hither and yon through soft tinted fields alive with brilliant flowers. Here and there weeping willows, splendid old hairy trees, lean over the water and trail their long green tresses upon its quivering mirror. Exquisite papyrus plants, sylphlike shoots, top-heavy with the weight of their huge feather-dustery plumes, in places line both banks thickly for yards, or stand isolated in stately clumps ten, fifteen, eighteen feet high. Their presence is accounted for by two distinct traditions — one that they were brought in the ninth century by the invading Arabs. This is probably true, but there is no poetry about it. The other and prettier story tells of a gracious Pharaoh a thousand years earlier who, charmed by the reports of King Hieron's lovely and gentle queen, Philistis, sent her as his choicest gift the loveliest thing dark Egypt could produce. Whichever story suits your fancy best — believe it!

Whether they have lived in Sicily for ten centuries or twenty, the reeds still spring in slender, graceful stalks of tender green, without leaf or

gnarl, from the moist earth, nodding their powder-puff heads lazily over the sparkling water and dreaming — if plants ever dream — of their sun-steeped home of eld beside placid Father Nile. Nowhere else in the world to-day does this paper-reed of the ancient Pharaohs grow wild; and here it strikes a strange exotic note among the harmonies of European flower and field.

Clear as crystal and blue as the heavens is the circular pool from which the brook springs. Through its cold, pellucid azure splendid gray mullet and other fish — guardians of the sacred spring, perchance — dart or idle about among mimosa-like aquatic plants plainly visible twenty or thirty feet below. It is poetic water, full of shifting lights and nuances of color — now a silvery, glancing mirror, now soft gray and translucent, now pure azure and thin as rain-washed air; but always beautiful, always dimpling to the sun. And what more poetic than its story?

When Pluto — again to give the Greek legend in the Latinized form preferred by the present day Sicilians — carried off Proserpina from the shores of Lake Pergusa, one of her attendant nymphs, Cyane, followed weeping after the black chariot until, in this mead of Syracuse, the King of Darkness turned, passed his scepter before her face, and the poor nymph dissolved into a pool of tears, the Pool of Cyane. But so potent was her grief that her

tears, through all the centuries since, have continued to flow; and they still bubble up, a living spring beneath the limpid waters of the little blue mere, "To witness if I lie."

Going back down-stream, the boatmen give an astonishing exhibition of how to "protect" Government property. So jealously does the Italian Government guard its precious papyrus plants that each boat must stop at a station where customs guards keep watch to see that no visitor carries away more than one single stalk. The boatmen know this perfectly, yet when a fine clump of the reeds provokes the passengers to ecstasy they amiably stop and cut as many as they have passengers — and some for good measure — without a word about the regulations. When nearing the guard-float, however, they throw all the extra stalks overboard, explaining the rules to the bewilderment of the incensed or amused travelers. The absurdity of "protecting" the papyrus from destruction by throwing it away strikes an American sense of humor very hard. Perhaps a little stiff fining of the boatmen for cutting too many pieces would have a more salutary effect! But the "height of the ridiculous" is reached by the guards themselves. Looking us gravely over, they inquired if *La Signora* and I were *sposati.* I admitted it, and they shook their heads.

"Throw away *your* stalk," they said together to me. "A married couple is only one!"

X

SYRACUSE, THE PENTAPOLIS

NEVER make the blunder of trying to study the Greater City when any of the big "tourist yachts" are in port. You will know soon enough when they are — cloop! cloop! cloop! go the hoofs under your windows long before you have thought of breakfast. An endless string of carriages plods out of the island full of gesticulating, noisy, Baedekering enthusiasts who make up in cheery adjectives what they lack in knowledge. When they are back at evening, white with dust and happily weary, and the launches have taken them all on board the white floating palaces, Syracuse sighs and sleeps again. Once more it is safe to venture out. Once more cabs can be had at decent rates. And once more the timid ghosts of Greek and Roman days come to the gentle call.

Ortygia, the island, was once connected with the mainland by a mole of cut stone, and afterward separated and attached and separated again as the whims and dangers of the different periods dictated. Now it is both connected and detached. Between island and shore is the citadel, separated from both

by little canals crossed by stout bridges, and capable of defense in time of necessity. All the dust of a whole rainless season seems to concentrate upon the dusty road leading from the island across the bridges, by the citadel, past the rows of shipping that fill the docks on either side of the mole, and so on through the deserted square which was once the Agora of Syracuse.

Every Greek city had its *agora*, or marketplace, as every Roman city had its forum. Besides being the market, where food and commodities of every other sort were sold the *agora* was the assembling place of the city, the central exchange for news and views. You must use your imagination today to reconstruct the *agora*, to people it again with the dark faces and flowing robes of the Greeks of old, to hear the clank of weapons and armor as a Tyrant's bodyguard passes through the unsmiling crowd: for the *agora*, now, is only a bare, open square, through the middle of which a naked red column thrusts upward. A kindlier fate has overtaken the Roman Palæstra near by—a gymnasium and auditorium where the youth of Latinized Syracuse used to polish their muscles and wits alike. One exquisite bit of it remains — the little semicircular lecture hall, in which clear water covers the pit, and mirrors back the delicate maidenhair peeping from the cracks and joints between the marble seats in its gleaming horseshoe. What schoolboy

debating societies met here, and who were the "exchange professors" who held forth in this choice hall where now waterbugs and tiny lizards alone give sign of life?

Not far from town the road runs into pleasant farming country, followed by orchards of almonds, lemons, and citrons. Farther up the slopes of Neapolis and Epipolai straggle great rocky groves of uncanny, fantastically shaped old olives, the most disreputable-looking tenants of the soil imaginable. They are whorled like an oak, knobbed like an apple tree, split full of holes, leaning at all angles; and, most curious of all, some appear to be nothing but half-shells of bark, only half of each half-shell having any visible contact with the roots. How they live and bear fruit at all in such astonishingly rocky fields is a mystery, yet they are proverbially prolific. They seem ghosts of dead Syracuse, phantoms of the citizens who once, in the pride of their strength and glory, trod the streets of the great pentapolis of Epipolai, Neapolis, Tyche, Achradina and Ortygia — Syracuse all.

Fewer than thirty-two thousand inhabitants exist now in the city, where more than half a million once looked down upon the great argosies afloat in their twin harbors. And the hills where Gelon and the Hierons, Agathocles and Timoleon flourished, where Theocritus and Archimedes were born and toiled, lie apart, dotted with scattered limestone

ruins where hawk and bat, tourist and guide are the only living things to disturb this city of silence.

About the Outer City, as the four mainland boroughs were called, Dionysius I — a brilliant soldier who by treachery and intrigue succeeded in raising himself to the tyranny early in the fifth century — spent seventeen years in constructing an enormous wall. Sixty thousand workmen with six thousand yoke of oxen constructed nearly three and a half miles in twenty days, a task whose herculean labor cannot be appreciated until the enormous blocks and the dffiicult formation of the country have been studied. Of the sixteen miles originally built, rather more than ten are still standing to testify to the solidity of the tyrant's work.

On the westernmost point of Epipolai, the highest part of the city, Dionysius built his great fort of Euryelus, now completely ruined. Words cannot make clear the fort's size and strength. It is only at Syracuse, standing among the crumbling piles, that one can grasp the value and vastness of Dionysius's greatest work. Its five massive towers and deep moats, carved out of the living rock, make it hard to understand how it was ever captured. Nevertheless, two hundred years later the Romans under Marcellus did it, though not so much by storm as by treason. This siege was the work of an army, the brilliant defense of the city the triumph of a single engineer — brave old Archimedes,

who worked such marvels that not a man could be seen upon the walls. Away back in the good old King Hieron's time, he had pierced them for both near and distant shooting, and brought to perfection every imaginable weapon and military engine. Plutarch says he had huge claws with which he picked up galleys bodily and smashed them like eggs against the walls; ballistas and catapults and crossbows for heavy and light artillery; hooks like cranes' bills; and certain devices for picking up ships and whirling them around in the air like huge pinwheels till their crews were all spilled out or dead. So greatly did the Romans come to dread his uncanny machines that they finally refused to approach those silent, apparently unoccupied walls at all, and the city had to be taken some other way than by storm.

At last, after a year's siege, on the night of the Feast of Artemis, a party of Romans scaled the northern walls without resistance from the drunken guards, opened the gate, and the whole army marched in upon Epipolai. With the day, Marcellus stood there upon the heights and looked down over the fair city he had come so far to win. Stern man and able soldier though he was, this Roman had the soul of a poet, and as he looked, and mused upon all Syracuse had gone through before, all she would probably endure before he gained the inner city, he wept.

However, he did not have to fight his way — Ortygia was betrayed by a Spanish mercenary officer. The most tragic of the events that followed was the death of the greatest genius ever given to immortality by Sicily. The accounts differ in details. But it seems certain that Marcellus sent a soldier to summon Archimedes. The legionary found the aged scholar at work upon a mathematical problem, and when he asked for time to finish his demonstration, the blunderer misunderstood and killed him. Whether this be the exact truth or not, we know that Marcellus sincerely mourned his dead adversary.

In spite of the Roman commander's tears over the sufferings of Syracuse, when first he saw it, he did not scruple to take away all he could of its pictures and statues and other works of art to adorn his triumphal procession at home, while the public funds he seized for Rome. This plundering of unfortunate Syracuse did not by any means stop with Marcellus, but went on through centuries, the worst offender being Verres of infamous fame.

From the shattered walls of Fort Euryelus spreads a magnificent view, bounded only by the mists in the distance. North and south run the scalloped shores, fading into the dancing blue of the Mediterranean; south and eastward lies Ortygia, the sun sparkling upon its thousand facets of white walls and tiled roofs, while in the opposite di-

rection, when the clouds lift, stands majestic Ætna, still wearing his winter nightcap of snow. Straight west tower the hills, peak on peak, and the littoral blossoms with every scented fruit of the field.

Not far from the Fort is a little cottage marked *Caffè*, where the improvident, or those who have perfect digestions, may buy luncheon. But for the average person it is a good deal better to take along the sightseer's snack the hotel puts up without extra cost — if you are living *en pension* — and eat it on the back porch. The *Caffè* serves "tea," if you foolishly ask for it; but ink made from dried willow leaves is even less refreshing than the thin red country wine. Tea making is a fine art Sicily has yet to learn. However, the view from the rear veranda down the steep slope to the Bay of Trogilus more than compensates for the trivial discomforts of poor tea and iron chairs. Evidently the host is determined that his furniture shall not be numbered among the spoils of Sicily by the souvenir-hunting visitor.

How those ancient Greeks did build for futurity! Deep down under the rocky plateau, at the cost of no one knows how many lives or what money, they carved two enormous aqueducts that gave old Syracuse to drink from distant mountain streams. No dynamite helped them tear out the adamantine channel; no greasy rock-drills worked by steam chattered and thumped down there in the

dark where now one hears without seeing it, the water which still gurgles contentedly on its way to the sea. It is all hand work, and one is filled with admiration akin to awe as the eye follows the low, square limestone copings that mark the course of one of them across hill and vale and field, over the heights of the Epipolai down toward the harbor.

Though Rome has left us comparatively few monuments in Sicily, they show clearly the difference between Greek and Roman ideals, in life as well as in art. The Greeks reared matchless temples and theaters never equaled for their purity and simplicity; the Romans, baths and amphitheaters whose floridness suggested display and luxury. The amphitheater of Syracuse is like all Roman amphitheaters, a vast elliptical arena — it measures two hundred and thirty-one feet long by one hundred and thirty-two wide — with an enormous cistern in the middle, to provide for flooding the ellipse for naval spectacles. The arena wall forms the side of a vaulted corridor with eight gates to give entrance and exit for fighters and beasts. Above all rise the seats in tiers, and in the arena you can pick out, upon shattered blocks of marble, several names of patricians who were "box-holders" in the grand tier.

Its very size bears witness to the degradation of Syracuse under the Roman rule, when the citizens, no longer satisfied with "stage deaths" in the thea-

ter, or with the splendid comedies of Aristophanes, demanded actual death and real blood here in the larger arena, where to-day the peaceful grasses and wild flowers innumerable spread their cloth of green and gold and crimson in a winding sheet of eternal beauty about the sanguinary old ruin. Here we met a young countryman of ours who promptly announced that he was abroad studying languages, and that, since paterfamilias "had a pull," he was going to be a consul-general as soon as he finished his linguistic labors and decided to which country he wished to go.

A short distance beyond the amphitheater is the biggest altar in the world — six hundred and six feet long, seventy-five feet wide, and six feet high. King Hieron built it so that Syracuse might be able to celebrate its Independence Day properly — its Fourth of July, if you choose. When the last usurper had been gotten rid of, in what the historians call the First Age of Tyrants, the festival of the Eleutheria was instituted in honor of Zeus Eleutherios, the god of liberty; and it is rather remarkable that Syracuse kept right on celebrating after the democracy had ceased and the meaning of the festival had vanished. On Hieron's altar was made a sacrifice every year as big as the altar itself. Think of butchering and partly burning up four hundred and fifty oxen at once to make a holiday! But then, in those old days they were open-handed

devotees of their gods, and the whole city had a glorious spree on such a gala occasion as the Eleutherian Feasts.

Across the road is the Latomia del Paradiso, one of the vast quarries from which the stone that built Syracuse was hewn. Carved out of the solid rock to a depth of perhaps an hundred and twenty-five feet, the dripping, barren stonepit has mellowed with time; and Sicilian Nature, with her usual prodigality, has transformed it into a riot of warm wild color. Tradition makes Dionysius a suspicious monarch who constructed cavern-prisons to find out what was going on among his political prisoners. In the western wall of the Latomia is an S-shaped grotto which has been capriciously chosen as one of these strange houses of detention, and called the Ear of Dionysius. Whether it was really part of the tyrant's original plan or an accident in the quarrying, the fact remains that a person at the upper end can hear even whispers from below.

Alongside the Paradiso is another quarry, the Latomia di Santa Venerà, a cultivated garden filled with even more profuse and brilliantly colored vegetation than its beautiful neighbor. All through the quarries are great columns, ledges, pinnacles and turrets, evidently harder portions of the rock left by the quarrymen when they were taking out the stone.

Immediately to the west of the quarries is the

Greek Theater, a vast open playhouse, the largest in existence after those at Miletus and Megalopolis. Though the superstructure of fifteen tiers of seats and the stage have vanished, the auditorium is in very fair condition despite its age, about twenty-four hundred years. In the greatest days of Greece relatively little care was bestowed upon the design and decoration of private dwellings, and not a sign remains of most of them. But the theaters, the social centers of Greek-Sicilian life, remain; in part because they were hewn out of the everlasting rock of the hills, and partly because the Romans kept them in use and repair.

Here in the Syracusan Theater it was that the illustrious Pindar, laureate of princes, sang his most fulsome odes to the glory of that cruel and suspicious tyrant, the first Hieron, who is supposed to have founded it. We wonder at the poet's mood. Was it simply a question of so much flattery for so much patronage, or what — ? Two hundred years later the second Hieron, the good king, restored and embellished the theater; and upon fragments of the marble plating which covered the royal seats, we find his name with the names of his wife, the Queen Philistis, and Nereis, his daughter-in-law.

Philistis, with whom Hieron fell in love when he was only a rising young army officer, has left us her portrait upon striking coins. And certainly, if she was as sweet-faced and gentle as the artists

have pictured her in precious metal, we cannot wonder that her royal lover-husband wished to perpetuate her beauty forever. Like the tyrant Hieron, the King was a patron of the arts, and in his day Theocritus invented and developed his pastoral odes and bucolics, which marked the period in an artistic sense as clearly as Pindar's poems marked the earlier régime.

The theater saw more than one drama not of the pure stage, for here eager multitudes watched the glorious combat in the Great Harbor, and here later the "purest hero in the whole tale of Sicily" appeared before his adopted countrymen. Noble by birth and nobler by deed, Timoleon of Corinth, sent in 344 B. C. with an army in response to the plea of Syracuse for aid against tyrants at home and barbarians from abroad, reëstablished the republic, sent for his wife and children, and retiring from public life, settled down to enjoy his later years near the people he had liberated. But though sudden blindness smote the grand old soldier-statesman, his faculties were unclouded to the last. Whenever Syracuse had need of the cunning of his brain, the citizens brought him in state, in a carriage, and led him to the stage of the theater, where out of the fullness of his experience he advised them for the welfare of Syracuse. Eight years only elapsed from his coming to his silent departure across the Styx; and "So died and so was honored," Freeman

tells us, "the man of the worthiest fame in the whole story of Sicily, the man who thought it enough to deliver others and who sought nothing for himself."

And Timoleon was not only great — he was fortunate! To deliver a whole people quickly and well, to be smitten with the black affliction of blindness while still in the very zenith of his popularity — and so to add the people's pity and love to their admiration — and then soon to die a beloved hero before the fickle public mind could forget him and the fickle public tongue learn to slander and to curse his name, was the highest fortune man could wish — though in all probability Timoleon himself never realized how kind the gods were to him!

From the upper level of the Theater the most desolate street of Syracuse climbs up the hill — the Street of Tombs, its burial vaults and niches yawning and yearning for the bodies they once sheltered. For centuries it has been the amiable custom, whenever the tomb of a great man is lost, to ascribe to him the finest mausoleum in the vicinity. We know positively that Timoleon was buried either in or very near the *agora* of Syracuse. We know also that when Cicero was the quæstor of Sicily he discovered the tomb of Archimedes outside the city, and identified it by the geometrical diagram carved upon it to illustrate the master's favorite demonstration that the solid content of a sphere is equal to two-

thirds that of its circumscribing cylinder. Both mausolea have disappeared, and two fine Roman-Doric tombs beside the road to Catania have been arbitrarily identified with Timoleon and Archimedes, regardless of the rights of their original occupants.

Amusing incidents often transpire from the fact that the Sicilian is quite as eager to practice his halting English as we are to struggle with Italian. An ancient long-beareded monk in a very dirty robe opened the door of the church of San Giovanni Evangelista to us, and asked quickly: "*Tedesco?*"

"No."

"Ah — *Russky?*"

"No."

"Hmph. *Inglese?*"

"No."

"*Diavolo!* But you speak a little English, don't you?"

"A little," I replied — in Italian.

The monk stared at me in disgust. "If you can, why don't you? I speak it whenever I get the chance."

This exceedingly interesting church dates from the latter part of the twelfth century, and its rose-window is a splendid example of the glass-staining and composition of that time. According to a popular legend, the Apostle Paul preached in the crypt-like chapel when he was in town — "And landing in Syracuse, we tarried there three days" (Acts,

XXVIII:12) — and the monk shows the altar where he "celebrated the Mass." Unfortunately for the illusion, the original San Giovanni was a fourth century structure, so St. Paul could not have seen it on his way to Rome or at any other time. The monk also points out a granite column at which he says St. Marcian was scourged to death, becoming the first martyr in Syracuse, and his seat and vaulted altar-tomb.

