

FROM PONKAPOG TO PESTH.

I.

LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE.

IN a previous paper¹ belonging to this series, I landed the reader on the shores of the Old World without giving him the slightest intimation as to how he got there. It is the purpose of the present chapter briefly to atone for that discourtesy.

On every steamer plowing its way across the Atlantic there are always several passengers who never miss a single one of the five meals served each day. In the interim between breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea, and supper, they smoke heavy black cigars — *cabañas*, I think — on the upper deck. They throw seafaring glances aloft, — for these folks are nothing if not nautical; they indulge in bets on how many knots an hour; it is never twelve o'clock or six o'clock with them, but so many bells. They even know the binnacle by sight. At night, in the grand saloon, they laugh and talk and play cards with a sort of unholy glee. If one of them chances to pass your open state-room door just before breakfast, you are immediately conscious of a penetrating aromatic odor in the air. You vaguely recognize it as the odor of a morning beverage which you knew in happier days, but do not greatly care for now.

I did not make the personal acquaintance of any of these abnormal beings on board her majesty's Cunard steamship *Abyssinia*, for, though I had been used to the sea all my life, — had, in fact, barely escaped being born on it, — I lay deathly sick in my berth from the time we left Sandy Hook Light until we sighted the Irish coast. Let me hope that in the mean while the reader was happy on deck and had suffered no sea change.

A conversation which I happened to

¹ Atlantic Monthly, vol. xxxix., page 19.

overhear one night in the state-room adjoining mine is the only detail I can give of that voyage across the Atlantic; but it is a detail not without significance. Indeed, it presents the whole situation in a nutshell.

For the first three days out the sea had been remarkably smooth, — “as smooth as glass,” Captain Haines observed. With the exception of an occasional impromptu plunge into a brother passenger, you could pace the deck quite comfortably, — provided you could pace it at all. Out of politeness to the pleasant weather the sky-light of the main saloon had not been closed. Taking advantage of this circumstance, a heavy sea broke over the stern-rail one midnight and deposited about fifty gallons of ocean wave in the cabin. The hurried shuffling of feet on deck and the shrieks from the inundated berths on the port side awakened everybody. Presently I heard a feeble voice uplifted in the state-room next to mine, — evidently the voice of a Briton: —

“Fwedwick — aw — I say — what's up?”

“Nothing at all, my boy. We only shipped a sea.”

“What a beastly ideah!”

“Go to sleep.”

“Aw — yes — but I carn't, you know.”

“Carn't you take a bit of sherry, then?”

Silence. The wind had sensibly freshened, and the ship began pitching in a most disagreeable fashion, now and then giving a roll to leeward to show what it could do in that line. In one of those careenings the ponderous screw, missing its grip on the water, quivered convulsively through all its length, and for an instant the great iron-plated hulk seemed to be seized by a death spasm. The sudden calm which followed, as the bronze fins were again submerged, was almost oppressive.

Once more the feeble voice lifted its head, so to speak:—

“Fwedwick — aw — I say — are we sinking?”

“Sinking? No! What blarsted rubbish!”

“Aw — I’m devilish sorry!”

II.

ON A BALCONY.

I hate — if it is not using too strong language to say that one hates — a balcony. A balcony is a humiliating architectural link between in-doors and out-of-doors. To be on a balcony is to be nowhere in particular: you are not exactly at home, and yet cannot be described as out; your privacy and your freedom are alike sacrificed. The approaching bore can draw a bead on you with his rifled eye, and wing you at a thousand paces. You may gaze abstractedly at a cloud, or turn your back, but you cannot escape him, — though the chance is always open to you to drop a bureau on him as he lifts his hand to the bell-knob. One could fill a volume with a condensed catalogue of the inconveniences of an average balcony. But when the balcony hangs from the third-story window of an Old World palace, and when the façade of that Old World palace looks upon the Bay of Naples, you had better think twice before you speak disparagingly of balconies. With that sheet of mysteriously blue water in front of you; with Mount Vesuvius moodily smoking his perpetual calumet on your left; with the indented shore sweeping towards Pozzuoli and Baiæ on your right; with Capri and Ischia notching the ashen gray line of the horizon; with the tender heaven of May bending over all, — with these accessories, I say, it must be conceded that one might be very much worse off in this world than on a balcony.