St. Marcian's column stands close to the entrance to the catacombs, which underlie much of the Achradina quarter, and are not only far larger than those at Rome, but are among the most imposing subterranean cemeteries in the world. The main gallery, ten feet wide and eight feet high, runs through the solid limestone for more than a hundred yards. People of distinction were usually buried in the rotundas, large circular chambers or chapels; and here, when the churches above ground were destroyed, or open services interdicted, the hunted faithful worshiped in secret. Here and there, now carved over a door, now rudely daubed in red upon the side of some grave-niche, is the likeness of a palm branch, dumb witness that here lay one who valued faith more than life, and died a martyr.

Even in these dank and gloomy caverns brave souls made art of a crude sort possible. Upon the walls, in the lunettes and above the chapel altars are rough frescoes, poor things in color and design,

but breathing the civilizing message of that Divine love which nothing can conquer. Walls and ceilings and doorways of this miniature city of perpetual night are sooty and black with the fumes of the lamps the Christians used. There is little doubt that large numbers of them took refuge in the catacombs during the early persecutions. We to-day cannot conceive of the horror of living in clammy darkness lighted only by the feeble, guttering flames of little bronze lamps. But we can admire the stern fortitude of men and women who could endure all things, and gladly weave into the handles of those poor lamps the words "*Deo gratias* — Thanks to God!" Unfortunately, not a tomb has been left undisturbed, and the only relics now visible are an occasional small pile of bones and smashed pottery; the few sarcophagi which were found having been removed to the Museum where, out of place, they possess little or no significance.

In the same vicinity is the Latomia dei Cappuccini, the largest and by far the most impressive of the quarries, a huge, irregularly shaped gulf whose sides are precipices, honeycombed with small pits, all carved out of honey, or, it might be, from dull clouded amber, and whose uneven floor here and there springs into the air in enormous fantastic columns of golden-gray stone. Both walls and columns riot in luxuriant verdure and flowers — silver vermouth, yellow spurge, glorious crimson roses against green

cataracts of glossy ivy and myrtle, honeysuckle and clematis. In the heart of this vast floral labyrinth lofty pines reach vainly upward toward the world from still depths where no breeze ever scatters the leaves, no gales lash denuded branches; and sun-warmed and dew-bathed, little groves of silvery-gray olives flourish beside prickly pear, sulphur colored lemons, yellow nespoli, golden oranges, almond blossoms all a mass of pallor or blushes in the tender warmth of early Spring. Throughout this smiling beauty, shadows dapple rock and foliage, like somber memories of the tragic Greek days, when the captured Athenians were thrust into the inhospitable quarry, then no such glowing garden as it is today.

"At first the sun by day was both scorching and suffocating," says Thucydides, "for they had no roof over their heads, while the Autumn nights were cold, and the extremes of temperature engendered violent disorders. . . . The corpses of those who died from their wounds, from exposure to the weather, and the like, lay heaped one upon another. The stench was intolerable, and they were at the same time afflicted by hunger and thirst. . . . Every kind of misery which could befall men in such a place befell them. This was the condition of the captives for about ten weeks. . . . The whole number of the prisoners is not accurately known, but they were not less than seven thousand."

At the end of the ten weeks many of them were sold. Thucydides does not explain the fate of those not disposed of in the great auction, but Grote says: "The dramas of Euripides were so peculiarly popular throughout all Sicily, that those Athenian prisoners who knew by heart considerable portions of them, won the affections of their masters. Some even of the stragglers from the army are affirmed to have procured for themselves, by the same attraction, shelter and hospitality during their flight. Euripides, we are informed, lived to receive the thanks of several among these unhappy sufferers, after their return to Athens."*

Others beside the Athenians have found their last beds here. In a gloomy little side cave, cut in the wall a foot or two above the floor, is a niche sealed with a marble slab —

Sacred to the memory of
Richard Reynall, Esq., British Vice Consul To Syracuse
He departed this life Sept. 16
A. D. 1838.
He was killed in a duel by an expert with weapons he
did not know.

What a vista that opens up! Who was the braggart who forced the quarrel, what were the weapons, what the circumstances of the quarrel, the condi-

* History of Greece.

tions under which the courageous Englishman went consciously to his fate? And how sad the legend inscribed to our own young countryman upon a lonely niche in the soft tufa a little farther along —

"William Nicholson, Midshipman in the Navy of the United States of America, who was cut off from Society in the bloom of life and health on the 18th day of September, 104, A. D., *et anno ætatis 18.*"

Just above this *latomia*, among the olive groves and flowers, surrounded by fine gardens, is a charmingly situated hotel, whence one can look down into this sunken stone quarry-garden if he chooses, and dream of swart laborers hewing out the stones that reared Syracuse a city of cities, of the physical agonies and homesickness of the grave Athenian slaves, or simply of the graciousness of Demeter in clothing the ragged stones as not Solomon in all his glory was arrayed. But for me the hotel by the Bay, the outlook over sparkling, living water, the music of it ever in my ears. And to think of Syracuse is to think of the Promenade of Arethusa, with its musical speech, its Greek faces all about, its maidens and their lovers who need but the touch of sympathetic imagination to be transformed into the nymphs and fauns of Greek days!

XI

CATANIA AND MOUNT ÆTNA

CATANIA is the second city of the island in importance, and has a far reaching trade in oil and wine, sulphur and grain and almonds, and the other products of the rich and fertile plain at whose edge it stands guard. It is a city of humdrum, a town which, like Milan, reminds one strongly of some American manufacturing center with a large foreign population, and surely nothing could be further from presenting an historic visage at first sight. Yet its history is a picturesque and vivid tapestry of which the main threads have always been the heroic spirit and enterprise of its people.

Settled in 729 B. C.— when the city by the Tiber was only a quarter of a century old — Kataneion or Katane in the sixth century became famous for a reformer and lawgiver named Charondas, some of whose enactments were decidedly original. Divorce he made simple. . . . Either husband or wife could put away the other for sufficient cause; but neither could remarry with *anyone younger than the person divorced!* And Charondas died by one of his

own laws, which forbade men to come armed into the General Assembly. The story goes that he had been out in the hills hunting robbers: when he came back the Assembly was in an uproar, and he hurried in to quiet things. Instantly a member saw his sword, and cried: "Charondas, you break your own law!"

"By Zeus!" he replied, "I will not set aside my law — I will confirm it!" and he plunged the sword into his breast.

Long afterward, in B. C., 476, the emulous Tyrant Hieron juggled with the city's name and its people, depopulating it and then recolonizing it with new settlers and giving it another name. Are the sober Catanians who pass us to-day descended from the old citizens who came back into their own when the Tyrant died? Or are this trolley-car conductor, this gayly uniformed hall-porter, sons of the Hieronic colonists? And this very street on which we study the Catanians of to-day — was it the ancient way leading toward Ætna, for whom the city was renamed?

The chief reason for Catania's modern appearance is — it is modern! Destroyed so many times, now in part, again entirely, by Ætna, it is more or less new, a veritable phœnix of Sicilian cities. Suspended from the ceiling of our room in the hotel was the very newest thing, a huge chandelier garnished with exceedingly new and shiny electric light fix-

tures. But alas! when we attempted to illuminate, we found the chandelier a hollow delusion. When the porter came, he smiled with the indulgence of superior knowledge.

"The chandelier is not intended for lighting. That would be extra — electricity is very expensive!" So we had to be content with the feeble gleam of one honest tallow dip in a room almost as big as a whole floor in a New York mansion.

As to antiquities, Catania has its share — a Greek Theater, a Roman amphitheater, a forum, baths, a nymphæum, and aqueduct, and so on. Most of them, thanks to Ætna's past activity, are now subterranean and but partly excavated — indeed, almost forgotten. But Catania does better by her celebrities. Tisias of Himera, locally nicknamed Stesichorus because of his genius in perfecting the lyric chorus of the Greek drama presented in the Theater some fourteen hundred years ago, has had a large and handsome square named in his honor, as well as the street leading straight from the heart of the town toward the mountain.

In the Piazza Stesicoro stands a monument to Catania's favorite son, Bellini the composer, born here in 1802 and brought back in 1867 from Paris, where he died. A more effective monument is the Villa Bellini, the city's handsome, hilly public park. Myriad steep paths of clean yellow and white pebbles carefully set on edge in mortar, picked out in black

and white scrollwork, and edged with solid walls of variegated flowers, lead up to two fine knolls, on one of which is a trim little belvedere flanked by flowerbeds. On the other is a large bandstand. Between the two Ætna hangs motionless on the horizon, more like the mirrored reflection of a volcano than a real mountain, his feet clothed in the foliage of vineyard and forest, his head capped with snows that almost never melt, gleaming in the sunshine like a giant's silvery hair.

Another charming little park is the Flora della Marina, a narrow strip of garden and greensward along the Bay. As you come through an arch of the railway viaduct, it bursts upon you with the same effect that a strip of brilliant Persian embroidery would have upon a somber coat, and you exclaim with pleasure at the inviting lawns and starry beds of bright colored flowers. Here and there idles an immaculate and lynx-eyed customs guard in sailor's uniform. From the ship's mast in the center floats the gaudy Italian tricolor; and in the background is a sailors' home from which tarry old shellbacks stump out to sit dreaming on the benches that give upon the Bay.

King Roger's eleventh century Cathedral has been so restored, because of the earthquakes that have wrecked it time after time, that it is simply a huge, composite modern structure. It contains the tombs of various members of the royal house of Aragón,

who generally resided here while the powerful baronial families were really ruling in Palermo the capital. In 1445 King Alphonso the Generous founded the first Sicilian university here, and for a long time Catania was the literary center of the island. The handsome new university building, however, dates back only to 1818.

Sicily has always been rather finicky about its saints, and Agatha of Catania, Lucy of Syracuse and Rosalie of Palermo are only three among many venerated virgin patronesses. Saint Agatha was executed by the Roman prætor Quintianus, and has a chapel in the Cathedral containing relics and jewels and a gilded silver statue said to contain her head. In any event, the figure is highly revered, and every year, in February, is carried in procession from church to church throughout the city. Image and pedestal weigh several tons, and about three hundred men robed in white, sturdy fellows all, have to shoulder the fifty-foot beams to lift it. Even with so many bearers, the procession moves forward only a few feet at a time, and it takes two or three days to complete the ceremony.

Holy day spells holiday to the Latin, and his religious ecstasy finds outlet in blazing fireworks, whoops of joyous enthusiasm, streets jammed to suffocation. Windows and housetops as well as the streets are packed with an eager, childish throng bubbling over with mercurial spirits. One of the

queerest features of this celebration, which goes back to time immemorial, is a privilege allowed the usually demure and sedate women. A young Catanian told me with great relish that on festival nights the women veil heavily, completely hiding their faces with the exception of the left eye. With that they may work such havoc as they can. Even the bearers of the sacred image return the sly winks and coquettish glances of the flirts whose identity is so perfectly concealed.

In the Piazza Duomo before the Cathedral, is a queer old lava elephant, mounted upon a florid pedestal, bearing upon his saddle an Egyptian obelisk. He looks down upon the noisy trolley cars circling about his feet with an amused expression, as if ridiculing such foolish modern means of conveyance. So old is he that no one knows when he was made, nor why, though legend says the artist was the necromancer Heliodorus — surely a man talented enough to fly through the air from Constantinople to Catania to escape his persecutors, was capable of executing even this weird beast!

Amber of a most unusual quality is a feature of Catania. Nearly every store has some of it, in the rough, and made up into beautiful beads, brooches, smokers' articles, combs and ornaments of various sorts, though it is not nearly so plentiful to-day as it was twenty years or so ago. The merchants shake their heads over the future of this now high

priced commodity, for the best beds have been completely exhausted, and the divers have greater difficulty every year in finding enough. Deeper in color than the usual clear or clouded variety, this amber is a rich marmalade color, with hues ranging from black and dark brown in the cheaper grades through all the ochres and umbers to pure yellow of different tones. The choicest pieces look as if the clear amber had been dipped in oil or vaseline, giving it a distinct bluish tint, observable, the dealers claim, in no other amber in the world — the same tinge that is to be seen upon water when oil is spilled upon it; and the amount of blue, and its brilliancy, determine the value of the product.

In some of the pieces are perfectly preserved mosquitoes, looking exactly like bottled specimens in the museums.

"How old are they?" I asked one dealer.

The Catanian shrugged his despair of figures. "Oh! They were old already when Homer sailed his ship in here on the way back to Troy. They must be five hundred years old at least, *Signore!*"

After all, it is neither history, modern character, nor amber that makes Catania, but Ætna. The finest view of him to be had from the city is from the suppressesd Benedictine monastery of San Niccolò, or San Benedetto, on the western edge of the town. Its church, the largest in Sicily and interesting in itself, contains one of the finest pipe organs

on the island, an immense instrument with five keyboards. When we asked how soon the next service would be held — I consulted my watch as I spoke — the custodian smiled. "*Gia!* You will have a long time to wait for the next service. It is played once a year, *Signore.* No more. A very fine organist, the best in Italy, comes down from Naples and plays. He has just been here!"

Since 1866 the monastery has been used as a barrack and school, museum and library. On the roof rises the large dome of the Observatory. Connected with it, and really of much greater practical importance, is an underground laboratory and experiment station full of seismographs and other instruments of the finest precision for the study and recording of earthquakes. To anyone interested in vulcanological phenomena, this deepset cavern and its curious apparatus make one of the most fascinating objects of interest in Sicily — yes, in the world.

From the dome of the church of San Niccolò you see not only Ætna, but the whole horizon. On all sides stretch the reddish-brown tiles of the city, the flat evenness and monotony broken here and there as spire or dome thrusts up through the red crust. Off to one side a prosperous little street ends abruptly in a ragged edged wall of lava some thirty or forty feet high, testifying mutely to the terrific activity that has characterized Ætna at intervals for hundreds of years. A little farther

along desolation begins, and nothing is visible in that direction but a long brown spoor leading up the giant's side — a cold stone river to-day, rough and scaly as an armadillo's back, but once a fiery serpent whose glowing jaws opened to engulf at least part of the metropolis. On either side beyond the confines of the rebuilt town are vineyards and silver-gray olive groves, vegetable gardens and glowing plantations, full of warmth and color and contrast, and above all the hard china blue of the hot Sicilian sky.

Above everything towers the tremendous bulk of Ætna — Mongibello — standing superbly alone, lord of all this eastern section of Sicily, rising from the sea without foothills or approach. To-day the Titan sleeps, but in the eighty major awakenings recorded in historic times, he has wrought incalculable destruction. Lava has poured from those black lips in hissing floods, one of which covered forty square miles; earthquakes which have laid fifty cities in ruins at once have accompanied the fiery retchings of the monster; ashes and sulphur and stones by millions of tons have rained destruction upon the fertile countryside for miles around. Yet though he has wrought misery and death ruthlessly, Ætna is also a benefactor, for the soil he has made and fertilized bears crops of marvelous richness and abundance. Tradition from the beginning has made the crater the prison of a cyclops, whose struggles

to free himself have caused the eruptions. Virgil sang of him; Empedocles; many another. Sicily to them was preëminently the home of the nether gods, and Ætna their most striking manifestation, a peak of mingled fire and snow. Indeed, it was not until Dante came that men were willing to believe anything less of Ætna than the supernatural.

The area of Sicily is some ten thousand square miles, and this greatest of European volcanoes occupies almost one-twentieth of it. It is nearly 11,000 feet high — the ascent is practicable only in Summer — and covered with more than two hundred smaller volcanoes or cones, huge safety-valves for the big boiler, through which the continual ebullition of the slumbering hell within finds exit in steam and vapors.

Having experienced the doubtful delights of climbing smaller Vesuvius — it is less than half Ætna's height — we decided that Ætna was to be ours from a distance only, much as we regretted not to see the indescribably magnificent effect of sunrise from its peak. Many visitors are satisfied to make the shorter, easier trip up the Monti Rossi, "The Brothers," two of the minor craters thrown up in 1669 on the side of the main peak. They rise to the not inconsiderable height of three thousand feet themselves, and the views from them are very fine. It is possible, moreover, to encircle the mountain by railway, and so to enjoy very satisfactory vistas of

both volcano and countryside — vast ragged plains of lava like petrified sponges of red and black and gray, the dark, fertile soil the lava makes, rich with vineyards and fruit plantations, small "safety-valve" craters, often hissing threats, and farm-houses among the trees in this, the most thickly populated agricultural district in creation. A brief stop over at one or more of the towns along the line affords still further opportunity to see the Titan and his works.

All these towns are rich in history, and the most surprising and impossible echoes come ringing out of the past at the touch of a modern foot. For instance, Adernò, a comfortable town with a big, dilapidated Norman castle in it, stands on the spot where Dionysius I founded his city of Hadranum twenty-three hundred years ago. Near it once stood the Sikel temple of Hadranos. Instead of human guardians, more than a thousand great dogs protected this shrine of the fire god, and their fame spread all over the world. Fragments of this structure are still to be found in a private garden near the town.

The railroad — it is called Circumetnéa — not only encircles the mountain, as its title indicates, but also climbs up along the slopes, reaching an altitude at one point 3,195 feet above the sea. This gives the traveler an opportunity to see two of the different zones or belts of vegetation on the vol-

cano. Lowest of all is the cultivated zone, in which deciduous growths and the grapes of Ætna play a prominent part. Just above the tracks begins the second belt, known as the *Regione Boscosa*, or forest region, which reaches up nearly four thousand feet higher. This consists mainly of evergreen pines, of birches in its upper section, and of a few insignificant groves of oak. The third and topmost division, extending to the black lipped silent crater itself, is the sterile *Deserta*, where only the most stunted vegetation exists.

In 1040 that Byzantine would-be deliverer of Sicily, Giorgios Maniakes, attacked the Saracens outside Maletto. The Norwegian Prince — afterward King — Harald Hardradr, and a considerable body of his berserkers formed part of the Byzantine army; and the allied forces scored a decisive victory. A century and a quarter later a monastery was founded there, and in 1799, during the Bourbon period, Ferdinand IV gave the whole estate to Lord Nelson, creating him Duke of Bronte, a nearby town whose name means thunder. The Villa, as it is now called, is still the property of an Englishman, the Viscount Bridport, who also retains his local title.

The most picturesque of these Ætnean towns is Randazzo, an interesting place where the women throw voluminous white shawls over their heads when they go to mass. Although Randazzo is

closer to the crater than any other town, it has always escaped destruction, and so is full of exceedingly interesting medieval remains — houses, a palace with an inscription in Latin so poor that a schoolboy might have written it, and a ducal castle now used as a prison. What an untoward fate for a noble structure from whose walls project the sharp iron spikes where the ancient Dukes impaled the heads of criminals they executed! During July and August Ætna may be ascended from Randazzo. The trip takes only about six hours, and the hotel proprietor will provide guides, mules and food for about seven dollars (American), for each climber.

Another echo of ancient days is the little Byzantine church at Malvagna, the only one of its kind in the island, by the way, that survived the Saracen invasion and conquest.

A delightful little excursion may be made from Catania by carriage and boat along the coast to the Scogli de' Ciclopi. To the prosy geologists, who mess about with their little hammers, these tremendous boulders are no doubt merely evidences of titanic natural convulsions. But to the rest of mankind, with a love for blind old Homer, they are the stones poor clumsy Polyphemus hurled at escaping Ulysses and his intrepid companions. The stately hexameters of the Odyssey give the story a noble swing — the brawny Greek hero burning out the drunken giant's eye with the blazing end of a pole;

the escape in the chilly dawn clinging to the bellies of the cyclop's sheep while he ran his huge hands over their backs; the launching of the little boat, and the daring mockery of the bewildered giant.

Blind and raging, crossed for the second time in his blighted life by puny beings he could crush with one hand, Polyphemus tore off the top of a small hill and threw it, missing the Greeks by a hair, but raising such a wave that their boat was almost washed ashore. Again Ulysses cried out upon him, and again the giant threw. And to this day the rocks tower out of the sea, one of them over two hundred feet above water and a couple of thousand feet in girth. Out of this giant's missile the Italian authorities have made them a geodetic survey and hydrographic station. What would Homer — or Ulysses! — think if he could see the rocks to-day? Curiously enough, though the Odyssey particularizes regarding these two of the Scogli, or Rocks, it says nothing whatever as to the other five of the group.

Right here another picturesque legend dealing with Polyphemus develops. For miles along this shore, town after town has *Aci* prefixed to its name, as a reminder of the story of Galatea and Acis. Polyphemus — huge, gross, uncouth monster — had no attraction for the dainty nymph, but as so often happens in even the prosaic days of fact, his bulk did not keep him from loving Galatea passionately.

So when — if one may be irreverently colloquial — the shepherd boy Acis "cut him out," Polyphemus crushed him to death with stones in Galatea's bower. Olympus heard her piteous mourning, and from the lifeblood of Acis sprang a crystal stream which imparted its life to the fields of Catania until jealous Ætna drank it up. But Acis lives in spite of the giant. Acireale, Acicastello, Aci San Antonio — how quaintly pagan and Christian myths mingle in the Latin countries! — and many another Aci perpetuate him.

Acireale, about ten miles from Catania on the main line of the railroad to Taormina, is a pleasant place to make a stay. Its mineral springs, the delightful views by sea and shore, the walks and drives in every direction through surroundings of the keenest interest and beauty, and, for those who are fond of the water, the little boat trips in the vicinity, make it a most agreeable spot in which to idle during the soft Sicilian Spring.

XII

TAORMINA

SICILIAN railroad trains have the very amiable — or would some people spell that word exasperating? — habit of never running according to schedule. One is tempted at times to wonder why they have a time-table at all! Express or local, the train is always either too late or too early. You may take your choice of reaching the station well ahead of the "due" time, and vegetating until the little locomotive sniffles shamefacedly in, away late, or going on time and finding the carriage doors locked, the train ready to leave, and the guards very much disinclined to open for you. A jingling of one's pocket usually unlocks the doors in such circumstances, however.

Did I say, "express or local"? Which it is is a puzzle, since it is all one. The "local" part of the train has to rush madly by stations whenever the "express" part does; and the "express" half is obliged to halt whenever the "local" end comes to a station it especially likes. Which train you ride in depends entirely on the label that happens to be on your car! But even with these vagaries,

the railways are good, the employés courteous, usually amenable to jingling reason, and the service unusually safe. A railroad inspector I talked with explained this safety tersely. "Italians or Sicilians would not matter. But, *per Baccho*, to smash up foreigners — we can't afford it!" As to that, their private reasons are none of our affair. That we can feel safe, and be safe, is the main thing.

The day we came to Taormina we reached the station too early, and a miracle occurred. The train was early, too — fifteen minutes too early! — and we secured an excellent compartment and waited. That was decidedly too early to go ahead with safety, so engineer and conductor strolled about town making friendly calls, a trainman had an *apéritif* at a nearby *caffé*, and we started at last in leisurely fashion — five minutes behind time.

The station is Giardini-Taormina, at the sea level; and Giardini, though theoretically Taormina's "harbor," is only a little fishing village. Yet here twenty-five centuries ago the first of Sicily's deliverers, the noble Timoleon of Corinth, landed to begin the work that built him such fame and gave Sicily such liberty. And in 1860 the second Deliverer, Giuseppe Garibaldi, after completing his work in Sicily, embarked here for Reggio di Calabria to continue his campaign of liberation on the Italian mainland. Nowadays nobody stops to look at Giardini twice, since far above, on the great cliffs against

which it nestles, lies the favorite beauty spot of Sicily, the haunt of artist and traveler the year around.

If you so much as look doubtfully at the rickety old landaus that meet the train, a driver will pile your luggage into one, almost push you in after it, and cracking his whip, start slowly up the road, a long, gentle ascent built in great sweeping curves. Splendid views unveil themselves at every foot of the way. Below lies the sea, ranging from transparent, broken-edged emerald at the beach, to fathomless azure in the depths, and a dull, dusty, almost colorless void at the horizon. It is streaked with wind-paths, flecked with tiny whitecaps, dotted with fishing boats flitting about like white bats, while far up the Strait where Italy seems to reach over and embrace its lovely sister, it is easy to imagine Scylla and Charybdis reaching out hungry, gleaming hands for the hapless voyagers rashly passing between. It is hard to think of anything else than the Argonauts, even amid the beauty of wild and cultivated flowers, vegetation clinging tenaciously to the face of the cliffs, or growing in luxuriance upon terraces in lovely banked and esplanaded gardens. Picturesque villas of every type range all the way from the usual bare, square, white hut-style to artists' abominations in all manner of castellated, battlemented, machicolated forms.

A turn in the road opens a matchless vista of

Ætna; another,— and squarely in front glimmers the red and tan ruin of the Greek Theater, perched high upon the jutting crest of a mound from which the spectators of the play had magnificent views to amuse them in case they tired of the work of the chorus. Standing on tiptoe at the very edges of precipitous acclivities big, pleasant looking hotels peer down with staring window-eyes, very attractive, but a trifle suggestive of what might happen should the edge of some particular precipice crumble off.

If you have been staying all along the way at the usual Swiss hotels with their familiar Franco-German cooking, why not try a genuinely Sicilian hostelry for once! Such quarters are to be found on the main street, in a hotel which wanders up and down the hillside in an ungainly series of overlapping stories and queer detached turrets and belvederes. From the street, the entrance looks very much like a black hole in the wall. It is exactly the same as the door of a little carpenter shop alongside, with the single exception of an inscription in faded paint: *Ristorante.*

The greatest charm of the place is a garden, which rambles about partly on the level, partly down steep little banks, and then, in the rear, rolls up to a stone wall beyond which is one of the milky white roads of the country. It is crammed with the wildest sort of tangled climbing roses, tiny things the rich color of a Maréchal Niel but no bigger than a

"The red and tan ruin of the Greek Theater . . . But it is Aetna that makes Taormina."

ten-cent piece; large red, yellow, pink and white roses; splendid geraniums, orange trees, lemons, medlars, almonds, stubby agaves, prickly pear, pink-flowered climbing cactus, and wonder of wonders, even a pair of apple trees! Ivy, numerous other vines and brilliant convolvulus riot about them all, while down the center runs a path under lemon-arches half smothered in rose bloom.

Beside this walk is a trellis bower covered with thousands of the tiny yellow roses, and furnished with a marble-topped table and an iron chair — an ideal literary workshop. But alas! the village tinsmith evidently shared my prejudice in its favor. When I came out prepared to work he had already preëmpted it for his mechanical workshop, and was filling the air with clatter and the noxious fumes of smoldering charcoal as he knocked together watering-pots to keep the garden green.

There are so many means of communication between the wings and the dining-room that it is very easy to lose one's self. Beware the kitchen stair especially, where a large, plump, elderly, and exceedingly dignified goat often blocks the way. Try to push her gently aside, and you are astonished to find how heavy and strong a goat is. Take her firmly by her stump of a tail and one horn, to hoist her bodily, and the proverbial pig under the stile could make no more distressing noise. Among those who hear is the cook. Full of apologies, and un-

heeding terrific protests, she grabs at the animal's beard and a horn or leg, and literally yanks her inside. But the moment she lets go, Signora Goat bounces out again as though on the end of a rubber band.

Taormina is bound to the green hillside by one long, curving white ribbon of a street, with flying tag-ends of alleys and byways. This Corso Vittorio Emmanuele is the artery that carries the thin but pulsing tide of the town's affairs, a narrow, windswept chasm, but far from being a dull one. Traffic is brisk, and the tiny shops, whose dark interiors are scarcely more than visible, do a lively trade with the townsfolk and *contadini.* Here and there a curio store — Taormina lives and fattens on the gullible foreigner, be he collector, artist, or traveler only — displays a great stringful of pottery hung beside the door to tempt the unwary browsing antiquary with tangible memories of "the glory that was Greece."

All about artistic decay is embayed by square, ugly, utilitarian buildings which the natives consider more practical than the exquisite finery of their noble predecessors. The very unexpectedness with which delicate bits of ruin appear constitutes one of the town's greatest charms. Yet happy in its isolation is the Badia Vecchia, a bit of fine old crumbling, machicolated stone tower once the nunnery of Taormina, surrounded by a brilliant patch

of lavender-flowered cactus among the trees on the irregular hillside above the town. Roofless and abandoned, it stands outlined in soft brown against the cobalt sky, its delicate windows still bordered by snowy marble diapering, its walls partly checkered in black lava and white marble, a noble Gothic picture, saturated with the atmosphere of Norman days.

A rugged, winding path leads up this hillside to the ancient castle, crowning a crag far above, though the usual route is by way of Mola. To-day the chief importance of the castle is as a platform for viewing the stirring panorama of shore and hills. Just beyond Giardini on a little promontory now covered by a luxuriant lemon plantation, those ardent pioneers under Theocles — it seems hardly fair to call them pirates, as some writers have done — established Naxos, the elder sister of all Greek colonies in Sicily, in 735 B. C. One thing of especial interest about Naxos is that outside its walls on what quickly became neutral ground, the colonists erected an altar and shrine to Apollo Archegetes, not merely the patron of Naxos, but the patron of all Hellenic Sicily. Hither all the Greeks could come in safety for a blessing ere departing on a journey, no matter what internecine strife might rage in the island. The athletes and patrons of the Olympic and Isthmian Games came here before sailing, to secure the favor of the god

in their endeavors to wrest the laurel from their brethren of Greece.

Naxos, however, was short-lived compared with the other cities. In 476 B. C., the Tyrant Hieron of Syracuse, who might well be called "the juggler of colonies," forcibly depopulated it and resettled its inhabitants in the city of Leontinoi. This seems to have been a favorite amusement of tyrants. To satisfy a passing whim, or as a means of punishment, the tyrant of the moment would calmly compel some unfortunate community to move in a hurry to a spot of his own choosing. However, there seem to have been people living in Naxos seventy-three years later, for we read that in 403 Dionysius destroyed it completely, and ever since it has existed only as a name, as the first milestone along the path of the superior incoming Greek civilization that made Sicily great.

The Taormina castle, by the way, is an excellent vantage point from which to pick out the places to which excursions may be made, and there are many very attractive ones — by boat, on foot, or on donkeyback, to Capo di Taormina and Capo di Sant' Andrea, where the coast is pock-marked with curious grottoes, to Monte Venere, to Monte Zirreto, and to many another local beauty spot.

In Sicily you must not believe everything you think you hear — and above all, you must not act rashly upon such an impression. When a Sicilian is

feeling well, his "Good morning, sir!" sounds like "Spartacus to the gladiators." When anyone addresses you as though murder were contemplated, with yourself as the victim, be easy. It is most likely to be a polite wish for a pleasant journey, delivered with characteristic Latin fervor and inflection. Our first morning in Taormina, a wild looking peasant beauty bearing upon her shapely head a huge dripping amphora, stopped us with uncouth gestures and a laugh so eldritch it startled us. Jerking her finger at *La Signora*, she poured forth a torrent of impassioned Sicilian dialect we failed to understand, though I thought she said we were folk unfit to be in Taormina and had better leave immediately.

Unpleasant thoughts of the *Maffiusi* — the *Mano Nera* we loosely call them — swept through me. The girl's utterance was so fierce, her expression so positively menacing, I wondered whether she might not be really an agent of the dreaded band. But before my combined annoyance and alarm led me into difficulties, two Taorminians came up and explained in Italian: "The *signorita* is afraid your *Signora* will lose her handkerchief. It is falling out of her belt."

I was glad I had not shouted for the police!

When I asked the girl, who could understand Italian perfectly, though she spoke none herself, if I might photograph her, she consented without a

trace of her former ferocity and — with a self-respect unfortunately rare in Taormina — refused any gratuity, merely wishing us a torrential good day as she vanished up the black and smoky stairs of a stone hut on one of the side streets.

It is a pity the town has not more like her. The Taorminians display comparatively little of the simple geniality and charm of the Palermitans, little of their bright-faced innocence and heartiness. At first it is hard to understand why, since they are no less Sicilian than their fellows of the capital. But a slight acquaintance with them will convince the most casual observer that they have learned their own value only too well as replicas of Greek and Roman and Saracenic beauty. Consequently many of them have turned from simple hill folk into insincere, lazy, professional poseurs, alert for camera or pencil, and lost forever to the childlike graces that distinguish their brothers.

And not only are the people replicas of the past, but their native music is reminiscent also — pure Greek melodies that have floated down the river of time from the days when Bion and Theocritus rambled these same hills and wrote songs eternally young; Saracenic love-songs full of the wild spirit of desert and river, quavering and melancholic; passionate lyric romances suggestive of cavalier Norman days. But it is the Greek that, being the purest and simplest strain, has always prevailed. Every day little shepherd lads stir the terrific soli-

"The girl's utterance was fierce, her expression positively menacing."

tudes of wind-swept mountain steeps with wordless songs drawn as by magic from their reedy flutes, music shrilly sweet and unforgettable. And at dinner in the evening you may hear some little minstrel wandering up and down the Corso, fluting his heart out in the moonlight.

In your eagerness you peradventure hale him into the mysterious labyrinthine "Garden of the Moon" behind the hotel, where the silvery blue orb of a great arc-lamp glows among the interlacing almonds and medlars, and bid him play. But he is a shy, embarrassed Pan, stiff of finger, timid of lip until he forgets the listening bystanders. Then the magic pipe takes up again the silver strain. There is no hotel upon the mountainside, but only the melody, the moon-mellowed primeval forest, the slumbering forms of the little shepherd's weary flock. The music ceases — the elfin charm is broken. Rudely over the fairy ring of your vision burst the ungentle voices of moderns in tailor-fashioned clothes, stiff boots and Paris hats, wearing no chaplets of ivy or acanthus upon ambrosial locks — and worst of all, some of them smoking cigarettes!

One such night I pleaded with the little minstrel, urged him by strange and magic names he never knew, to let me have his reed. Reluctantly, unsmiling, he gave it up, and as I write, it lies close by. But alas, no more it knows the Grecian strain — it will not sing for me!

XIII

SOME MOUNTAIN VISTAS

THE ignorance and illiteracy to which reference has already been made are the chief misfortunes of the Sicilians. Since schools are few and far between, little girls are taught only to sew, knit and cook. The boys, more unfortunate, receive little or no instruction at all — there is work for them as soon as they are old enough, and they are useful in the fields and about the stables and goatpens at six or eight. The children of wealthy or noble families seem to be regarded as superior beings who have to learn practically nothing, and who accordingly go through life unworried by knowing anything. A few years ago an English lady undertook to make Taormina over single handed, and though the town still has a long and thorny road to travel, the results the Hill School has accomplished in helping the people to help themselves have surpassed all anticipations, and prove that even with both heredity and environment against them, the people are willing to learn and to work when shown how.

Within one of the dark doorways along the Corso

"She charged ten cents a month each for tuition . . . 'It is much for some!'"

is a typically Taorminian institution, a knitting school where little tots sit demurely knitting, crocheting or embroidering with faces as expressionless as the visages of so many trained kittens. The "lady principal" comes forward graciously to welcome visitors in her tiny domain, and readily grants permission to make photographs. But the room is lighted only from the front door, and the little heads and bodies are so difficult to keep in repose for even a few seconds that photography is speedily abandoned for an inspection of the work of the pupils, babies of from three upward, except that occasionally an older girl takes a "post graduate course" in fine embroidering. They click away industriously as their visitors pass along the line, and some do not even glance up, so thoroughly have they been drilled by the schoolmistress. Each juvenile knitter uses two long needles and wears a belt with a little leather plastron, in which the butt-end of the stationary needle rests, to protect the thinly clad little body from the prick of the sharp steel instrument.

When we visited the school, I asked the teacher how much she charged for tuition.

"Ten cents a month each," was her grave reply. "It is much for some to pay."

"Does that pay you?"

She waved her hand at the circle of twenty-five pupils. "It does!"

The food of the people is intended to support life rather than gratify the palate. And though the little ones, like normal children anywhere in the world, are gifted with a sweet tooth, their desire for *dolci* is very, very seldom gratified. So when you loiter about the door of the little school, be sure to have a bag of sweet cakes with you — the bakers along the Corso all sell them. The "lady principal" will gladly permit you to distribute the glistening, white-iced treasures, and you will be amply repaid in watching the pupils — the daintiness with which they accept and hold the proffered delicacies, the timid "*Graz', Signora! Graz'!*" of each, the perfect restraint of eager eyes and mouths.

A very important personage in this little mountain town is Signor Atenasio Pancrazio, banker, steamship agent, postal messenger, and storekeeper; and curious indeed are his business methods. On four days which we noticed especially because of a desire to get at some of Signor Atenasio's money, he opened his bank-store at the somewhat irregular and unusual hours of eleven-thirty, a quarter before nine, noon, and twenty minutes past three. And then, to make the hours appear still less like a matter of sordid business for gain, the gentleman threw wide his doors on a Sunday morning and kept open shop, bank and house until long after everybody but the ubiquitous tourist had gone to bed.

Banker though he is, the good gentleman has ideas above mere money-making, and if you are content to sit at his feet in the big, dim counting-room — which smells of cheese and wine, of garlic and rubber-stamp ink — you can learn much about the Sicilian problem, which is as perplexing to the Italian Government as the Irish bogy is to Downing Street. When absentee landlordism is combined with ignorance and poverty, it makes a problem indeed.

The agricultural system is very old. It had its inception as long ago as the days when Pope Gregory the Great was one of the most important proprietors in the island, in the name and person of the Church. He was a good and careful landlord, but others are the opposite, and the system, always unjust, has degenerated. At the present time an estate is nominally managed on behalf of the owner by a factor, who most often re-rents it to someone else. This third person in turn, not wishing to cultivate it personally, leases it in small patches to the farmer at exorbitant rates, or to a fourth factor, who repeats the operation. Thus when the peasant finally comes into possession of his acres, he is paying so heavy a rental that it is practically impossible to do more than make his actual expenses.

Driven to desperation by such a condition and often in actual need, he has recourse to the money-

lender, who loans readily — and collects with grim certainty, practically enslaving the wretched farmer. The usurers grow rich, but they hoard up their evil fortunes, keeping the money out of circulation, and the country is the poorer. Naturally the steamship office becomes the most important place in towns where discontent prevails. The companies have men ready to answer all questions, and more than willing to encourage the peasant to give up his hardly earned savings, providing he is physically sound. Indeed, they even send glib and persuasive agents about to drum up trade in likely districts by painting glowing pictures of the golden streets of America.

"Signor Atenasio," I said, "you are a steamship agent yourself. Do you go about and make trade this way?"