I know that I came to regard the narrow iron-grilled shelf suspended from my bed-room window in the hotel on the Strada Chiatamone as the choicest

spot in all Naples. After a ramble through the unsavory streets it was always a pleasure to get back to it, and I think I never in my life did a more sensible thing in the department of pure idleness than when I resolved to spend an entire day on that balcony. One morning, after an early breakfast, I established myself there in an arm-chair placed beside a small table holding a couple of books, a paper of cigarettes, and a field-glass. My companions had gone to explore the picture-galleries; but I had my picture-gallery *chez moi*, — in the busy *strada* below, in the villa-fringed bay, in the cluster of yellow-roofed little towns clinging to the purple slopes of Mount Vesuvius and patiently awaiting annihilation. The beauty of Naples lies along its water-front, and from my coigne of vantage I had nothing to desire.

If the Bay of Naples had not been described a million times during the present century, I should still not attempt to describe it: I have made a discovery which no other traveler seems to have made, — that its loveliness is untranslatable. Moreover, enthusiasm is not permitted to the modern tourist. He may be æsthetic, or historic, or scientific, or analytic, or didactic, or any kind of ic, except enthusiastic. He may be Meissonier-like in his detail; he may give you the very tint and texture of a honey-combed frieze over a Byzantine gate-way, or lay bare the yet faintly palpitating heart of some old-time tragedy, but he must do it in a nonchalant, pulseless manner, with a semi-supercilious elevation of nostril. He would lose his self-respect if he were to be deeply moved by anything, or really interested in anything.

“All that he sees in Bagdad
Is the Tigris to float him away.”

He is the very antipode of his elder brother of fifty years syne, who used to go about filling his note-book with Thoughts on Standing at the Tomb of Marcus Antoninus, Emotions on Finding a Flea on my Shirt Collar in the Val d’Arno. The latter-day tourist is a great deal less innocent, but is he more

amusing than those old-fashioned sentimental travelers who had at least freshness of sympathies and never dreamed of trying to pass themselves off as cynics? Dear, ingenuous, impressible souls, — peace to your books of travel! May they line none but trunks destined to prolonged foreign tours, or those thrice happy trunks which go on bridal journeys!

At the risk of being relegated to the footing of those emotional ancients, I am going to confess to an unrequited passion for Mount Vesuvius. Never was passion less regarded by its object. I did not aspire to be received with the warmth of manner that characterized its reception of the elder Pliny in the year 79, but I did want Mount Vesuvius to pay me a little attention, which it might easily have done, — without putting itself out. On arriving in town I had called on Mount Vesuvius. The acquaintance rested there. Every night after my candle was extinguished I stood a while at the open window and glanced half-expectantly across the bay; but the sullen monster made no sign. That slender spiral column of smoke, spreading out like a toad-stool on attaining a certain height, but neither increasing nor diminishing in volume, lifted itself into the starlight. Sometimes I fancied that the smoke had taken a deeper lurid tinge; but it was only fancy. How I longed for a sudden burst of flame and scoriam from those yawning jaws! — for one awful instant's illumination of the bay and the shipping and the picturesque villages asleep at the foot of the mountain! I did not care to have the spectacle last more than four or five heart-beats at the longest; but it was a thing worth wishing for.

I do not believe that even the most hardened traveler is able wholly to throw off the grim fascination of Mount Vesuvius so long as he is near it; and I quite understand the potency of the spell which has led the poor people of Resina to set up their Lares and Penates on cinder-buried Herculaneum. Bide your time, O Resina, and Portici, and Torre del Greco! The doom of Pom-

peii and Herculaneum shall yet be yours. "If it be now, 't is not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it *will* come."

Indeed, these villages have suffered repeatedly in ancient and modern times. In the eruption of 1631 seven torrents of lava swept down the mountain, taking in their course Bosco, Torre dell' Annunziata, Torre del Greco, Resina, and Portici, and destroying three thousand lives. That calamity and later though not so terrible catastrophes have not prevented the people from rebuilding on the old sites. The singular fertility of the soil around the base of the volcanic pile lures them back, — or is it that they are under the influence of that nameless glamour I have hinted at? Perhaps those half-indistinguishable shapes of petrified gnome and satyr and glyptodon which lie tumbled in heaps all about this region have something to do with it. It would be easy to believe that some of the nightmare figures and landscapes in Doré's illustrations of *The Wandering Jew* were suggested to the artist by the fantastic forms in which the lava streams have cooled along the flanks of Vesuvius.