"The holy Saint Pancratius forbid!" he exclaimed, piously calling upon his patron. But he spoiled the effect by adding instantly: "No, I do not have to. I get all the trade there is in Mola anyway. It is very little," he shrugged, and turned the subject.

This Mola, the tiny town on the hilltop above Taormina, may be cited as a typical example of what taxes, lack of education, usury, and as a consequence, emigration, are doing for Sicily to-day. Though Mola lies only about a thousand feet higher up in the air than Taormina, it is ten times as far

away by foot — and by foot you must go, "either your own or another donkey's!" as one weary but none the less enthusiastic visitor put it on returning. The road — a good part of it is low stone steps, the round, flat pebbles set on edge in mortar — winds along the uncertain sides of the little valleys, and since not a single tree of any size shades it from an almost tropical sun at full power, it is sufficiently trying. Here and there a female beggar pops up most unexpectedly to demand an alms "for the love of the blessed Christ who walked thus to Calvary!"

The town curves in a semi-circle around the top of the hill, behind the battered remains of stout old walls which even to-day are massive and in places almost perfect, and might be turned to excellent account in defense. Just where the road skirts the base of the cliff, one night in December of 1677, forty stout-hearted native soldiers scaled the wall — when you look up at it, it seems an impossible feat — with ropes, and surprised and captured the French garrison then in possession. The highly picturesque entrance by a carved archway under a bit of wall leading outward at right angles from the overhanging cliff is commanded by an equally picturesque evil-looking iron smooth-bore cannon.

So still is Mola that the old lines fit it perfectly:

"Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the moldering wall;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away, thy children leave the land."

It is literally the "Deserted Village." Half an hour suffices to explore the Corso — even tiny Mola has its highway named for the King! — and all the silent high- and by-ways from end to end; mere *gradini,* crooked and steep, slits between out-of-plumb houses whose only occupants seem to be pigs. The biggest, blackest, dirtiest and leanest razor-backs imaginable march solemnly up and down the front steps of the best houses, or snore comfortably inside on the parlor floor. Occasionally a savage mother with her little shoats takes up a good share of the way, snapping viciously at anyone who ventures too close. Our "guide," a mere baby, offered to go and stir up such a family when he saw me about to take its picture, and nearly lost a leg for his pains.

But in all these streets not a man is visible of adult years and able to work. Only at the "Cathedral" can vigorous men be seen, the verger and the priest. The whereabouts of the others are told in the single magic word that spells so much to all Europe —"America!" It is literally true. Of all the male inhabitants only those too poor, too feeble to make the long trip, or too young to be acceptable as toilers, have remained at home. Even the ex-

"Occasionally in Mola a savage mother with her shoats takes up a good share of the way."

ceptions, the verger and the priest, gaze seaward with longing eyes.

The "Cathedral" is a building to make the heart ache. Poor and ignorant though they are, the people strive with cheap, garish colors and hideous decorations to please the Deity as well as to give their lowly church the air of a rich-folks' Cathedral. What grips one most is to be found in the sacristy. Tied tightly to the arm of a much betinseled Mary Magdalen is a beautiful and amazingly thick braid of human hair. What is the tragedy behind the oblation? What poor little girl from Mola came cowering and repentant to the feet of the saint and fastened the simple ex-voto in broken-hearted gratitude to the arm of her who wept over the sacred feet and wiped them with her hair? Is it a local tragedy or one from across the unfathomable seas? The verger pretends he does not know. Yet as you wander through the unkempt streets of the deserted village, you cannot help looking curiously about for any woman whose head shows the trace of the votive shears.

Many a time throughout Italy we had been tormented by filthy beggars on the steps of the cathedrals; but it was reserved for Mola to show us a pig who owned to being a pig in such a place! As we came out a huge, lean razorback grunted in savage disapproval, lurched to his feet, and trotted heavily off down a side street.

If the ascent to Mola is difficult, what can be said of the coming down? You stretch muscles you never knew you had, all the corns in the world seem to have concentrated upon your luckless feet, and you pitch and roll and toss like a mastless ship in a cross-sea.

After that Mola trip the most energetic traveler is apt to go to bed very early, and so for the first time hears the night noises of Taormina. The town makes quite a clatter on its way to bed—the click! click! click! of hobnailed heels on the lava pavement, the light chatter and songs of the children, which for all their occasional gayety have an elusive element of the tragic in them, the fluting of some little shepherd, and the tired bray of a home-going donkey glad the day's work is over. And every half-hour the bell-baiting! Would that Poe had heard these Sicilian bells before he wrote his tintinnabulating rhyme. Beaten, not rung, they clamor with the maddening insistence of fiends until the ear rebels and no longer notices their angry tumult. One tradition has it that there is not a bell-clapper in the island, for the returning French took the iron tongues away after the Massacre of the Vespers, to keep the people from ringing alarms. But the ingenious Sicilian found that he could make much more noise with a hammer, and though six hundred years and more have rolled by, he is still so tickled with the racket that he seems each time

to be trying to break all previous records. A more plausible story is that the clappers were taken away by the Neapolitans as recently as the day of Garibaldi's arrival with his thousand red-shirts in 1860.

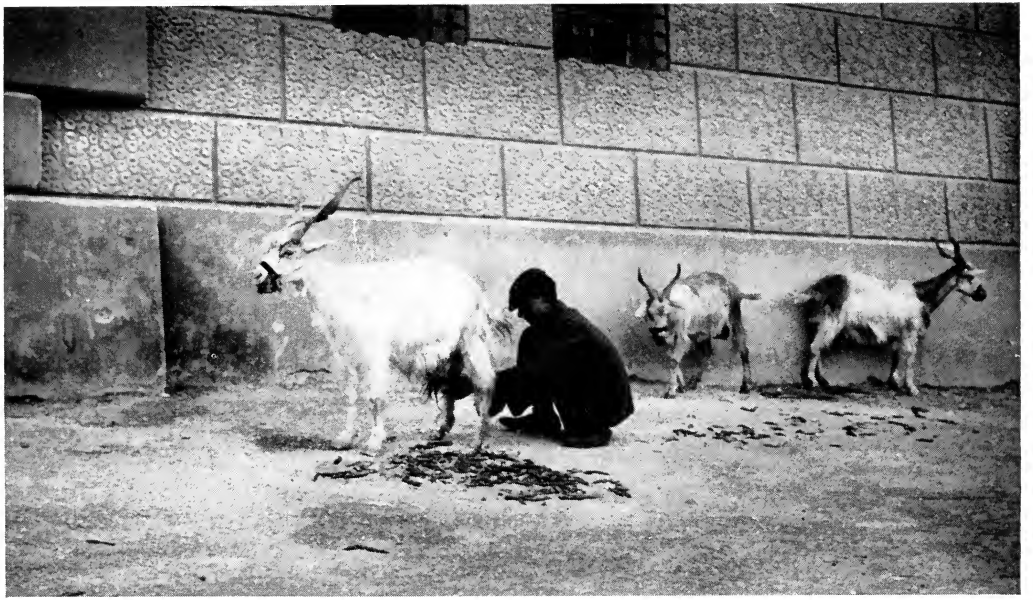
Save for the bell-baiting only, silence reigns from about ten until two. Then the first donkey's tiny little overburdened feet come ticking down the Corso, the whack of his rider's stick and an occasional gruff adjuration to the patient little mouse-colored beast recurring in a regular work-*motif*. Slowly the light begins to come. A sleepy ringer bangs out fifty irregular notes from his bell, hesitates a moment as though not quite certain of his count, and adds one last vigorous clang for good measure. Chanticleer first awakes the echoes, in strenuous rivalry with stentorian peacocks. Again silence reigns for half an hour or so. Then Taormina turns in bed, stirs luxuriously, yawns, and "gets busy."

Along the Corso donkeys bearing slim wine-casks and great tins of goats' milk patter past at a smart pace; vegetable hawkers from the *piana* shout their wares into open doorways; cats and chickens side by side strike out into the daylight from the obscurity of their shelters, stretching and flapping comfortably. Children, standing like models of Justice, scales and weights in hand, call their merchandise, weigh and measure with preternatural gravity, or eye older hucksters sharply as the latter use their

own scales to weight out a "penorth" of this or a "haporth" of that.

These street views are keenly interesting, but after all it is Ætna that makes Taormina an artist's paradise. Travelers and artists alike come for a brief glimpse or a sketch of Ætna, return again and again, or perchance find the fascination of hoary crown and delicate lights and shades so irresistible they settle down in the volcano's shadow and remain for years, proclaiming Taormina to be the rarest beauty spot in creation.

One of the American artists who came twenty years ago and has never been able to tear himself away from the thrall of the great cold peak, shows his studies of its moods, a great stack of marvelous water colors made at dawn, at noon, at sunset, at every hour of day and night, with every whimsical effect cloud or sun or shadow could give as he sat at his easel in a white-walled garden with the perpetually beautiful before him as a model. Perhaps the most remarkable contrasts are from a perfectly moonlight night to a clear dawn the next morning. All night the moon, sailing in solemn round overhead, tints the peak's snowy shoulders with a faint greenish tinge that makes it the wraith of a volcano. A little before four o'clock, slowly, tenderly, moon and pallid stars dwindle into spookish reflections of themselves as the sky lightens, the velvet blue of the night puckers into gelid gray, changes into pale



"Many a protesting goat is compelled to scramble up four or five flights of dark stairs."

turquoise through which majestically sail a vast fleet of enormous fluffy clouds, while Ætna rises dark and forbidding from the piana below.

Graciously a faint flush in the eastern sky increases in volume, deepens in tone; the grim pile of the volcano on the west darkens at the top, and as the ineffable pink spreads around behind it, the cone turns dead and spectral, and the thin, cottony tuft of curling smoke above the main crater eddies upward with all the seeming of steam on a foggy winter's morning. These first changes come with the measured caution of a master painter working carefully lest through some hasty stroke he spoil the effect of the tone picture to come. The light spreads. Neither camera nor pen can keep pace with the instantaneous transformations on every side. The vast crimson-coppery disc sails slowly up in majesty to eye the little world of Taormina from behind the inky green shoulder of the Greek Theater's hill. The upper edges of the clouds turn pink and silver; the lower, soft salmon pink, saffron, orange, gold. It is day!

There is something awe-inspiring, archaic, terrible about it all. It suggests the ancient Egyptian belief of Amen-ra riding through the horrible fastnesses of the Tuat in his sacred boat, and emerging in the glory of the resurrection.

It is a chilly performance of a spring morning, and a hungry one. At a quarter before six, an

eight o'clock breakfast seems at a starving distance; so the best thing to do is to come down into the street to see the milk being delivered. Right, left, and everywhere are nothing but goats! goats! goats! the whole length of the Corso; by twos, singly, in herds of twenty or more, with a pair of fractious kids roped together under their mother's usually wide open, yellow old eye, or tied one to each hind leg, very much to mother's discomfort. They burst out upon the Corso from narrow little *gradini* as if they had been kicked out of Mola on the crags above, and had not been able to check their speed on the long roll down. The tobacconist whose shop is directly opposite the hotel, opens at dawn to catch the early trade of the Mola goatherds in snuff and *sigari.* If you catch his eye he will throw wide both arms to include all the goats on the Corso, and exclaim: "*Latte de' capri è molto bell'!*"

Take his gracefully conveyed hint, and ask for a glass. One of the *ragazze*—two-thirds at least of the goatherds in Taormina and Mola are young girls—milks a rich, warm, foaming pint. Whatever your misgivings, the tobacconist is quite right —"Milk of goats is very beautiful!"—very grateful to a cold and empty stomach.

The hotel is quite civilized, the honest goatherd milking his animals into bottles which he carries in under the eye of a servant whose business it is to see that there is no adulteration or watering. In

the private houses still more scrupulous care is observed. Many a protesting goat is compelled to scramble up as many as four or five flights of dark and difficult stairs to be milked in the "parlor" into the suspicious or indolent housewife's own can or bottle. The Taorminians are worried by no inspectors or supervision of their milk supply, for the purchasers are their own supervisors, and milk is one thing in Sicily absolutely above reproach.

XIV

LIGHTS AND SHADES

FOUNTAINS in Sicily occupy much the same place in the life of the people that the forum occupied in a Roman community of old. That is, the fountain and its piazza are the center for exchanging news and gossip, for recreation, for all the varied diversions the people have in common. Taormina's principal fountain lies just outside the old wall, not far from the Porta Catania, the gate facing toward Catania. About the cool and dripping basin gather the graceful young peasant girls, balancing incredibly large and heavy amphorai of water upon their well poised heads; pretty, kittenish children and grimgaunt old rheumatic gossips; loutish waterboys in from the *piana* with their great barrel-carts to take the ichor of the gods back home; and generally the background for all is a fringe of seedy, admiring youths, casting sheeps' eyes at the girls and wondering how long it will be until they can get married—or sail for America!

This particular fountain is crowned by the arms of Taormina, which consist of the twin castles of

Mola and Taormina, and a mythological creature with the body of a bull, the tail of a fish and the head of a woman. Exactly what this beast is would tax the powers of the most ingenious of zoologists to explain—possibly a "nature-faker" could do it better.

From the Porta Catania the old town wall, perhaps twenty feet in height, rambles up the hillside in weird curves and abrupt angles, following the contour of the ground. Now that it is useless as a defense the thrifty Taorminians have built up a row of tiny houses which cling limpet fashion to the outside of the sturdy old masonry, through which windows have been driven that add greatly to its picturesqueness. Wonderful climbing bougainvilleas and other vines have sprung up from the fertile soil and spread their graceful tendrils higher and higher until almost every window is smothered in a mass of tender greenery and blossom.

To see these picturesque cottages is to wish to end one's days in one, or at least to bring some of its perfume and beauty back home. Near by a steep *gradino* is a floral waterfall. On the house-sides, festooning every post and projecting bit of masonry, brilliant flowers foam in pink spray, as from some perfumed fountain farther up the hill where roses distil their spicy fragrance from long, nodding branches.

Facing its own little piazza inside the wall, and

just below the Corso, is the Cathedral, which has a fine fourteenth century Gothic side portal. Perhaps the service is fourteenth century, too. It is conducted by the parish priest, a withered old man of grim and ascetic aspect, who drones in out-of-key nasals through the ritual, his voice drowned out a good deal of the time by the wheezy old organ, played by the village cobbler. The choir consists of the verger and another man who appears and disappears like a jack-in-the-box; at no time are more than two men visible in the organ loft, but in their vigor they quite make up for lack of numbers or inspiration. On the opposite side of the choir rises what seems to be a larger and more imposing organ. It is really nothing but a huge stretcher of canvas on which an instrument is painted, evidently to impress visitors with the dignity and grandeur of this mountain church.

When we were at service the good padre was assisted in his ministrations by the verger—when he was not singing—who worked with a becoming sense of the dignity of his position, and by an impish little acolyte in flaming scarlet, who hopped about like a cricket. If ever there was a little rascal who deserved excommunication for his pranks, it was this juvenile mischief-maker, who swung his censer so as almost to choke the old priest, keeping a more watchful eye upon the strangers than upon his business, and scarcely stopping to crook an irreverent

little knee as he passed about in front of the altar. Once, stooping to rearrange the priest's robes, he did it with such a mischievous flirt, and such a droll gleam in the brown eyes fixed on us, that we half expected to be held up by a small highwayman after mass, and asked for a penny or two in token of the sacrilegious show we had been permitted to witness.

The elders of the town sit upon the long bench or dais of red porphyry where the archbishop would be enthroned should he visit Taormina. They are curious old men, gnarled, withered apples full of sun and wind-wrinkles, who wear the typical brown-gray-black shawl as a muffler. Below them, on the throne's lowest step, squat several of the oldest women in the town. Over this seat a large and imposing shield bearing the arms of Taormina is supported by a time-stained oaken eagle, who leers with side-cocked head and an expression of inebriate gravity in his partly closed eyes. He seems more a gargoyle, a grotesque, than a strictly appropriate bit of ecclesiastical decoration.

Some of the peasant girls in the congregation are very lovely—perfect young Madonnas; sloe-eyed, raven-haired; with exquisite features and coloring, and distinctly Greek profiles. But they are not all dark; there is also the florid blonde type the Latin peoples so greatly admire, though it cannot bear comparison with the other. All of them dress with a taste and a restraint hardly to be expected among

mountain folk only a few degrees removed from the primitive. Here and there a fawn-like maid has thrown a Roman scarf with broad orange bands lightly over her hair, its vivid colors in pleasing contrast with her simple dark blue dress, piped with white, and the usual black silk apron that distinguishes her as of a prosperous family.

About through the throng in the nave the worshipers' children run freely to and fro, laughing, crying, talking, calling to one another. Some gather in little colonies on a step of the door at the foot of the church and eye the scene with baby solemnity; and even when the Host is elevated, some dainty nymph of three or four may unconcernedly clatter higgledy-piggledy across the tiles in hob-nailed shoon that wake the ancient echoes, crying at the top of her small voice: "Papá! Papá!" to an old farmer entering the door.

There is an indescribably moving something in the spectacle these poor folk present as they sit and stand and kneel and make the responses with the utter devotion of ignorance and superstition. Still, the outside can not be forgotten, even in the ecclesiastical atmosphere, and as the big bell up in the campanile booms the hour clear and mellow through the sound of voice and instrument, the world, the flesh and the devil stir the worshipers with a restless little movement of anxiety to get back into the sunshine again.

The eagle over the bishop's throne would appear to greater advantage in the funerals to be met on the Corso, conducted by the Fraternity of the Misericordia, which originated in Florence so many centuries ago. Weird indeed is one of these processions, as it ambles leisurely along through the heavy dust, often stirred by a light sirocco which flaps the robes and sends the incense smoke eddying upward in sacerdotal wreaths. Tragedy and farce clasp hands in the pitiful *cortége*. The boy members of the Guild amuse themselves and shock the beholder by pulling their ghastly masks awry, contorting their faces into uncouth grimaces, and winking portentously through the large eyeholes. The men are scarcely better — even the pall-bearers laugh, joke, turn freely to pass a word with some acquaintance in the street or up in a window, and tilt the casket so recklessly that the cross and crown on top slip about and all but fall off. Their white frocks are too short, and from beneath the skirts protrude very baggy trouser-legs, dirty socks, or even a few inches of bare leg thrust hastily into shoes donned for the nonce, and left with strings dangling in the dust. Inquisitive goats and uncertain chickens get in the way and are either lifted to one side, carried along and petted for a few moments, or gently pushed out of the way with a kindly foot.

Strange indeed was a double funeral we saw one

sultry afternoon. At the head marched the ancient Guild, bearing a curious double cross, perhaps eight feet high and apparently very heavy. Nailed to its upper limb — askew, of course — was a small light cross. Behind the men walked eighteen little girls in ordinary street dress, and after them six older girls in black, marching in couples, each pair carrying a large floral wreath. The middle pair bore their wreath with an air that did not distinguish the others, since it surrounded a framed picture of the dead man. Directly behind the picture came a priest, his hands clasped over a missal which he held firmly against his well-fed stomach.

After the living, the dead — the first of the coffins was a tiny one of flaming pink, stolidly handled by four sturdy lads of the Guild, who took as much interest in it and the proceedings as though they were bearing a crate of lemons to market. Immediately behind, four unusually tall Guildmen bore the man's coffin, large and black, with a cross and a silver crown resting upon it. On either side trudged the womenfolk of the family, one in each file carrying a smoking plate of incense that nearly choked her, while two files of friends brought up the rear of the procession proper, followed by the usual rabble.

Through the heavy African air the cathedral bells tolled with an inexpressibly sad intonation as the little cavalcade passed along the street. But even

the relatives were compelled to laugh when from the rear, running at full speed, came a panting boy of about ten bearing the canonicals of the officiating priest. The robe flapped behind in most undignified fashion, one corner occasionally raising a little spurt of dust as it swept the stones; and every few steps the boy yelped an unintelligible sound, to bid the marchers slow down and let him catch up before the priest entered the cathedral.

However, the touch of the ridiculous that turns tears to laughter is never far away in Sicily. Turning into a side street, one of those little *gradini* or flights of slippery stone steps which make up most of Taormina's lesser byways, and thinking only of the funeral, we were suddenly halted by two of the juvenile troubadours who lie in wait for strangers, or patrol the streets, seeking whom they may charm. They sprang out at our approach, struck tragic attitudes, and began to shout out an old pirate song at the top of their thin little pipes. Lustily they sang, till the veins in their small foreheads bulged blue with the effort, screaming out the bloodthirsty words of the ancient ditty with gusto, and acting their parts like veterans. It was all so sudden, so utterly ludicrous, that we laughed until we cried. The moment we began to laugh, the larger boy frowned, stopped singing, and shaking his pudgy fist at us indignantly, announced: "I am a singer! A very good singer — you listen to me!"

No cosmopolitan tenor could have put more outraged dignity and temperament into a protest. But sturdily they began all over. Here and there we caught a phrase about a wicked captain who stole a lovely maiden from her doting parents and took her away on his rakish barque to rove the smiling seas. Before I could reward them a large boy, who had kept away the crowd during the singing of the infant highwaymen, touched me on the arm.

"*Signore* — you should pay me all. I . . ."

"Oh-ho! So you think you are their impresario, do you?" I demanded.

"*Sissignore! Si! Si!*" he exclaimed joyfully, not in the least understanding anything but that I seemed willing to play into his hands.

"Are you a relative of the great Hammerstein?" I asked.

"Probably, sir. I do not know. Does the gentleman live in Taormina?"

Just then an ancient crone, toothless, and gifted, if anyone ever was, with the "evil eye," pinched my arm with a vigor astonishing in so aged a creature, and shrilly demanded her gift. Annoyed, I asked her as gently as possible, while the crowd grinned in derision: "But what have you done that I should pay you?"

"Done!" she retorted. "Done! It is enough — am I not here?"

"We were suddenly halted by two juvenile troubadours, seeking whom they might charm."

Declining to pay for being pinched, we worked our way slowly through the tenacious rabble — which clamored for *soldi* — down into the courtyard of the hotel that was once a pious house of prayer and fasting, the gray and ancient Convento di San Domenico. Beyond the edge of the older town it poises its massive stone bulk, whitewashed and scrupulously neat, on the ragged edge of the cliff: where fragrant roses climb all about and potted plants fringe the balustrades on all sides with rich color. It is a joy to sit here and take tea, with the marvelous panorama of storied coast and slumbering sea directly beneath. San Domenico is as cold as it is lovely, and the guests are hardly to be envied their rooms, once the silent stone cells of the monks. They are, however, to be envied the charm of the great hall with its carven choir stalls and lecturn, and the beautiful flower-decked cloisters. But where the crumbling Byzantine arcades once echoed with the Vesper, the Matin and the Ave, now is heard only the laughter of the heedless tourist, the chatter of children, the swish of skirts, and the click of the camera-shutter.

From the stone balustrades of the terrace, one gazes down upon slopes thorny with the spikes of the prickly pear, toothed and spurred with many an ugly rock that must have been there when the intrepid tyrant, Dionysius I, led his storming party up the slopes one winter night in 394 B. C., and

forced his way into the very marketplace, only to be repulsed by the heroic citizens and come tumbling down — literally, it is said — six hundred feet among the rocks and thorns of the snowy ascent. No wonder Dionysius hated Taormina after that! He disliked it before, and his little impromptu toboggan filled him with a tyrant's decision to even things with Taormina sooner or later. Four years afterward he kept his oath, in an outburst of savage fury that reduced the hamlet to ruins but failed to injure it permanently.

The moldering palace of the once mighty Dukes of Santo Stefano is also at this western end of the town. But all there is to see is a garden, tangled and sweet, a deep well whose carven curb speaks eloquently of the love of its former masters for the beautiful, and a barren earthen room under the palace, where dingy mosaics upon the stucco walls peep through the grime of ages. In one corner is a mortared pit about thirty inches deep and two feet in diameter. The caretaker is contemptuous at any failure to understand so simple a thing as an ancient bath, and displays the superior air of one who, however economical she may herself be in the use of such a luxury, is thoroughly versed in the theory of its employment by others of less Spartan virtue.

Beyond this — nothing! The key is in Palermo. With the characteristic fondness of Sicilians for

separating buildings and their keys, the Duke leaves it in the capital, so the Greek and Roman marbles stripped ruthlessly from the Theater at the other end of town are usually invisible.

But though they may not be visible, the Theater from which they were taken is very much so. The Corso on the way is always a human and animal kaleidoscope. Here a man holds his grateful horse by the bridle while his wife lifts a black iron soup kettle to give the weary beast a drink of warm and nourishing soup made of bread, vegetables and goats' milk. Yonder a demoralized old cat licks her kittens into shape on a shady doorstep while a venerable hen looks on and seems to have a proprietary interest in seeing the work properly performed. Cats and kittens and dogs lie jumbled together, in genial disregard of the usual enmities, suggesting the lion and the lamb parable.

Quaintly dressed peasants from the *piana* stare at the visitor, and vendors of antiquities call lazily from their black little holes in the wall, advertising their strings of "ancient" pottery, that rattle ominously whenever a wisp of breeze playfully tugs at them. A carriage-full of tourists Baedekering through Sicily passes literally on the jump, with craned necks and vociferous consultation of the fat little red books so essential to comfort in this land where no one is willing to confess that he really knows anything positively. Water-carts creak by, a

huckster whose wares are not yet all sold bellows most musical of "*A-a-ar — ca — cio-o-o — fi-i-i-i!*" and from behind comes the mellow boom of the cathedral chimes knelling away the brilliant hour. Artists with easels and sketching kits lumber heavily by on their way back from the Theater, the only great ruin of which Taormina can boast.

There is little now in the shattered playhouse to make alive its glories of Greek days, for as it stands it is largely a Roman ruin. The conquerors built amphitheaters throughout the island, but their theaters were in almost every instance merely enlargements or adaptations of older structures. Here in Taormina the building shows perfectly what the Romans did with the stage, which is in an almost perfect state of preservation. The playhouse, hewn in great part from the living rock, measures three hundred fifty-seven feet in its greatest diameter, while the diameter of the pit or orchestra is no less than one hundred and fifteen feet. The stage itself is quite narrow, with a vaulted channel or passage underneath for the water, used in flooding the arena, for the naval combats that the degenerate Romans preferred to Greek drama. Behind the stage the wall they built — of plain red brick instead of the costlier marble of early days — is still two stories high, and four of its granite Corinthian columns, with parts of the architrave, have been reërected to show the decora-

tive scheme. Directly behind are the entrances upon the stage, one at the right, another at the left; and in the center a great ruinous breach in the wall where was once the third or central entrance. On each side are niches which contained statues, and in the side wall at each end of the stage are the *vestiaria*, the dressing-rooms of the actors. What is left of the auditorium proper — the superstructure added by the Romans is all gone — shows that the seats were divided into nine *cunei*, sections shaped like wedges; and so perfect were the acoustics that even yet, ruined though the structure is, the slightest word spoken upon the stage is distinctly audible at the very farthest extremity of the upper tier of seats.

The way up to the topmost seats is through grass and weeds starred with tiny flowerets, mantling over the scars of Time. Sitting there where Greek and Roman and Saracen in turn have mused before, he is cold indeed who does not thrill to memory and to the marvelous panorama spread below: on the right, tier on tier of the eternal hills in warm brown, their crowns of Saracenic-looking castles lending a militant air to their own stern beauty; below them, a confused medley of roofs and spires, roads and wandering walls, Taormina; through the *scena* one of the grandest vistas in all creation — Ætna the giant holding heaven and earth apart, his feet in the mists of the low rolling farmlands, his mighty

crest lost amid the clouds of the spring afternoon; and reaching away into infinity, the passionless Ionian Sea of song and story, murmuring a susurrant requiem for the vanished glories of other days.

XV

THE CITY THAT WAS

FROM Taormina to Messina the train hurries along at what seems breakneck speed — through vine and olive yards; past broad shallow, dry *fiumi,* dusty in summer but heavily walled on both sides against the coming of the winter and spring freshets. Now the hills rise bold and sheer, as we dash into and out of innumerable little smoky tunnels, like a firefly flashing through tangled brush. High on one hillside an old cemetery looks down — an enormous file of dusty old pigeon-holes tossed out from a Titan's office and abandoned among the greenery.

There comes a town; a queer, quaint, smelly little fishing village — Ali — whose distinct perfume wafts in through even closed windows. Every house in it possesses atmosphere, character, a certain uncouth distinction all its own. Farther on goats — a big herd of them — munch their way along the beach undisturbed by our noisy passing, walking in the cool water up to their fetlocks, eating seaweed and wagging their cronish old heads over the salty feast. What must be the flavor of their milk! But the

goats are forgotten as up the Strait from Reggio steams the great car-ferry *Scylla*, since six miles away along the sweeping curve of the Italian shore to the north, the ugly gaunt rock of Scylla herself crouches against the dun background of iron shore.

Scylla and Charybdis, those fabled monsters of early Hellenic legend, apparently had no terrors for the pirates of Kymé who, Thucydides tells us, planted the first nursling settlement of Zankle, later Messina, in one of the most splendid natural locations ever utilized by man — a long, narrow strip of flat shore along the Bay, where the mountains stand well back, and only the foothills come near the water. Before the town shimmers one of the finest harbors in the world, a big circular bay fenced in by a low and sandy strip curved like the sickle the Sicilian Greeks called Danklon or Zankle. The site was a natural emporium at the point where the East and the West meet and are one; an ideal location for a great strategic, commercial and social center.

It has always been a notable city. Now we see it in the scarlet page of history as the home of the pirate, the prey of the Carthaginian, the bandit stronghold of the Mamertine, the first glorious conquest of the dashing Norman; then glorying in the wealth the Crusades poured into its lap as the kings of the earth passed by in their search after the impossible and unattainable. Now we hear of it as

Messina—"The City that Was!"

the prey of a despot, an absentee monarch; now as the favorite of a king who loaded it with privilege; now as the bulwark of all Sicily against incursion from the mainland when Charles of Anjou, after the Vespers, came down upon Messina like Byron's Assyrian. Every man became a soldier, every woman in the city — ladies accustomed to ease and luxury as well as their less fortunate sisters — a worker. A song still popular in Sicily runs:

Deh com' egli è gran pietate
delle donne di Messina,
veggiendo iscapigliate,
portando pietre e calcina!

"Oh, what a pity 't is to see the ladies of Messina carrying stones and chalk!"

One of the things that brought disaster upon Messina was its location upon the line of contact between the primary and secondary formations of Ætna and Vesuvius, where the shock of earthquake is necessarily the most violent and frequent. And during the last two centuries or so every misfortune that could befall a city has befallen it — siege, bombardment, fire, inundation, cholera, plague, earthquake. Yet through it all, however severe the visitation, the city has been great and undaunted, rising heroically from every catastrophe to begin anew; great in commerce, too, as well as in the heroic spirit

of its citizens. Notwithstanding its tragic story, of late years it was a dusty, commercial town, eminently set upon minding its own business and giving little heed during business hours to anything but business.

In the evening, however, the whole town was out of doors, gathering in a dense throng to listen to the band concert in the Piazza di Municipio. Grave and reverend seigniors puffing at black Italian cheroots, fat wives on their arms or waddling behind under the weight of their wonderful jewelry; young sparks who wore their hats rakishly and eyed the daughters of families with roguish airs of expert judgment in petticoats; flashy corner loafers whose visages betrayed their character — or lack of it; solemn family parties to whom this open air concert was the diversion of the week; and scores of impish little ragamuffins whose specialty seemed to be vociferous appeals to smokers for cigarette stubs. But the crowd was very Italian, very good-natured, very indolently happy. *Dolce far niente* ruled, save for the industrious bandsmen, and everybody enjoyed himself in his own way.

In the eighteenth century the wide and handsome promenade along the clear waters of the Strait was named *La Palazzata*, because the stately *palazzi* of the nobility lined its entire length, and each palace was equal in height, style and construction to all its neighbors. But slowly there crept into the city

the sneaking spirit of commercialism. The haughty nobles fell upon evil days and died. Their palaces became shops, hotels, stores; the old glory was fading fast, and the new was a tawdry imitation. The splendor of the *Palazzata* waned before the vigor of expanding trade that filled the wharves with casks of spoiling lemons for the manufacture of acids and essential oils. The very air of Messina became impregnated, redolent of the pungent essence of fruit turning into gold.

But that was not the end. The *Palazzata* — aye, all Messina — was doomed to fall in the crowning misfortune of the centuries. The terrible earthquake predicted almost to the minute by Mr. Perret of the Vesuvius Observatory, smote the city while it slept, on the morning of December 28, 1908. The earth became a shaken old carpet, ripping, tearing, rending apart hideously, crumpling upon itself. The sea receded and heaped itself in mountains of waters, the beach lay bare. The grim gods of the nether world smiled; they piled the sea and the waves higher into an Olympian bolt, hurled it resistless and foaming upon the helpless town, again to take toll of man's rashness. Palace and hotel, shop and church trembled — vacillated — crashed down into agonizing ruin, burying half the city in their débris. In the city alone 77,283 persons perished. Humanity stood aghast before a catastrophe so tremendous that the intelligence could

not grasp its full significance of horror. And when the final relief work was completed, the last reports tabulated, the toll of Ætna on both sides of the Strait — in Calabria as well as in Sicily — mounted up to two hundred thousand — nearly a quarter of a million lives!

Sleeping and praying, weeping and cursing, unconscious and paralyzed with terror, Messina died in the murdering cruelty of the most appalling of all the disasters the heroic city had ever known.

The Cathedral, which was begun in 1098 and finished by King Roger, had shared the misfortunes of the city. Earthquake and fire and the still more vandal hand of the restorer had robbed it long before of almost all semblance to the plans of King Roger's architects. And the gods of the earth, being no respecters of buildings, hurled it down into ruin like the commonest hut in the city. Not all its massiveness and splendor could save it from the common fate; not all its treasures of goldsmith's work and sculpture and art. But though it fell, the people of the dauntless city did not blench. Crushed and dazed as they were, one of the first buildings they put up was a new house of prayer. Hastily knocked together of rough boards, the triumphant symbol of hope and faith nailed firmly above it, that pitiful church spoke dramatically of the spirit that defies defeat and honors victory.

The city has arisen anew in a metropolis of more

than 65,000 souls, with suitable churches now. Moreover, the commercial spirit of the people asserted itself almost immediately, and exports began with scarcely any delay. In the new Messina that has sprung up — a little to the south and a trifle farther inland — away from the chaos of wrecked buildings and blasted hopes, there is at least a measure of safety. It is largely a wooden city; the buildings are restricted in height, and no fires are permitted expect in the kitchens, which are built of brick.

The American relief work is especially interesting to us. No less than 1336 two-room-and-kitchen houses were put up by American hands and with American materials and money in the new Messina, and five hundred more across the Strait in Reggio di Calabria, a total of 1836, capable of housing more than 12,000 people. Each family is bound under pain of expulsion to observe stringent rules for public safety and sanitation, approved by Queen Elena herself. In places these low, white clapboarded cottages, shaded by mulberry trees, have a decidedly New England town appearance. Beside these, American funds built an hotel with seventy-five rooms and thirteen or fourteen baths; a church where some 350 people can worship; two schools that care for eighty children each, and the Elizabeth Griscom Hospital, in which every available resource of modern sanitary engineering in design and

construction was employed. White-walled and red-roofed, it stands high on the hillside, a very attractive sight from the Bay, its windows commanding a sweeping view which is a tonic in itself.

During the reign of horror that followed the fall of the city, fire and snow, rain and pestilence added their agonies to the already overflowing tragedy. But British and American, Russian and French bluejackets toiled heroically, regardless of personal danger from falling ruins or infection from the stench of thousands of unburied corpses, to help their Italian brethren succor the wounded and rescue the dying. King Victor Emmanuele himself, disregarding comfort and personal safety, hurried to the scene and risked his life in superintending the work of rescue, endearing himself to the Nation by his cool bravery and resourceful tenderness to the sufferers. And not only the King, but Queen Elena, who accompanied him, struggled through the ruins day after day, braving hardships and danger, aiding the wounded and dying with her own hands. All Italy arose and called her blessed. They gave her a new name. She was no longer merely *Regina d' Italia* — Queen of Italy — but *Regina di Pietà* — Queen of Pity.

XVI

THE NORTHERN SHORE

ALONG the northern coast from Messina westward to Palermo, almost every foot of the way has some historic interest. High among the precipitous cliffs above the present station of Rometta, the Christians held out against the invading Saracens — who had entered the island in 827 — until 965. Rometta was the last place to fall. A little farther along the rocky shore Sextus Pompey was annihilated by Agrippa in the battle of Naulochus in B. C. 36. Milazzo, sixteen miles from Messina, is the site of ancient Mylæ, Messina's first colony, which had a stirring time of it through all the centuries. The last big event in her history was Garibaldi's victory over the Neapolitans, freeing the city from the hated Bourbon rule.

The train runs over *fiumare* after *fiumare* — river-beds dry in Summer, rushing torrents in Winter — and vineyards stretch beside the track in vast expanses of low, bushy vines, ripe with promise. Then, with a shriek, the engine drags us in a cindery cloud of smoke through the promontory on which stood Tyndaris, the Greek colony founded by

Dionysius I. The town stood nine hundred feet above the black hole into which we plunge. What would be the sensations of this swash-buckling Greek could he see the rock to-day, with the trains, black worms darting through the solid rock he never dreamed of penetrating! More tunnels follow fast, then another cape, and a stretch of glad, open, smiling country that makes one think of the orchards at home.

Picturesque towns, groves of oleanders, battered old Roman bridges and medieval castles in which life is still of the Dark Ages, flit by rapidly until Caronia is reached. Here, nearly 2,600 years ago, a Sikel settlement called *Kalé Akté* — Beautiful Shore — was made under an ambitious leader named Ducetius, who hoped to save the remnant of his people who were still free in the interior, from absorption by the Greeks. A single defeat, however, crushed this native rising, and all hope of Sikel independence vanished in 444 with the death of Ducetius. "Beautiful Shore" withered away until to-day Calacte is a commonplace Sicilian town with even a commonplace name, and only its memories to save it from utter insignificance.