A man might spend a busy life in studying the phenomena of this terrible mountain. It is undergoing constant changes. The paths to the crater have to be varied from month to month, so it is never safe to make the ascent without a guide. There is a notable sympathy existing between the volcanoes of Vesuvius and *Ætna*, although seventy miles apart; when one is in a period of unusual activity, the other, as a rule, remains quiescent. May be the imprisoned giant Enceladus works both forges. I never think of either mountain without recalling Longfellow's poem: —

"Under Mount *Ætna* he lies,
It is slumber, it is not death;
For he struggles at times to arise,
And above him the lurid skies
Are hot with his fiery breath.

"The crags are piled on his breast,
The earth is heaped on his head;
But the groans of his wild unrest,
Though smothered and half-suppressed,
Are heard, and he is not dead.

- " And the nations far away
Are watching with eager eyes;
They talk together and say,
' To-morrow, perhaps to-day,
Enceladus will arise ! '
- " And the old gods, the austere
Oppressors in their strength,
Stand aghast and white with fear
At the ominous sounds they hear,
And tremble, and mutter, ' At length ! '
- " Ah me ! for the land that is sown
With the harvest of despair !
Where the burning cinders, blown
From the lips of the overthrown
Enceladus, fill the air.
- " Where ashes are heaped in drifts
Over vineyard and field and town,
Whenever he starts and lifts
His head through the blackened rifts
Of the crags that keep him down.
- " See, see ! the red light shines !
' T is the glare of his awful eyes !
And the storm-wind shouts through the pines,
Of Alps and of Apennines,
' Enceladus, arise ! ' "

For the first half hour after I had stationed myself on the balcony, that morning, I kept my glass turned pretty constantly in the direction of Mount Vesuvius, trying to make out the *osteria* at the Hermitage, where we had halted one noon to drink some doubtful *Lachryma Christi* and eat a mysterious sort of ragout, composed — as one of our party suggested — of missing link. Whether or not the small inn had shifted its position over night, I was unable to get a focus upon it. In the mean while I myself, in my oriole nest overhanging the strada, had become an object of burning interest to sundry persons congregated below. I was suddenly aware that three human beings were standing in the middle of the carriage-way with their faces turned up to the balcony. The first was a slender, hideous girl, with large eyes and little clothing, who held out a tambourine, the rattlesnake-like clatter of which had attracted my attention; next to her stood a fellow with canes and palm-leaf fans; then came a youth loaded down with diminutive osier baskets of Naples strawberries, which look, and as for that matter taste, like tufts of red worsted. This select trio was speedily turned into a quartette by the appearance of a sea-faring gentleman, who bore

on his head a tray of boiled crabs, sea-urchins, and small fried fish; — *frutti di mare*. As a fifth personage approached, with possibly the arithmetical intention of adding himself to the line, I sent the whole party off with a wave of the hand; that is to say, I waved to them to go, but they merely retired to the curb-stone opposite the hotel, and sat down.

The last comer, perhaps disdaining to associate himself too closely with vulgar persons engaged in trade, leaned indolently against the sea-wall behind them, and stared at me in a vacant, dreamy fashion. He was a handsome wretch, physically. Praxiteles might have carved him. I have no doubt that his red Phrygian cap concealed a pair of pointed furry ears; but his tattered habiliments and the strips of gay cloth wound, brigand-like, about his calves were not able to hide the ungyved grace of his limbs. The upturned face was for the moment as empty of expression as a cipher, but I felt that it was capable, on occasion, of expressing almost any depth of cunning and dare-devil ferocity. I dismissed the idea of the Dancing Faun. It was Masaniello, — Masaniello ruined by good government and the dearth of despots.

The girl with the tambourine was not in business by herself; she was the familiar of a dark-browed organ-man, who now made his advent, holding in one hand a long fishing-line baited with monkey. On observing that this line was too short to reach me, the glance of despair and reproach which the pirate cast up at the balcony was comical. Nevertheless he proceeded to turn the crank of his music-mill, while the girl — whose age I estimated at anywhere between sixteen and sixty — executed the tarantella in a disinterested manner on the sidewalk. I had always wished to see the tarantella danced, and now I had seen it I wished never to see it more. I was so well satisfied that I hastened to drop a few *soldi* into the outstretched tambourine; one of the coins rebounded and fell into the girl's parchment bosom, which would not have made a bad tambourine itself.

My gratuity had the anticipated effect; the musician took himself off instantly. But he was only the *avant courier* of his detestable tribe. To dispose at once of this feature of Neapolitan street life, I will state that in the course of that morning and afternoon one hundred and seven organ-men and *zambognari* (bagpipe players) paid their respects to me. It is odd, or not, as you choose to look at it, that the city which has the eminence of being the first school of music in the world should be a city of hand-organs. I think it explains the constant irritability and the occasional outbreaks of wrath on the part of Mount Vesuvius.