And then we come to Cefalù, a town whose reputation depends on its dirt, its beggars, and its Cathedral. And there is no excuse for either dirt or mendicants, since it is a thriving commercial and manufacturing city with ample resources to keep

Cefalu, across the fields from a car-window of the fast Palermo express.

itself clean, and purged of begging pests. The name tells its location — *Kephalé*, in Greek, meant head; that is, promontory in this case, and the old Sikel city occupied the crest of the big jutting headland thrusting straight out into the sea and rising over 1,200 feet in height. On this elevation — seventy minutes now of stiff climbing it takes to reach it, over boulders and the detritus of centuries — the Sikels built them a safe city, and swept it about with massive battlemented walls, carried clear down to the sea. Parts of them are still in very good condition; no doubt through the centuries they have been restored again and again.

The "Head" is bald now — a snowy pate with only a sprinkling of grass — and but one building of uncertain age remains to testify to the different races that have ruled upon this lofty spot. After its acquisition by the Greeks it was important as their western outpost on the northern shore of the island. The one small ruin still standing seems to be that of a Sikel building, of unique structure and great interest. The huge irregular stones in part of it indicate its original appearance, while all about them the decently cut and shaped blocks show an Hellenic restoration. From this height the view is all-embracing — Pellegrino towering above Palermo forty miles to the west; the gaunt black fire peaks of most of the Lipari Islands — once the windy isles of Æolus — straight out to sea in the northeast;

and behind us fertile stretches of rolling country checkered with farms and vineyards; town after town set upon impossible rugged peaks, mountains whose tops tear ragged holes in the mist clouds.

In the near distance is the Punto della Caldara, where the shrewd and wily sons of Tyre and Sidon, full of the instinct of commerce, not combat, beached their frail craft and sat down at the feet of the Sikel natives for barter, within easy eyeshot of this eyrie. No doubt from the battlements the natives peered down with less of an eye for the splendid view than for the marketplace of the swarthy, black-bearded Canaanites; and thither they were lured by tempting displays of the royal purple of Tyre, the gold of distant Tarshish far to the west, and the glass and ornaments and statuettes that the Phœnician tempters knew how to make and to market so much better than their uncouth selves.

As we came down from the desolate heights, it began to rain. Within a few hundred yards of the town we passed the house of an old *contadino* who sat calmly inside his jute-walled goatpen meditating. In the kitchen door stood his brawny wife, feeding the unkempt, shrewish looking old goat with soup full of green onions from her husband's bowl, and diverting herself betimes by lashing the gentle philosopher vigorously, after the fashion of Mrs. Caudle.

In 1129 King Roger was returning from the

Italian mainland — whither he had gone to whip into docility sundry recalcitrants among his unruly barons — when his vessel was overtaken by a violent storm of the sort that so often lashes the Mediterranean into fury. The King, greatly alarmed, vowed a fine church in honor of the Christ and the Twelve Apostles if he and all his company were permitted to land unharmed. The ship made Cefalù head, and everyone came ashore safely. Two years later King Roger fulfilled his vow, by establishing a town at the foot of the cliff, and beginning to rear the most magnificent sanctuary that had been built in Sicily since the Greeks constructed their massive Doric temples.

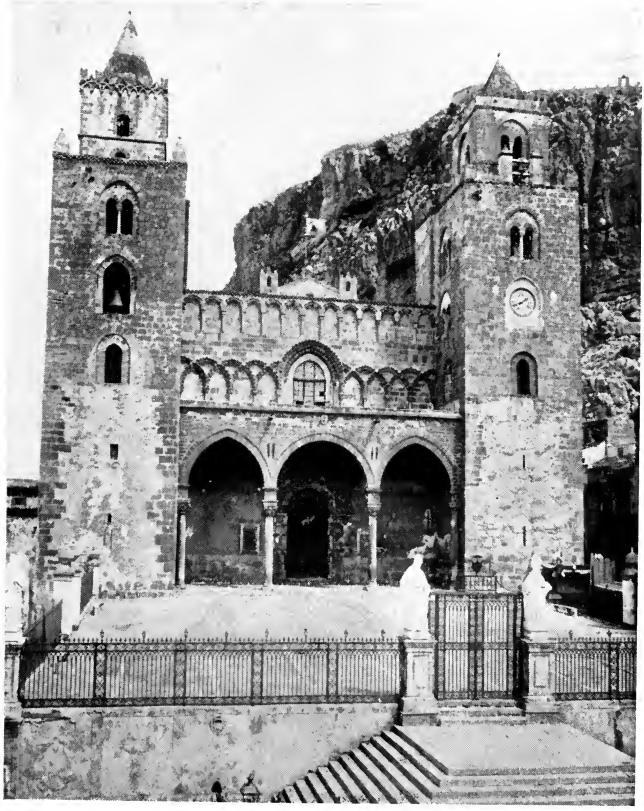
Tremendous and massive are the only words that fit this building, and the enormous hewn stones upon which the façade rests seem to indicate that here must once have stood some ancient fortification which offered the Norman architects a permanent base upon which to build their shrine. The twin spires, the play of the interlacing arches, the round-headed portal — it is especially worthy of notice, by the way — all spell the cool and coherent genius of the northern French architect. Indeed, it is, like King Roger himself, of the Norman brood, but thoroughly adapted to its Sicilian environment.

Within, one realizes how royally Roger fulfilled his vow. What miracles were wrought by these hard-living, hard-fighting, hard-worshiping souls

who took their religion with such mighty seriousness that it became an integral part of themselves and their daily lives! The main body of the Cathedral is plain white and generally barren. But no pen can describe in detail the blazing mosaics in the tribune without heaping color upon color, design upon design. The colors of the pictures were executed by artists who were almost tone impressionists, so delicate are the soft shades they used to set off the more primitive hues of the borders.

From the floor of the chancel the flying ribs of the roof seem sections of delicate enameled work. The farther away one stands the more perfect the illusion becomes, to the point where the designs lose their identity. Indeed, no master jeweler could produce a more harmonious effect with his intricate interweaving of colors and blending of tones. But the crowning wonder of the Cathedral — as in the Cathedral of Monreale and the Cappella Palatina — is the enormous mosaic bust of the Christ which fills the vault of the tribune. Built up like its fellows of the brilliant bits of colored glass that adorn the rest of the apse, it seems a portrait of encrusted gems, a human conception of the Godhead that flashes inspiration from myriad delicate facets.

Nevertheless, Cefalù Cathedral fails to impress the beholder as do the other two in which there is not a jarring or inconsistent note from pave to rooftree. Here in Cefalù the bare and dingy plas-



"One realizes how royally Roger fulfilled his vow in this magnificent Cathedral."

ter walls of the main body — adorned with dubious figures of saints of both sexes, covered with dirt and cobwebs and minus certain of their limbs — make a contrast so glaring as to strike dismay to the most appreciative spirit.

Old as the Cathedral is, the beach at Cefalù is strewn with curious craft that seem even more ancient: queer old feluccas, cask-like smacks with barrel bows and truncated sterns swept by huge tillers, bottle-nosed xebecs with staring painted eyes for hawse-holes and central sideboards in lieu of keels. And nowhere else in the island are the different types of the forefathers more numerous and distinct: here a distinctly Semitic type, with the swart face, black beard and piercing eyes of the Phœnicians; here a pure Greek face worthy of the sculptor; there a burnt-up son of the desert, and yonder a Roman beside a Gaul. Busy and prosperous they seem, for all their dirt and indifference to squalor and evil smells; and moreover, contented. Their fishing smacks bring in tons of herring which by euphemy go out of Cefalù in cans of oil as the best sardines. The chief industries of the town, after the selling of clothes and notions, seemed to be the manufacture and sale of cheap perfumes and footgear, so far as I could see.

From Cefalù westward the railway runs beside acres upon acres of artichokes and whole fields of crimson sumac, while the "donkey ears" of the

prickly pear form spiky hedges and great pin cushions everywhere. For these are the *Campi Felici*, the Happy Fields of Fertility, whose fruitful farms give back rich returns for the labor spent upon them, and which murmur always with the creaking music of huge wooden wheels over which run the endless strings of irrigating buckets introduced ages ago by the Arabs. Another of their importations is manna. On the slopes of Angels' Peak — otherwise Gibilmanna, or Manna Mountain — these trees still grow, as they did in Africa and Araby, and the people gather considerable quantities of their exudations of gum.

Ten miles down the line we come to the site of Himera. Here two of the greatest events in Greek history transpired, battles both, one a glorious victory, the other a frightful defeat and disaster. The good tyrant Theron of Akragas secured his vast number of able-bodied slaves here after the first battle, when in 480 B. C., with his son-in-law, the tyrant Gelon of Syracuse, he defeated the Carthaginians. It is said that Hamilcar himself took no part in the battle, but that all day he stood alone on a hilltop overlooking the fight, watching the Greeks driving back his picked troops. All day he prayed and sacrificed in vain, and at evening, his own army little more than a disorganized rabble streaming pellmell across the field, he threw himself into the altar fire as a supreme sacrifice to the

bloody gods of Carthage. When Hamilcar's grandson, Hannibal Gisgon, was sent over in another campaign against the Sicilian Greeks — this warfare was practically continuous — he wasted no time — though he destroyed Selinus by the way — but hurried to Himera, urged on by the spirit of filial vengeance. Baal and Ashtaroth were more gracious to him than they had been to his grandfather, and he wiped Himera from the map, literally leaving not one stone upon another in the fated city. At the end of the day he made his sacrifice to the gods — three thousand of the men of Himera, all who were left alive after the battle, on the very spot where the Shophet Hamilcar seventy-one years before had offered up himself.

What is the relation between street cries and criers? Do certain words or names necessarily draw to themselves vendors whose characters can be influenced by the sounds they utter in selling their wares; or do natures of a given sort instinctively select only those things whose names have a corresponding spirit to their own? Some Max Mueller can perhaps answer the question; but anyone can observe the facts. They apply especially to newsboys in the Latin countries. Passing Termini again — the hot springs of Himera — the papers were just out, and the voice of the little fellow at the window of the compartment with copies of *The*

Hour was a long, musical drawl — "*L' Oh-oh-oh-oh-— raaaa! L' Oh-oh-oh-oh — raaa . . . !*" Very different from this cry was that of the lad selling *Life.* He cried in a sharp staccato recitative, repeating very rapidly: "*La Vita-Vita-Vita-Vit'-Vit'-Vit'!*" Most lackadaisical of all was the older boy who had *Sicilia.* From scarcely opened lips and with dreamy eyes, he slowly intoned each syllable of the name, extending and amplifying and sweetening it, as a tender morsel of which he could not get enough, softening his c's and making his l's most liquid and mellifluous — "*Seee-sheeeeee-lll-ly-aaaaah!*"

About the time that the Phœnicians founded Panormos, their greatest city, in the bosom of the rich plain at the water's edge, they also founded another city upon the crest of a lofty rock at the other side of the bay, and called it Solous, probably from the Hebrew or Phœnician word *sela,* meaning rock. It was a border fortress, a watch tower from which the Semitic traders could keep an eye on the ever encroaching Greeks. But when the heyday of Phœnician power was fading, the Soluntines invited the conquering Romans in, so the meager ruins to be seen are not the wreck of Phœnician Solous, but of the Roman Soluntum in which its identity was swallowed up. No greater contrast can be imagined than that which exists between these two cities— Palermo living, Solunto dead be-

"Solous was . . . a border fortress, a watch-tower from which to eye the encroaching Greeks."

yond any power to infuse life into its stony veins.

There are three ways to reach Solunto — that is its modern Italian name — by express train to the station for Bagheria; by accommodation to Santa Flavia, which is within five minutes' walk of the Antichità di Solunto; or by carriage from Palermo, a ten- or twelve-mile drive each way. Luncheon should be taken. If you enjoy a lively time, by all means go by express to Bagheria on a *festa* or feast-day. As you step from the station platform you are immediately the center of a howling mob of peasants and hackmen, all behaving like enraged lunatics and grabbing at you from every side. When this happened to me, I called into play all the football tactics I had ever learned, charged through the thickest of the mass, and pelted down the road in exceedingly undignified fashion, the whole pack yelling derisively at my heels.

As I trudged ahead, I heard the squeak of ungreased wheels, and was hailed by the driver of a skeleton stage capable of holding four uncomfortably — five were already in it.

"Hai — get in and ride!" he called cheerily. "Where are you going?"

"To Bagheria. I like walking!"

The driver laughed; so did his inconsiderate fares. "It is a very long walk by this road to Bagheria — all the way around Sicily!"

I stopped walking. He went on: "But if you

want to go to Solunto, I'll take you there for three *lire.* You can walk to Bagheria from there."

"But your stage is too full now," I objected.

"Never! Plenty of room. Come — I'll take you for two *lire,* if you can't afford to pay me three."

Crowding uncomfortably together, the other occupants, decent young peasants, made room for me, and we creaked slowly on behind the half-starved horse whose best pace was a walk. Here a huge brown villa of the soap-box type deflected the road to one side; there fresh young vegetables sprouted thickly from clay pits which had all the seeming of prehistoric stone ruins; yonder a meadow full of drying brick and loose straw proclaimed the brick-maker at work. Turning and twisting, the road wandered on leisurely until we neared the Antichità di Solunto, the rest house where visitors may stop to eat luncheon and buy the sour red wine the custodian has for sale. A sudden ominous sagging of the rear of the stage made everyone seize something. But a cheery voice reassured us, and Gualterio's beaming face peered in over the tailboard.

"I am here, *signore!*" he cried delightedly. "Behold, if you need me."

I crawled out with some difficulty while everybody laughed but the driver, who was demanding four *lire* instead of two. Promptly Gualterio took command of the situation.

"You go on — I will pay him!" and he turned on

the fellow with a fervid exposition of his complete ancestry of thieves and jailbirds, threw him two *lire*, and started him off again.

The road up the hill to Solunto is magnificently paved even yet with the great irregular smooth blocks the Romans put to such excellent purpose on their military highways, curving to take advantage of every angle in the abrupt hillside, winding among thickets of prickly pear, and past little irrigation ducts among lemon groves which murmur with a susurrant echo of the little channels that flow down Granada's long slope. Neatly piled beside the upper reaches of the road on either hand are dismembered columns, statues, fragments of pilasters, cornices, and blocks of marble. The ruins of the city itself are unsatisfying and meager — a single wide street lined with the foundations of some buildings of undiscernible age, half a dozen streets, similarly desolated, crossing it at almost right angles, a single three-cornered structure set up by an archæologist and called, for want of a better title, the Gymnasium, and here and there some bit of mosaic pavement or wall decoration.

Indeed, no one knew the exact site of Soluntum, which vanished ages ago, until in 1825 a peasant scratching about on the hillside unearthed splendid marble candelabra whose richness indicated their Roman origin, and small statues of Jupiter and Isis. Soluntum was found, and the archæologists pro-

ceeded to uncover it. It reminds one strongly of Pompeii, though much less of interest has been discovered in it. But Solunto has a view, a transcendent panorama before which even a fountain pen falters.

At the foot of the hill, Gualterio — he had come out from Palermo for the *festa* — put me into a passing jaunting car and sent me on my way to the villas of Bagheria, the most interesting of which is the property of Prince Palagonia. On either side of the gate are two queer old gnomes mounted upon marble pedestals and dressed in fantastic adaptations of Saracenic costume; the head gardener's wife assured me that these trolls are so terrible they frighten away not only trespassers, but "any other evil spirit" who dares to come that way. She crossed herself devoutly when she mentioned the names of certain malicious spirits who, she said, would be only too glad to molest Bagheria but for the forethought of the Prince.

The hollow wall about the rather ragged garden is wide enough in places to be used as dwellings for the servants. Courageous indeed must they be to rest under the shapes that decorate the wall, as weird a collection of zoological nightmares as ever were carved in stone by an insane sculptor at the hest of an insane patron. Black with age and the weather, grotesque pipers, trolls, knights, gentlemen, ladies, elves, monkeys, dragons, hunchbacks, cats,

roosters, things intended to be representations of evil spirits, a miscellaneous scattering of angels and cherubs, a virgin or two, and the Prince's patron saint, stand, jump, walk, fly, or poise on one foot.

A heavy wind had played havoc with some of the figures a few days before my visit. "*Ecc'!*" exclaimed the gardener's wife, pointing ahead.

On the wall a most pious madonna, her hands crossed over her faded blue breast, gazed sadly down upon a dancer standing upon her head and buried almost to her shoulders in the mucky earth. How horrified the staid Virgin must have been when the worldling flew down the wind and poised upside down!

"Frightful, isn't it?" asked my guide.

"Oh, *spaventosa!* When are you going to put her back on the wall?" I inquired.

She shook her head sadly. "I do not know. Maybe never. The Prince is not rich enough now to bother about raising fallen ladies!"

There are other unoccupied villas in Bagheria of the same kind, with the same sort of "devil-scarers," but I preferred the live performers to the dead ones—the *festa* waited. *Festa di San Giu,*' the natives called it; but the railroad announcements in the stations stated that it was a town fair in honor of San Giuseppe. Bagheria itself is not a particularly attractive town, though clean and well-kept, and its nineteen or twenty thousand inhabit-

ants do their best to decorate themselves and their buildings in honor of the saint, while thousands of merrymakers flock in from Palermo and all the country round.

At one side of the Corso two workmen were nailing pinwheels, serpents, set pieces and other explosives to a set of frames for a *castello di fuoco* (fire-castle), at the same time puffing on long, thin Italian cigars. As I came along, one of the men knocked the ashes of cigar upon a pile of small saucissions, and nodded a cheerful greeting.

"What's the matter?" he called, as I sprang back. "Did something bite you?"

"No," I replied, steadily walking backward. "But aren't those fireworks?"

"Certainly!"

Stalls with cakes, sweet bread-sticks, candies, preserved watermelon seeds, nuts, fruit of various sorts, and indigestion-breeding pastry filled the streets. Around them the people flocked in their wonderful Sunday clothes. Others, gray-headed and sedate, sat in couples on the curbs, the men, generally fat, tinkling on ridiculously tiny mandolins, while their wives sang, and the crowds in the cafés and on the sidewalks clapped time or danced with feet, hands and heads, though all the while sitting still. One wineshop, little more than a cellar, had twelve heaps of not overly clean straw spread upon the damp stones.

"Does the illustrious foreign *Signore* require a bed?" asked the proprietor with a grinning bow. "Most cheap, sir, and excellent, only two *soldi* — for all night. Eleven are already taken. Behold the property!" and he pointed to various lumpy bundles of clothes, and large bandanna handkerchiefs tied at the corners, undoubtedly containing food. The owners of these bundles had made sure of their beds by stuffing their property into the straw. Thanking the genial Boniface, I declined his invitation and passed on.