The youth with strawberries, and his two companions, the fan-man and the seller of sea fruit, remained on the curb-stone for an hour or more, waiting for me to relent. In most lands, when you inform a trafficker in nicknacks of your indisposition to purchase his wares, he departs with more or less philosophy; but in Naples he sometimes attaches himself to you for the day. One morning our friend J——, who is almost morbidly diffident, returned to the hotel attended by an individual with a guitar, two venders of lava carvings, a leper in the final stages of decomposition, and a young lady costumed *en négligé* with a bunch of violets. J—— had picked up these charming acquaintances in one of the principal streets at the remote end of the town. The perspiration stood nearly an inch deep on J——'s forehead. He had vainly done everything to get rid of them: he had heaped gifts of money on the leper, bought wildly of cameos and violets, and even offered to purchase the guitar. But no; they clung to him. An American of this complexion was not caught every day on the Corso Vittorio Emanuele.

I was so secure from annoyance up there on my balcony that I did not allow the three merchants arranged on the curb-stone to disturb me. Occupied with the lively, many-colored life of the street and the shore, I failed even to notice when they went away. Glancing in their direction somewhat later, I saw

that they had gone. But Masaniello remained, resting the hollow of his back and his two elbows on the coping of the wall, and becoming a part of the gracious landscape. He remained there all day. Why, I shall never know. He made no demand on my purse, or any overture towards my acquaintance, but stood there, statuesque, hour after hour, scarcely changing his attitude, — *insouciant*, imperturbable, never for an instant relapsing from that indolent reserve which had marked him at first, except once, when he smiled (rather sarcastically, I thought) as I fell victim to an aged beggar whose bandaged legs gave me the fancy that they had died early and been embalmed, and were only waiting for the rest of the man to die in order to be buried. Then Masaniello smiled — at my softness? I shall never be able to explain that man.

Though the Chiatamone is a quiet street for Naples, it would be considered a bustling thoroughfare anywhere else. As the morning wore on, I found entertainment enough in the constantly increasing stream of foot-passengers, — soldiers, sailors, monks, peddlers, paupers, and donkeys. Now and then a couple of acrobats in soiled tights and tarnished spangles would spread out their square of carpet in front of the hotel, and go through some innocent feats; or it was a juggler who came along with a sword trick, or a man with *fantoccini*, among which Signor Punchinello was a prominent character, as he invariably is in Italian puppet-shows. This, with the soft Neapolitan laugh and chatter, the cry of orange-girls, the braying of donkeys, and the strident strain of the hand-organ, which interposed itself ever and anon, like a Greek chorus, was doing very well for a quiet little street of no pretensions whatever.

For a din to test the tympanum of your ear, and a restless swarming of life to turn you dizzy, you should go to the Strada Santa Lucia of a pleasant morning. The houses in this quarter of the city are narrow and tall, many of them seven or eight stories high, and packed like bee-hives, which they further re-

semble in point of gloominess and stickiness. Here the lower classes live, and if they live chiefly on the sidewalks it is not to be wondered at. In front of the dingy door-ways and arches the women make their soups and their toilets with equal *naïveté* of disregard to passing criticism. The baby is washed, dressed, nursed, and put to sleep, and all the domestic duties performed, *al fresco*. Glancing up the sunny street at some particularly fretful moment of the day, you may chance to catch an instantaneous glimpse of the whole neighborhood spanking its child.

In the Strada Santa Lucia the clattering donkey cart has solved the problem of perpetual motion. Not less noisy and crowded are those contiguous hill-side lanes and alleys (*gradoni*) where you go up and down stone steps, and can almost touch the buildings on both sides. No wheeled vehicle ever makes its way here, though sometimes a donkey, with panniers stuffed full of vegetables, may be seen gravely mounting or descending the slippery staircase, directed by the yells and ingenious blasphemies of his driver, who is always assisted in this matter by sympathetic compatriots standing in door-ways, or leaning perilously out of seventh story windows. Some of the streets in this section are entirely given over to the manufacture of macaroni. On interminable clothes-lines stretched along the sidewalks at the height of a man's head the flabby threads of paste are hung to dry, forming a continuous sheet which sways like heavy satin drapery and nearly trails on the ground; but the dogs run in and out through the dripping fringe without the least inconvenience to themselves. Now and then one will thoughtfully turn back and lap it. Macaroni was formerly a favorite dish of mine. Day and night the hum of human voices rises from these shabby streets. As to the smells which infest them, — "Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination." Here Squalor reigns, seated on his throne of mud. But it is happy squalor. In Naples misery laughs and sings, and plays the Pandean pipe, and enjoys

itself. Poverty gayly throws its bit of rag over the left shoulder, and does not seem to perceive the difference between that and a cloak of Genoese velvet. Neither the cruel past nor the fateful present has crushed the joyousness out of Naples. It is the very Mark Tapley of cities, — and that, perhaps, is what makes it the most pathetic. But to get back to our balcony.

I am told that the lower classes — always excepting the sixty or seventy thousand *lazzaroni*, who have ceased to exist as a body, but continue, as individuals, very effectively to prey upon the stranger — are remarkable for their frugal and industrious habits. I suppose this is so, though the visible results which elsewhere usually follow the thriftiness of a population are absent from Naples. However, my personal observation of the workingman was limited to watching some masons employed on a building in process of erection a little higher up on the opposite side of the strada. I was first attracted by the fact that the men were planing the blocks of fawn-colored stone, and readily shaping them with knives, as if the stone had been cheese or soap. It was, in effect, a kind of calcareous tufa, which is soft when newly quarried, and gradually hardens on exposure. It was not a difficult material to work in, but the masons set to the task with that deliberate care not to strain themselves which I had admired in the horny-handed laboring man in various parts of Italy. At intervals of two or three minutes the stone-cutters — there were seven of them — would suddenly suspend operations, and without any perceptible provocation fall into a violent dispute. It looked as if they were coming to blows; but they were only engaged in amicable gossip. Perhaps it was a question of the weather, or of the price of macaroni, or of that heartless trick which Cattarina played upon poor Giuseppe night before last. "*Cospetto!* but she was a saucy baggage, that Cattarina!" There was something very cheerful in their chatter, of which I caught only the eye flashes and the vivacious southern gestures that

accompanied it. It was pleasant to see them standing there with crossed legs, in the midst of their honorable toil, leisurely indulging in graceful banter at Heaven only knows how many francs per day. At about half past ten o'clock they abruptly knocked off work altogether (I knew it was coming to that), and, stretching themselves out comfortably under an adjacent shed, went to sleep. Presently a person — presumably the foreman — appeared on the scene, and proceeded energetically to kick the seven sleepers, who arose and returned to their tools. After straightening out this matter the foreman departed, and the masons, dropping saw, chisel, and fore-plane, crawled in under the shed again. I smiled, and a glow came over me as I reflected that perhaps I had discovered the identical branch of the Latin race from which the American plumber has descended to us.

There is one class, forming a very large portion of the seedy population of Naples, and the most estimable portion, to whose industry, integrity, and intelligence I can unreservedly testify. This class, which, so far as I saw, does all the hard work that is done and receives nothing but persecution in return, is to be met everywhere in Italy, but nowhere in so great force as in Naples. I mean those patient, wise little donkeys, which are as barbarously used by their masters as ever their masters were by the Bourbons. In witnessing the senseless cruelty with which a Neapolitan treats his inarticulate superior, one is almost disposed to condone the outrages of Spanish rule. I have frequently seen a fellow beat one of the poor animals with a club nearly as large round as the little creature's body. As a donkey is generally its owner's sole source of income, it seems a rather near-sighted policy to knock the breath out of it. But, mercifully, the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb, and the donkey is pachydermatous. A blow that would kill a horse likely enough merely impresses a donkey with the idea that somebody is going to hit him. Under the old order of things in Naples his insensibility was

sometimes outflanked by removing a strip of his hide, thus laying bare a responsive spot for the whip-lash; but that stratagem is now prohibited by law, I believe. A donkey with a particularly sensitive place on him anywhere naturally fetches a high price at present.

The disproportionate burdens which are imposed upon and stoically accepted by the Neapolitan donkey constantly excite one's wonder and pity. As I sat there on the balcony a tiny cart went by so piled with furniture that the pigmy which drew it was entirely hidden from sight. The cumbersome mass had the appearance of being propelled by some piece of internal machinery. This was followed by another cart, containing the family, I suppose, — five or six stupid persons drawn by a creature no larger than a St. Bernard dog. I fell into a train of serious reflection on donkeys in general, chiefly suggested, I rather fancy, by Masaniello, who was still standing with his back against the sea-wall and his eyes fixed on my balcony as I went into lunch.