At San Giuseppe the people, with cheery indifference, had turned the yard of the house of prayer into a den of thieves. Gambling of every sort known to the Sicilian peasantry was going on, and two games were running full blast, one on each side of the main entrance. There were the familiar *p'tits ch'vaux;* lotto on a black rubber sheet bearing numbers; the old familiar shell game, and a sort of crude roulette. Surrounding these stalls, of which there were nineteen on the sloping piazza between the church and the street, were hundreds of boys and young men, mostly lads of ten to twelve years. Their average play was one *soldo* or penny, the minimum bet half a *soldo*, and the high four *soldi.*

The façade of the church was covered with hundreds of oil-cups in rows. Inside, the whitewashed walls were hung, for the nonce, with a bewildering jumble of strips of gaudy colored cloth, pendant

from the gallery, fringed and criss-crossed with gold lines like cheap wall paper. The image of San Giu' (Saint Joseph), mounted upon a large float, waited at one side of the nave ready to go out on the men's shoulders just at dusk for the procession, and around it stood eighteen candles, some of them six inches in diameter and no less than six feet in height. On the front of the float hung votive offerings, paintings in smudgy oils on cardboard, one showing the death of Benedetto Giuseppe, at the hand of an assassin.

Children with carts and poles and rubber balls played about while old men and women knelt praying on the stone floor, and young girls strolled about in giggling pairs. Four hundred or more guttering candles filled the church with smoke and falling flakes of soot, and "all the world" eddied in and out comfortably and contentedly, unawed by their church or their saint, making a comrade of holy Giuseppe and at peace with the whole of Creation, including even the foreign interloper with the camera, who sat to one side and watched as they made merry.

XVII

THE WESTERN SHORE

GOING westward from Palermo, the railroad cuts inland behind Monte Pellegrino, crossing the Conca d' Oro past many villas, and does not again touch the coast until, ten miles away, it reaches Sferracavallo, whose main street is so atrociously paved as to give the town its merited name — Unshoe-a-Horse. The line then skirts the shore for some distance, and the early morning scenes on the water to the right are more than lovely. Fishermen flit about in their white-winged boats or toil at launching the heavy craft. The waterfront of every village is a hive of industry. One picturesque and striking scene after another flits by until, at the end of an hour or so, we come out at Cinisi-Terrasini on the shores of the Gulf of Castellammare, a tremendous, sparkling expanse belted in by a fillet of gleaming white sand. From the bay, orchards and grain fields roll upward to the hills that pyramid, one upon another, into mountains dim and blue in the misty distance.

At Partinico we desert the shore and sweep in a ragged loop inland to pause a moment at the town

— it has a far reaching trade in oil and wine — before darting back shoreward again, unable to resist the fascination of Father Neptune. Close to the water's edge another town, Balestrate, sprawls along shore among the dunes, over which grows a savage luxuriance of reeds and grasses, among which, on an occasional acre, wrested from barrenness, is a hut of thatch and a hardy family of hard working peasants. Can these be the descendants of the Sikans and Sikels who so long ago vanished from the earth; and are these huts anything like the primitive dwellings in which those still more primitive folk loved and bred and died? Certainly except for using iron tools and smoking tobacco, they seem to have little advantage over their progenitors. Paying back-breaking taxes and furnishing conscripts to-day is almost as bad as being at the mercy of a Greek tyrant with his demands for money and men.

At the head of the bay, three miles before the railroad reaches the town of Castellammare, once the seaport of Elymian Segesta, it turns southward, and ascends the valley of the Fiume San Bartolommeo. Its principal tributary is the Fiume Freddo (Cold Stream), once the Krimisos, near which a wonderful battle was fought between the Carthaginians, and the Greeks under Timoleon the Deliverer. So alarmed was Carthage by his prowess and activity that for the first time the Sacred Band, the

picked Home Guard, was sent over to Sicily. Near the Krimisos, Timoleon, undaunted by the desperate odds, hurled his eleven thousand Greeks against the 70,000 barbarians. Just before the conflict the Greeks met a mule train laden with *selinon*, or wild celery, the plant used at funerals. What omen could have been worse? Panic hovered in the air. But Timoleon's wit was quick and sure. Gayly he made a wreath of the plant and crowned himself, with the remark that it was the crown used at the Isthmian Games. With a shout of relief officers and men followed his example, and confidence mounted high as the host marched on. In the battle that followed, the very gods of Hellas fought for the Deliverer, Zeus the Thunderer darkening the heavens and hurling his fiery bolts. Rain and hail quenched the ardor of the Carthaginians; the thunder deafened and the lightning blinded them — the whole storm drove straight in their faces. And the Greeks, marching forward steadily under the divine ægis, cut the Punic host to pieces, annihilated the Sacred Band.

History repeated itself May 15, 1860, when, on the hills of Calatafimi, again a deliverer of the people, this time Giuseppe Garibaldi, crushed a foreign enemy and oppressor. Many an army had marched and camped and fought among these hills and vales, and the powdery dust of the milk-white roads had puffed up from the feet of Elymian and Phœnician,

Greek and Roman legions. But never before had a victory meant so much to civilization as the success of the badly armed but desperately determined and immortal Thousand who followed the gray-haired sailor-hero. And history repeated itself yet again when Garibaldi, like Timoleon, refused everything for himself, counting it honor enough to serve Sicily so well.

While it is possible to drive from Castellammare to all the points of interest in the vicinity, and they are many, it is better to go on by the train to the station Alcamo-Calatafimi. Neither town is near the railway station, but either *diligenzia* or carriage is to be had for the ride — four miles to Alcamo, an old Saracenic town which still keeps a certain oriental tang, or about six miles in the other direction to Calatafimi. Almost straight north, along the high-road to Castellammare, are the ruins of Segesta, a spot full of tragic memories.

Segesta — Egesta it was then — one of the two great Elymian cities, trafficked with Carthage, with Sicilian Greeks, with Athens, with anyone, in a word, as suited her purpose at the moment; but somehow she usually came to grief through these very alliances. Indeed, it was her continual bickering with Greek Selinus, her distant neighbor on the southern shore, that first brought the meddling Athenians to Sicily, and so indirectly caused the great war between Athens and Syracuse. To-day

there is not an Elymian ruin left in the city; all that remains of the ill-starred metropolis is Greek and Roman.

The superb temple, alike a monument to Greek genius and the devotion of the people, rises from a lofty plateau — a glowing golden shrine upon an altar all of green, embayed by watchful, hoary mountains. Only the massiveness of a Doric structure could so perfectly chime in with the grandeur of Nature, so fittingly command the immense and silent though turbulent landscape that rolls away from its feet. Revelation inspired its location, and genius erected it — to stand lovelier and more marvelous still after the lapse of ages than when there was a city near by to detract from its majestic solitude.

The Greeks, with their unerring artistic sense, always built their theaters in positions commanding magnificent views, and the little theater here at Segesta, though only about half the size of the one at Syracuse, looks out upon the sea, many miles away, and a magnificent panorama of hills and forests on either side. Of the town only a few very scanty bits of ruined houses have been uncovered.

One of the most lurid episodes in the city's history occurred when the tyrant Agathocles — he feigned to be a merry soul, though really a butcher at heart, with massacre as his chief diversion! — tortured and slaughtered ten thousand of the inhabit-

ants, sold all the likely looking boys and girls as slaves, repeopled the city with colonists of his own, and called it Dikaiopolis, the City of Righteousness! Indeed, Agathocles was in many respects the most picturesque despot Sicily ever produced, and his career reads like a modern romantic novel. Born a potter, he entered the army, was banished, recalled to Syracuse, married a wealthy widow there, frustrated plot after plot against his life, engaged in wholesale murders, established himself as a full fledged tyrant, and made war against Carthage in her own territory — the first time the arrogant daughter of Phœnicia had ever been tracked to her lair by an enemy. Raising himself by treachery and massacre upon a throne of his enemies' skulls, Agathocles made himself master of all Sicily, and for seventeen years more held his power intact, butcher and trickster to the end, yet somehow managing always to retain the good will of the masses.

From Calatafimi the train goes on southward past ancient Halicyæ, a big town arrogantly perched upon a height, gemmed with a castle, to Castelvetrano, where we leave it for the ruins of Selinus on the shore, seven miles away. The trip is made either by carriage or on horseback, as you may prefer. The acropolis, the pulsing heart of Selinus, is an empty shell. Beneath our feet the historic pave over which rumbled the springless chariots of

Phœnician and Greek, lies buried in crumbling débris; the fallen temples, the vast hillocks of ruin beyond, tell mutely how great and how glorious must the city have been before Hannibal the destroyer poured forth his savage wrath upon it; and in street and plain the *selinon*, or wild celery, which named the city, still thrusts upward to the same sun that warmed the early settlers.

On the hill east of the acropolis rise the ruins of the three largest temples, colossal structures, but not a fragment of any other kind. These stupendous edifices, even in their desolation, are among the most inspiring of Sicilian monuments; especially when we remember that at no time was the city first or even second among the Greek communities. And from these temples of Selinus were taken the wonderful metopes — now in the Palermo Museum — that so graphically illustrate the progress of Greek-Sicilian temple sculpture. Here on the eastern hill the Selinutines were busy raising to Phœbus Apollo his greatest fane when the invader came, and, dropping their tools, the workmen hastened to their doom. The structure was 371 feet long, 177 wide — so tremendous that upon its base were erected forty-six giant columns, almost fifty-eight feet high and twelve feet thick! It seems almost impossible that so vast, so tremendously solid a structure should collapse like an eggshell; and yet the seismic shock that evidently destroyed it tossed

those huge walls and columns lightly aside, voiding at a single stroke the work of the builders who planned like genii and executed like Titans. How was it, we wonder, that Selinus offended the mighty earth gods as well as the god of war? And how long was it before they shook the earth to its very vitals and completed the work of destruction the barbarian had begun?

That the Carthaginians cut off the temple builders at their work is proven by a visit to the quarries, some distance inland. From the necropolis, west of the river, the road winds in, and before the quarries are reached we pass block after block of the shaped stones abandoned in transport to the temples. In the great pits themselves one may look on, almost as if time had been annihilated, at the various stages of the work — there are some huge blocks from eight to ten feet long and eight feet thick, corresponding exactly with the column drums of the temple marked G on the plans for the use of visitors, and without doubt intended for that edifice. It is an object lesson one cannot soon forget, of the blighting breath of war, a tragedy without words that is inexpressibly moving.

To the southwest of Selinus is the Punta di Granitola, where the Arabs landed in 827 A. D., Koran in one hand, sword in the other — the last African invaders to conquer the island, let us hope. Far-

ther along, on both shore and railroad, is Mazzara, with a Norman cathedral and ruined castle; and straight northwest on a little promontory of its own is Marsala, better known for its sweet, rich wine than as the modern successor of Carthaginian Lilybaion. Though Marsala — the name is Arabic: Marsa Ali, Ali's Harbor — was never possessed by the Greeks, its story is nevertheless vivid and varied. As the chief stronghold of Carthage, it played a vital part in the struggle for supremacy in this "barbarian corner" of the island. Pyrrhus besieged it in vain, and thirty years later Rome besieged it unsuccessfully for eight years in one of the most stubborn and remarkable campaigns in history. Afterward, during the Roman period, the city was known as "the most splendid," and was made the capital of the western half of Sicily, Syracuse being the eastern capital. It became an important dockyard and naval station, whence the Roman campaigns against Africa were dispatched. Don John of Austria, too, sailed hence on his expeditions against he Turks.

It was into the harbor of Marsala on that memorable 11th of May, 1860, that the two little steamers *Lombardo* and *Piemonte*, which the revolutionists had shanghaied from the Rubattino Company up at Genoa the week before, sneaked to land Garibaldi and his red-shirt brigade. They got ashore safely, in spite of the Bourbons' cruisers, and before they

left for Calatafimi Garibaldi posted his now famous proclamation claiming Sicily for King Victor Emmanuele.

Of course there are a cathedral, Punic and Christian tombs, the remains of ancient walls and harbor works, *latomie* and so on, but to-day Marsala really spells only — Wine! The largest and most important establishments are those of the Englishmen Ingham and Woodhouse, and the Sicilian Florio of Palermo. But there are numerous others not so well known nor doing so large a business. The long, low, white bodegas are open to the inspection of visitors, and to those who have never seen them, the processes of blending and converting with the use of the "mother" wines, the mechanical bottling and corking, the labeling and packing departments, the endless rows of hogsheads and the strongly vinous atmosphere, all possess an attraction peculiarly their own. There is something of interest in every foot of each establishment. But — *verbum sap!* Beware the atmosphere, and the testing to which you are invited. In all the great wine-making countries it is considered a legitimate joke to befuddle the careless American whose enthusiasm outruns his prudence. One or two sips of the wine may be taken with dignity, but Marsala, like its Spanish cousin, Sherry, is a heady wine, and the rich, heavy air of the winery and wareroom alike bespeak caution on the part of the investigator, if

a delightful memory is not to be spoiled by a pricking conscience.

Around the old harbor to the north of Marsala are extensive salt works, and between it and Trapani are about forty-five more, all worked by private capital, since Italy's royal monopoly has not been extended to Sicily. Salt is one of the island's most valuable exports, and the salt-pans down by the sea, at Trapani — the ancient Drepana of Carthaginian days — have made the city the most prosperous place, for its size, in the island. From a distance the heaps look as if an army of invading Saracens had pitched their tents upon the flats, and quaint windmills add a distinctly Dutch note to the scene. The heavy brine is pumped up into shallow excavations or "pans," as the tanks are called. The hot Sicilian sunshine and the warm African breezes do the rest. When the water has evaporated, the pans are thickly coated with the crystals, which workmen shovel into glittering heaps and cover with tiles to protect them. There the salt waits, for either the refinery or for shipment in bulk as a crude product.

Trapani itself is one of the cleanest towns in the island, as well as one of the most prosperous, and of course has its Via Garibaldi, which proves its fraternity with all other Sicilian cities. While there is nothing really great in it, in either architecture or art, the city is nevertheless full of minor

interest, and various objects of art ranging all the way from pieces of the Middle Ages down to the present day statues of King Victor Emmanuele II and Garibaldi, neither of which is yet forty years old. One could while away many a pleasant day loitering among these things — the Cathedral, with its Crucifixion by Van Dyck, and splendid old carven seats in the choir; the quaint decorations of Sant' Agostino, where the Knights Templars worshiped centuries ago; Lucca della Robbia's marble-framed Madonna in the other church of Santa Maria di Gesù; the seventeenth century polychrome wooden statues by Trapani's own sons in the Oratory of San Michele; the queer tower of the Spedadello down in the Ghetto, and so on. Equally pleasant it is to wander along the tree-shaded promenade at the water's edge, or as far out as the Torre di Ligny, on the very tip of the "sickle" (*drepana*) that Trapani thrusts out into the sea.

Off shore, the picturesque Ægadian Isles rise like jewels from the sea. From the middle of the eighteenth to the last quarter of the nineteenth century they were owned by the noble Pallavicini family of Genoa. They are still private property, since in 1874 Signor Florio of Palermo, the steamship man and wine grower, added them to his multifarious interests and made them the headquarters of the most important tunny fishery in Sicily.

Trapani possesses the usual historical interest of

intermittent conflict between the races that struggled for the possession of the island, but its legendary story is even more gripping. Virgil pictures the founding of the city by the hero Æneas and his Trojans after Troy had fallen, the death of the venerable Anchises, and the festival Æneas instituted in honor of his father's uneasy spirit. The poet's soaring imagination carried the hero on up the mist-shrouded mountain behind, to worship at the fane of his mother Venus. This cloudy peak was named after Eryx — son of Butes, the mighty wrestler — who challenged Hercules to a test of strength, and was vanquished by that worthy robber, who stopped while driving off Geryon's stolen herds long enough to win the match and take the mountain as his prize.

With the beginning of history it appears in the possession of the Elymians, who claimed to be descendants of the Trojans. Twenty-five hundred feet in the air rises Eryx, to-day Monte San Giuliano, reached from Trapani by an interminably winding but easy road that twists and turns half a hundred times in its ascent. Up through the purple shadows of gulches, along the sharp edges of startling acclivities winds the trail, with halcyone fields of every brilliant flower and plant below, and great expanses waving with grain, green and gold with lemons and oranges, red with the fresh wounds of the plow. Hide-sandaled and heavily caped and

hooded peasants, shepherds who seem to have stepped right out of Odyssey or Æneid, carrying classic water or wine flasks, greet us cheerily along the way. As we near the top the reason for these heavy garments becomes apparent in the lower temperature, for Eryx is a peak and a city of fog, often a little world by itself far above the earth, unseen by and unseeing city and plain below, looking down only on the tufted white of rolling mists. Cyclopean fragments of ancient walls and natural precipices blend into one another and into the present town walls, above steep approaches to the Gates of Trapani, of the Heralds, and of the Sword, the three entrances to all that exists of Eryx to-day, where less than three thousand souls live in that part of the town nearest the ruins of the temple, whose very altars long since crumbled into the dust of oblivion.

In the days when the Elymians were its masters, the mountain was sacred to a goddess who evidently had the same functions as the Roman Venus. What her Elymian name was we do not know; but since the Phœnicians called her Astarte, the Greeks Aphrodite and the Romans Venus, one after the other, we may feel sure that whatever her original name, she stood, as did those later goddesses identified with her, for love and beauty and sustenance. And though centuries have passed, and the altar before her whereon no blood was permitted to be spilt no

longer bears the fire of sacrifice, the priestly ideal of woman still presides over this sacred rock so high among the mists. For here where the pagans worshiped their unknown goddess, to-day the Virgin gazes down upon the unchanging sacrifice of years, the hearts of men.

The town is rugged and irregular and personal to a degree that captivates the most hardened sightseer — crooked, narrow streets, full of quaint buildings rich in Eastern touches: here a latticed casement suggesting veiled women and mystery, yonder *ajimez* windows divided by delicate little columns, farther along an harmonious blending of the Norman and Moorish on sculptured pillar capital and gallery. The people are as captivating as the town — caped men stalking to and fro like comic opera brigands, women whose loveliness has made Eryx noted.

Foliage so rich and varied that only a catalogue can describe it riots in the garden once part of the temple precincts, and sprouts between the stones of the ancient, partly ruined castle that legend would have us believe was erected by no less a personage than Dædalus himself. To-day the castle is partly used as a prison, and it is a warden who admits to the quiet precincts. Crumbling bastion and curtain, roofless hall and moldy dungeon keep, silent corridor and deserted rampart, where no Elymian spears now glisten in the occasional sunshine or

drip gloomily with the characteristic golden fog, weave a powerful spell, so powerful, so enchanting none would be surprised in the slightest did the castle suddenly galvanize into life, and the figure of the lovely goddess of eld once more smile in the little temple whose foundations only now exist.

It is a city, a castle, a location only to be sketched. No colors, no details can at all conjure forth the charm at once so definite and so elusive. See Eryx! — even if you have no æroplane and must either "ride or walk"— a guidebook solemnly advises this as the best way to reach the summit — up that splendid road into the very skies.

XVIII

ADDIO, SICILIA!

IN Sicily all roads lead to Palermo. And if they do not, you manage to make them. And no matter how many times you return to that city of splendid light, you always find that there is some pleasant or interesting or profitable trip out from the city that you have missed before: perhaps to the picturesque Albanian colony of Piana dei Greci; or up in the hills to the suppressed Benedictine monastery of San Martino, founded by Gregory the Great in the sixth century; or to the village of Acquasanta near by for the sea-bathing; or even to the convict island of Ustica, about five hours away, whose population was killed or carried off by pirates as recently as the middle of the eighteenth century; and always — unless you have spent a year straight through in the city,— you will find some new festival to gladden your eyes and deafen your ears. It may be that after a tiresome day your matutinal slumbers are rudely disturbed by a weird clamor in the street long before getting-up time. Growlfully you turn over and try to sleep again. The racket goes right on, with

darting insistence, and by and by you grow interested enough to ring for a maid and ask why in the name of Morfeo the concierge doesn't go out and put on the soft pedal if he can't entirely stop the bedlam!