When I returned to my post of observation, half an hour later, I found the street nearly deserted. Naples was taking its siesta. A fierce, hot light quivered on the bay and beat down on the silent villas along shore, making the mellow-tinted pilasters and porticoes gleam like snow against the dull green of the olive-trees. The two cones of Mount Vesuvius, now wrapped in a transparent violet haze, which brought them strangely near, had for background a fathomless sky of unclouded azure. Here and there, upon a hill-side in the distance, small white houses, with verandas and balconies

“Close latticed to the brooding heat,”
seemed scorching among their dusty vines. The reflection of the water was almost intolerable.

As I reached up to lower the awning overhead, I had a clairvoyant consciousness that some one was watching me from below. Whether Masaniello had brought his noonday meal of roasted chestnuts with him, or, during my ab-

sence, had stolen to some low *trattoria* in the vicinity to refresh himself, I could not tell; but there he was, in the act now of lighting one of those long pipe-stem cigars called Garibaldi's.

Since he wanted neither my purse nor my person, what was his design in hanging about the hotel? Perhaps it *was* my person he wanted; perhaps he was an emissary of the police; but no, the lowest government official in Italy always wears enough gold-lace for a Yankee major-general. Besides, I was innocent; I had n't done it, whatever it was. Possibly Masaniello mistook me for somebody else, and was meditating a neat stiletto stroke or two if I ventured out after night-fall. Indeed, I intended to go to the theatre of San Carlo that night. A rush—a flash of steel in the moonlight—and all would be over before any one could explain anything. Masaniello was becoming monotonous.

I turned away from him to look at the Castel dell' Ovo, within rifle range at my left, on a small island connected by an arched breakwater with the main-land at the foot of the Pizzofalcone. I tried to take in the fact that this wrinkled pile was begun by William I. in 1154, and completed a century later by Frederick II.; that here, in the reign of Robert the Wise, came the witty Giotto to decorate the chapel with those frescoes of which only the tradition remains; that here Charles III. of Durazzo held Queen Joanna a prisoner, and was here besieged by Louis of Anjou; that, finally, in 1495, Charles VIII. of France knocked over the old castle, and Pedro de Toledo set it up on its legs again in 1532. I tried, but rather unsuccessfully, to take in all this, for though the castle boasts of bastions and outworks, it lacks the heroic aspect. In fact, it is now used as a prison, and has the right hang-dog look of prisons. However, I put my fancy to work restoring the castle to the strength and dignity it wore in chronicler Froissart's day, and was about to attack the place with the assistance of Ferdinand II., when the heavy tramp of feet and the measured tap of a drum chimed in very prettily with my hostile

mood. A regiment of infantry was coming down the strada.

If I do not describe this regiment as the very poorest regiment in the world, it is because it was precisely like every other body of Italian soldiery that I have seen. The men were small, spindle-legged, and slouchy. One might have taken them for raw recruits if their badly-fitting white-duck uniforms had not shown signs of veteran service. As they wheeled into the Chiatamone, each man trudging along at his own gait, they looked like a flock of sheep. The bobbing mass recalled to my mind—by that law of contraries which makes one thing suggest another totally different—the compact, grand swing of the New York Seventh Regiment as it swept up Broadway the morning it returned from Pennsylvania at the close of the draft riots in '63. If the National Guard had shuffled by in the loose Garibaldian fashion, New York would not have slept with so keen a sense of security as it did that July night.

The room directly under mine was occupied by a young English lady, who, attracted by the roll of the drums, stepped out on her balcony just as the head of the column reached the hotel. In her innocent desire to witness a military display she probably had no anticipation of the tender fusillade she would have to undergo. That the colonel should give the fair stranger a half-furtive salute, in which he cut nothing in two with his sabre, was well enough; but that was no reason why every mother's son in each platoon should look up at the balcony as he passed, and then turn and glance back at her over his shoulder. Yet this singular military evolution, which I cannot find set down anywhere in Hardee's Tactics, was performed by every man in the regiment. That these ten or twelve hundred warriors refrained from kissing their hands to the blonde lady shows the severe discipline which prevails in the Italian army. Possibly there was not a man of them, from the colonel's *valet* down to the colonel himself, who did not march off with the conviction that he had pierced that blue muslin wrap-

per somewhere in the region of the left breast. I must say that the modest young Englishwoman stood this enflaming fire admirably, though it made white and red roses of her complexion.

The rear of the column was brought up, and emphasized, if I may say it, by an exclamation point in the shape of a personage so richly gilded and of such gorgeous plumage that I should instantly have accepted him as the king of Italy if I had not long ago discovered that fine feathers do not always make fine birds. It was only the regimental physician. Of course he tossed up a couple of pill-like eyes to the balcony as he straggled by, with his plume standing out horizontally, — like that thin line of black smoke which just then caught my attention in the oiling.

This was the smoke from the pipe of the funny little steamer which runs from Naples to Sorrento, and thence to Capri, where it drops anchor for so brief a space that you are obliged to choose between a climb up the rocks to the villa of Tiberius and a visit in a small boat to the Blue Grotto. The steamer is supposed to leave the Chiaia at Naples every morning at a stated hour; but you need not set your heart on going to Capri by that steamer on any particular day. It goes or not just as the captain happens to feel about it when the time comes. A cinder in his eye, a cold in his head, a conjugal tiff over his *polenta*, — in fine, any insignificant thing is apparently sufficient to cause him to give up the trip. It is only moderate satisfaction you get out of him on these occasions. He throws his arms despairingly in the air, and making forked lightning with his fingers cries, "Ah, mercy of God! no, — we sail not this day!" Then wildly beating his forehead with his knuckles, "To-morrow, yes!" There is ever a pleasing repose of manner in an excited Italian.

I suspect the truth is that some of the directors of the steamboat company are mediæval saints, and that the anniversaries of their birthdays interfere with business. The captain is an excellent fellow of his sort, and extremely devout,

though that does not prevent him from now and then playing a very scurvy trick upon his passengers. One's main object in going to Capri is to see the Blue Grotto, the entrance to which is through a small arch scarcely three feet high in the face of the rock. With the sea perfectly tranquil, you are obliged to bow your head or lie down in the wherry while passing in; but with a north or a west wind breathing, it is impossible to enter at all. When this chance to be the case the captain is careful not to allude to the matter, but smilingly allows you to walk aboard, and pitilessly takes you out under a scorching sky to certain disappointment and a clam-bake, in which you perform the rôle of the clam.

Through my glass I could see the little egg-shell of a steamer, which for some reason had come to a stop in the middle of the bay, with a thread of smoke issuing from her funnel and embroidering itself in fanciful patterns on the sunny atmosphere. I knew how hot it was over there, and I knew that the light westerly breeze which crisped the water and became a suffocating breath before it reached shore had sealed up the grotto for that day. I pictured the pleasure-seekers scattered about the heated deck, each one dejectedly munching his Dead Sea apple of disappointment. The steamer was evidently getting under way again, for the thread of smoke had swollen into a black, knotted cable. Presently a faint whistle came across the water, — as if a ghost were whistling somewhere in the distance, — and the vessel went puffing away towards Castellamare. If the Emperor Tiberius Claudius Nero Cæsar could have looked down just then from the cloudy battlements of Capri, what would he have thought of that!

The great squares of shadow cast upon the street by the hotel and the adjoining buildings were deepening by degrees. Fitful puffs of air came up from the bay, — the early precursors of that refreshing breeze which the Mediterranean sends to make the summer twilights of Naples delicious. Now and then a

perfume was wafted to the balcony, as if the wind had stolen a handful of scents from some high-walled inclosure of orange-trees and acacias, and flung it at me. The white villas, set in their mosaic of vines on the distant hill-side, had a cooler look than they wore earlier in the day. The heat was now no longer oppressive, but it made one drowsy,—that and the sea air. An hour or more slipped away from me unawares. Meanwhile, the tide of existence had risen so imperceptibly at my feet that I was surprised, on looking down, suddenly to find the strada flooded with streams of carriages and horsemen and pedestrians. All the gay life of Naples, that had lain dormant through the heavy noon, had awakened, like the princess in the enchanted palace, to take up the laugh where it left off and order fresh ices at the cafés.

I had a feeling that Masaniello—he was still there—was somehow at the bottom of all this; that by some *diablerie* of his, may be with the narcotic fumes of that black cigar, he had thrown the city into the lethargy from which it was now recovering.

The crowd, which flowed in two opposing currents past the hotel, was a gayer and more smartly dressed throng than that of the morning. Certain shabby aspects, however, were not wanting, for donkey carts mingled themselves jauntily with the more haughty equipages on their way to the Riviera di Chiaia, the popular drive. There were beautiful brown women, with heavy-fringed eyes, in these carriages, and now and then a Neapolitan dandy—a creature *sui generis*—rode along-side on horseback. Every human thing that can scrape a vehicle together goes to the Riviera di Chiaia of a fine afternoon. It is a magnificent wide avenue, open on one side to the bay, and lined on the other with palaces and villas and hotels. The road leads to the Grotto of Posilippo, and to endless marvels beyond,—the tomb of Virgil, Lake Avernus, Baia, Cumæ, a Hellenic region among whose ruins wander the sorrowful shades of the gods. But the afternoon idler is not likely to

get so far; after a turn or two on the promenade, he is content to sit under the trees in the garden of the Villa Nazionale, sipping his sherbet dashed with snow, and listening to the band.