"Why, *signori!*" cries the girl, astonished at ignorance of so important an event. "It is the *Festa della Madonna dei Capri* — the Feast of Our Lady of the Goats. We have it every single year. Everybody is out!"

It sounds that way! There is no use in trying to sleep, so you get up wrathfully and open the shutters. Along the dusty way in solemn processions march conscious-looking cows, wreathed and garlanded with flowers. Now and then a stately bossy ambles by, wearing a three-foot horseshoe of red and white roses, rising above her horns like a halo, and exhaling, if not the odor of sanctity, at least right sweet odors withal. Other cows have about their necks painted wooden poke-collars surmounted by floral horseshoes, or wear simply strings of flowers; and behind nearly every cow tags her mournful looking baby. The goats, fairly strutting with pride, however, are the most ludicrous members of these amazing cavalcades, for they have bouquets attached with wire and toothpicks to twisted horns and even to their sub-tails, which wigwag signals as they bob along with arched necks. Occasionally a lone lamb, waddling toilsomely be-

"Baby, tied to mother's tail, managed to get a few pints of breakfast as the crowd posed."

hind everything else, bleats its disgust and weariness, its immaculate wool tied full of flaring crimson or blue ribbon crosses, its tail banded with ribbons in a network until it looks like the foot and ankle of a dancing girl.

Before them all march the "bands," scratch organizations of amateur players who discourse painfully upon all manner of instruments, wind, string and brass. The fortunate morning we saw this unique *festa pasturale,* I really wanted to make pictures, but mindful of my chilly sunrise experience in Taormina, neither blare of bands nor tinkle of bells could move me until after breakfast. Then, alas! the decorated animals had all passed by, and I had to be content with a plain, motherly cow, whose baby — tied to mother's tail! — managed to get a few pints of breakfast as the crowd posed. I made the picture-taking as slow as possible, to give the poor little calf five minutes for refreshments.

No one who has ever seen the pastures in and near Palermo wonders at the poor beasts' melancholy air of appetite. You find some of these grazing fields on the slopes of Monte Pellegrino when you go toilsomely up to visit the shrine of the city's virgin saint, Rosalia. The little Mount of the Pilgrim has not always borne that name; only since the great plague of 1624, in fact. Before that, for ages, it was Herkte, or Heircte. Square-faced and rugged, it rises in a sheer precipice from the waves

on one side, an isolated limestone crag, and slopes less abruptly down to the Conca d' Oro on the other. In 248 B. C., Hamilcar the Carthaginian, who camped up on Herkte to keep in check the Romans in Palermo, cleared and planted fields with grain to feed his hungry troops. There are still scanty cultivated fields on the mountain, and though now, from a little distance, Pellegrino seems even balder than it is, large herds of cattle manage by hard work to crop a meager living from its insignificant grass and herbage.

Visiting Pellegrino's upper slopes and the little chapel in the grotto of Sta. Rosalia is as much a part of seeing Palermo as the visit to the Colosseum is a part of seeing Rome. But it is not quite so easy as some of the other little journeys about Palermo, since the steep ascent cannot be negotiated by carriage. Either on four feet or on two the trip must be made — most people make it on four. Tumultuous donkeyboys lie in wait in the Piazza Falde at the foot of the mountain, and "bark" the merits of their beasts with a vigor that is sometimes confusing, while the donkeys themselves — mere burros they are, tiny but powerful — gaze at their burdens-to-be with a droll air of resignation. Most of the saddles are medieval housings built of boards, over which odds and ends of coarse carpet have been nailed until they look like Joseph's famous coat. Lucky visitors, or those who start early

enough after either breakfast or luncheon to have room for choice, pick the more commonplace and comfortable leather saddles that decorate two or three of the newer donkeys. Otherwise, eating from the mantelpiece for a day or so afterward is almost a necessity!

The road up the hill is a splendid piece of engineering as well as a picturesque and romantic highway. Who but Latins would construct at vast expense a road like this simply for the ease and comfort of pilgrims to a shrine no more illustrious than scores of others, and call it the *Via al Santuario,* the Way to *the* Sanctuary? Partly on the solid rock of the mountain, partly on graceful arched bridges or viaducts, it leaps upward in short, acute angles, now spanning the dry bed of a *torrente,* now edging its way along the precarious parapet of a crag. Large, smooth pebbles set on edge in mortar, divided and bordered by three lengthwise parallel strips of lava or some other equally durable stone and crossed by other strips every fifty feet or so, make it apparently as enduring as Pellegrino itself. On either side rises a low, thick stone wall, and every few hundred yards are white signposts with the name in black letters.

From the Piazza Falde — *falde,* in Italian, means flank, skirt — it leads upward in an easy ascent that continues for two or three hundred yards. But after the third turn, it takes a sudden inclination of

twenty degrees or more out of the horizontal. That begins the real climb,— and the view. Palermo, the Conca d' Oro, the sea below, the mountains behind, appear and disappear with each turn, like the ever-changing film of a motion-picture.

The Japanese say there are "two kinds of fools: those who have never ascended Fuji-yama, and those who have ascended him twice." The proverb applies here on Pellegrino perfectly. It is as great a mistake not to make the journey once as it would be needless to make it a second time, for no one can ever forget the picturesque climb up that zig-zag road on donkey-back. When the writer went up, everybody who saw the miniature procession laughed. We three, beast, boy and man, made a sight Cervantes would have smiled to see. Equipped with a stout club, the plump boy answered very well for Sancho Panza. With my camera case over my shoulder in lieu of a target, and my tripod-legs projecting at impossible angles, I did very well as Don Quijote. And the faithful burro was surely a replica in miniature of Rosinante, long ears flopping disconsolately back over her neck.

Instead of beating his beast as almost every other boy does when the animal balks at the steeper part of the ascent, "Sancho" ran lightly forward and began picking up wisps of the straw gleaners had dropped on their way down the mountain. When he had a handful, he held the bunch of fodder out

temptingly, and yelled "Aaaaaa-ah-ah!" "Rosinante" snorted, sniffed suspiciously, and with a suddenness that almost slid "Don Quijote" over her haunches into the road, bolted forward for the tidbit. A mouthful at a time it was given to her, and thus the hardest part of the way was quickly passed over without a blow being struck.

"Do all the donkey-boys do this?" I asked, surprised at the humanity of the proceeding.

"Sancho's" reply was disconcertingly frank. "Oh, no, *Signore.* I am the only one. I can't afford to buy a new donkey, and if I *wear this one out,* how can I bring *forestieri* at Pellegrino? The other boys beat their donkeys — yes! But then, they can get new ones every little while!"

Once above the long series of viaducts that keep the road on an even plane of ascent over gullies and chasms, the way ceases to be so steep. On the rocky slopes, hardy Swiss cows graze among stones that seem incapable of yielding even thistles. When all the sparse grass is gone, with muzzle and hoofs the hard-working cows turn over boulders of considerable size and eagerly lick up the meager, pale blade or two of grass they conceal, finishing the attack by calmly devouring the fat little snails that cling to the moist earth and the under side of the big stones — I saw this myself. The cows have a hard time of it indeed, trudging out from the city every morning, grazing and rooting all day among the rocks,

and then going down at night to be milked from door to door.

But the goats have an even harder time. Some are seen every day on the very apex of the mountain, mere black specks against the sky. They clamber up there opposite the telegraph and semaphore stations without a thought of the journeys they must make in the evening. On coming back into town with heavy bags, their owners drive them ruthlessly up four or five flights of stairs to give some lazy customer as little as half a pint of their strong, rich milk.

Near the top of this Via del Santuario is the roofless chapel of Croce, the Cross, which projects bastion-like from the jutting brow of the hill. Here every year a priest from the monastery on the heights, standing where he can see the whole splendid sweep of the Golden Shell below, a rippling sea of green and gold, returns thanks for its fertility during the past season, and beseeches heaven for a continuance of it for another year.

The chapel of Santa Rosalia is in the gloomy cavern to which the lovely maiden fled to escape the temptations of her uncle's court in Palermo; a court full of the factitious splendor and richness of the East, with Saracens all about and an atmosphere which, to say the least, was probably not conducive to saintly meditation. She is a mysterious and interesting figure, this daughter of the

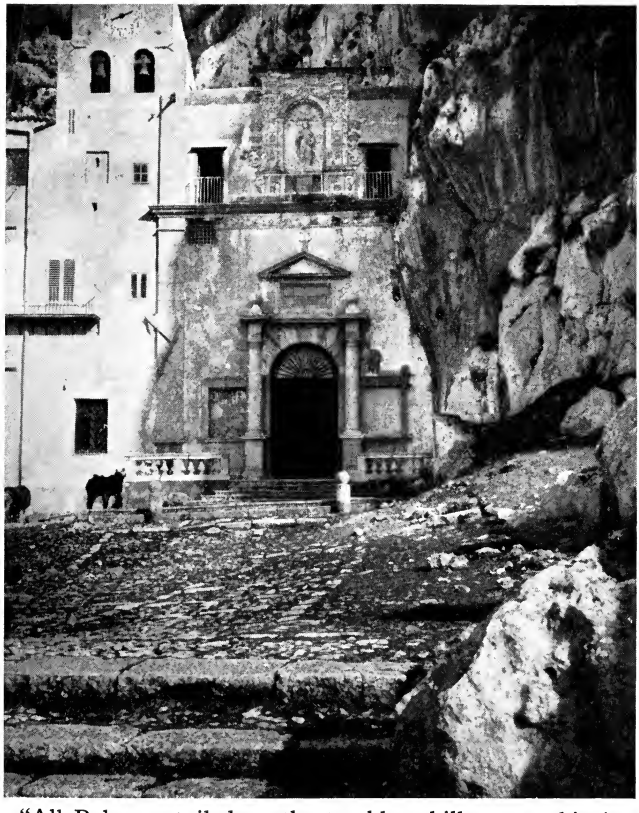
mighty Duke Sinibaldo and niece of King William the Good. How could she ever have cast aside the ease and luxury of the elaborate civilization in which she had been reared, and come to this stalactite grotto, dripping and cold, where her companions were no lords and ladies in waiting, but only the bats and small mountain animals seeking shelter from inclement weather?

Exactly how long Rosalia maintained herself here in holy seclusion no one knows, but the date of her death seems to have been about 1170. In any event, she lay peacefully in oblivion until in 1624 some bones were discovered in the cavern. At that time a plague was raging, the city panic stricken, and when the bones were brought in to the Cathedral, the plague stopped. Such a coincidence was too striking to be ignored by the simple-minded, so Rosalia was canonized and appointed the patron of the city, because of her gracious intervention on behalf of the people against whose ancestors she had shaken off the dust of her feet.

Filled with that dramatic religious fervor which has found its expression in so many wonderful pilgrimages, from the Crusades to the present, all Palermo toiled up the trackless hill to worship before the niche in the grotto where she died. Miracle after miracle was performed; and to-day the whole city, whether religiously inclined or not, is devoted to its female saint, whose relics are believed to be

preserved in a huge funerary urn surmounted by her statue, and kept in the treasury of the Cathedral. The monument, which is solid silver, weighs more than fourteen hundred pounds. Every year her festival is celebrated with great pomp, a huge car, fifty feet high and as big as a house, being dragged through the streets amid the acclamations of the faithful. The float is also brought out in solemn procession whenever her intercession is especially desired for the city.

No attention has been paid to the gratuitous information of a scientist that the saint's relics are really only animal bones. The late Andrew D. White, in his "*History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*," says: "When Professor Buckland, the eminent osteologist and geologist, discovered the relics of Rosalia at Palermo, which had for ages cured diseases and warded off epidemics, were the bones of a goat, this fact caused not the slightest diminution of their miraculous power." Certainly no Palermitan to-day would listen to any Goth who attempted to tell him such a story as this; and even to heretic Americans, the "scientific" attitude which delights in iconoclasm is hard to comprehend. Why should the scientist who claims that his only wish is to benefit humanity, take from the poor and miserable any belief that heals them, however idle or superstitious that faith may seem to him?



"All Palermo toiled up the trackless hill to worship in the grotto where Rosalia died."

Eventually up on the mountain a chapel was constructed whose artificial wall meets the edges of the grotto, enclosing it completely. There is no roof to this outer section except over the front door; and the sunshine, falling upon the floor between entrance and choir, gives this open court the air of a pleasant vestibule roofed only by the azure, and throws into strong, shadowy relief the cavern beyond, with its candles twinkling in the dusk before the altars. A handsome black iron screen divides outer court from inner grotto; and both are paved with big, uneven stones worn to glassy slipperiness by the knees of the devout. The natural rock roof is weird and fantastic, covered with stalactic pendants, colored in all the shades of brown and green by the highly alkaline water that whispers perpetual requiem into myriad leaden gutters which carry it to the sides, and so preserve the decorations from destruction. Bent and twisted and angled, the gutters seem the branches of so many dead trees sprawling high among the jumbled rocks.

At the rear of the chapel is a handsome white marble and mosaic altar, and nearer the front, enclosed in a glass case under an elaborate and massive shrine of highly colored marbles, is the figure of the saint over which Goethe rhapsodized. By the light of a flickering taper thrust between the marble bars, little by little the image within takes shape in the gloom. The head and hands are marble, the

robes gilt. She seems to sleep naturally, a young girl of eighteen or twenty, her head easily disposed upon the pillow, her lips just apart; exactly, as the great German expressed it, as if she might breathe and move at any moment. Upon her breast blaze the crimson jewels of the Cross of Savoy, presented by Queen Margharita herself, and innumerable other tokens, among them a huge golden heart, the gift of a Palermitan cardinal. Gold and silver watches, jeweled rings, loose precious stones, bracelets, necklaces, and other ornaments by the dozen lie about the glass casket or upon the gilded robes, which are exquisitely worked with lacelike tracery. And to one side is a gilt scepter fully five feet long.

Opposite, on the wall, a white marble slab marking the niche where the bones lay, bears the words:

VT QVO LOCO, ET SITV D. ROSALIAE SACRVM CORPVS
ADMIRABILI OPERE LAPIDEIS THESIS INSERTVM
ANNOS FERME CCCC DELITVERIT,
QVOD MAIORES NOSTROS LATVIT, NOBIS DIVINITVS INNOTVIT
POSTERI NON IGNORARENT:
IPSIVS EXPIRANTIO IMAGO VBI IACVERAT SITA EST:
ARA SUPERIMPOSTA ANNO IVBILAEI M DC XXV

From the grotto-chapel, past a group of goatherds' houses and through their attendant flocks, it is only about a quarter-mile stumble to a jutting spur which forms the highest crag of the moun-

tain. Perched there between the halves of a dismantled arcade of plaster columns, stands a colossal figure of Santa Rosalia, hundreds of feet above the sea. Lightning has beheaded the statue twice, and the two marble heads lie in a little hollow at the saint's feet. After the second bolt from the heavens the Sicilians, who are not by any means a wealthy people, put on a third head — a cheap plaster one; and though many a fierce storm has raged about Pellegrino since then, not once has the lightning struck the statue — perhaps the plaster head is not worth destroying.

That *all forestieri have money, so why shouldn't they pay?* is the logic of the Italian, and everywhere except in Sicily he carries it to the absurdities; and even in this blissful isle an individual sometimes forgets his geniality by turning highwayman for the nonce. A tatterdemalion goatherd, for instance, charged me sixteen cents for a milked-to-order pint of goat's milk.

"Sancho" regarded the transaction with undisguised scorn. "By Bacchus, but all *forestieri* are fools!" he said. "Why didn't you tell me to get it for you? I could get all you wanted for four cents!"

Yet notwithstanding his philosophizing "Sancho" generously let me off with only the usual gratuities.

A day or so later — with so much yet undone —

grieving that we must leave the island which had taken so mighty a grip on our hearts, we rolled down, for the last time, through the Place of the Four Winds, and went aboard the beautiful little *Marco Polo.*

Half a dozen Nations decorated the Bay with their colors from a score of mastheads. Here lay a filthy little Greek tramp whose faded blue and white stripes fluttered limply from her steam-spitting stern; there a smutty white trading barque with gaping red seams and burnished copper, hairy a foot below the water line with grass and moss; yonder trim white steamers of the N. G. I. Disconsolate we sat on the promenade deck watching the lively scene along the Scala Florio. A tiny breeze was stirring, and the slip of new moon came staggering up the blue vault with the rotund body of her deceased mother in her thin little wide-stretched arms, followed at a respectful distance by a winking, blinking satellite. Pellegrino and distant Grifone showed soft and dim in blue and pink and gray, like the too closely cropped hide of a young donkey.

On the wharf were tears and laughter. An eager crowd drove up in ever increasing numbers and thronged the space about the gangplank to give their friends a hearty send-off. Farther out a young girl sang atrociously to a wheezy handorgan, while a small boy, cap in his teeth, clambered over

the *Marco Polo's* rail and begged for pennies. A gold-laced official, with an important beard and furious mustachios, marched aboard with as dignified a stride as his five-feet-two permitted, and instantly the quiet ship became alive. Boatswains bellowed gruff orders, a steam-donkey somewhere forward chattered right merrily, and down in the hold the *ingegniero* "turned over" his engines to make sure everything was working properly. A serpentine hawser slipped from its bitt on the wharf and splashed writhing into the water at our feet — we were sailing.

But no — at this very last instant a shout from the empty Place of the Four Winds a block away, stopped us. The heartiest send-off of all was yet to come. Roaring and spitting fire and smoke, a huge automobile in gray warpaint tore through the square, skidded to the edge, stopped as though it had rushed into a stone wall, and fairly shot a young man out upon the gangplank just as it quivered on the rise, while women shrieked and men laughed.

His two companions were on the dock in a second, seized his shiny little black box-trunk, swung it to and fro once or twice, and hurled it after him with such precision that it caught the unlucky passenger in the small of his back and bowled him over squarely. As he was rising to his feet, white with astonishment and rage, his heavy handbag, thrown

with the same forceful kindliness, knocked him down a second time, and ship and dock chorused happily together. Meantime the automobile panted contentedly as the fasts were cast off bow and stern, the screw began to revolve, and the white *Marco Polo* slipped out into the gathering night.

Silently we fled the harbor, dotted now with myriad dancing lights; curtseyed gracefully out past Santa Rosalia's statue, nine hundred feet aloft on the crag; dashed by small clusters of lights in a shadowy pocket of the outer hills, and were at sea again. Once more the long, slow roll of Mediterranean was under our feet, its grateful salt breath in our nostrils.

A boy with the dinner-gong came yam-yam-yamming down the decks. We did not heed him. The whirling screw was throbbing a different refrain in our ears —

"Thou art the garden of the world, the home
Of all Art yields or Nature can decree;
E'en in thy desert what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility,
Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced."

THE END

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There are also several books covering parts of Sicily, or some of its customs; these are generally to be had in the larger public libraries.

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