I saw more monks this day than I met in a week at Rome, their natural head-quarters; but in Naples, as in the Eternal City, they are generally not partial to busy thoroughfares. I think some religious festival must have been going on in a church near the Chiajamone. A solemn, dark-robed figure gliding in and out among the merry crowd had a queer, pictorial effect, and gave me an incongruous twelfth-century sort of sensation. Once a file of monks—I do not remember ever seeing so many together outside a convent—passed swiftly under the balcony. I was near tumbling into the Middle Ages, when their tonsured heads reminded me of that row of venerable elderly gentlemen one always sees in the front orchestra chairs at the ballet, and I was thus happily dragged back into my own cycle.

It was a noisy, light-hearted, holiday people that streamed through the strada in the waning sunshine; they required no policeman, as a similar crowd in England or America would have done; their merriment was as harmless as that of so many birds, though no doubt there was in these laughing throngs plenty of the dangerous stuff out of which graceful brigands and picturesque assassins are made. But it was easier and pleasanter to discover here and there a face or a form such as the old masters loved to paint. I amused myself in selecting models for new pictures by Titian and Raphael and Carlo Dolci and Domenichino, to take the places of those madonnas and long-tressed mistresses of which nothing will remain in a few centuries. What will Italy be when she has lost her masterpieces, as she has lost the art that produced them? To-day she is the land of paintings, without any painters,—the empty cradle of poets.

I do not know that anything in the lively street entertained me more than the drivers of the public carriages. Like

all the common Neapolitans, the Jehus have a wonderful gift of telegraphing with their fingers. It is not a question of words laboriously spelled out, but of a detailed statement in a flash. They seem to be able to do half an hour's talking in a couple of seconds. A fillip of the finger-joint, and there's a sentence for you as long as one of Mr. Carlyle's. At least, that is my idea of it; it is merely conjecture on my part, for though I have frequently formed the topic of a conversation carried on in this style under my very nose, I never succeeded in overhearing anything. I have undoubtedly been anathematized, and, barely probable, been complimented; but in those instances, like Horatio, I took fortune's buffets and rewards with equal thanks. It is diverting to see two of these fellows meeting at a breakneck pace and exchanging verdicts on their respective passengers. May be one, with a gesture like lightning, says: "I've a rich English milord; he has n't asked for my tariff; I shall bleed him beautifully, *per Bacco!*" At the same instant the other possibly hurls back: "No such luck! A pair of foolish Americani, but they've a pig of a courier who pockets all the *buonamano* himself, the devil fly away with him!" Thus they meet, and indulge in their simple prattle, and are out of each other's sight, all in the twinkling of an eye.

The twilights in Southern Italy fall suddenly, and are of brief duration. While I was watching the darkening shadow of the hotel on the opposite seawall, the dusk closed in, and the street began rapidly to empty itself. A curtain of mist was stretched from headland to headland, shutting out the distant objects. Here and there on a jutting point a light blossomed, its duplicate glassed in the water, as if the fiery flower had dropped a petal. Presently there were a hundred lights, and then a thousand, fringing the crescented shore.

On our leaving Rome, the landlord had pathetically warned us of the fatal effects of the night air in Naples, just as our Neapolitan host, at a later date, let fall some disagreeable hints about the Roman malaria. They both were right. In this delicious land Death shrouds himself in the dew and lurks in all gentle things. The breeze from the bay had a sudden chill in it now; the dampness of the atmosphere was as heavy as a fine rain. I pushed back my chair on the balcony, and then I lingered a moment to see the moon rising over Capri. Then I saw how that bay, with its dreadful mountain, was lovelier than anything on earth. I turned from it reluctantly, and as I glanced into the silent street beneath, there was Masaniello, a black silhouette against the silvery moonlight.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

DAFFODILS.

THIS sunny day, so glad, so gay,
A song my blooming garden fills;
And she has come, the smiling May,
And strown her way with daffodils.

They nod to me, with glances free,
Till all my heart-complaining stills;
It is so good once more to see
My golden, golden daffodils.