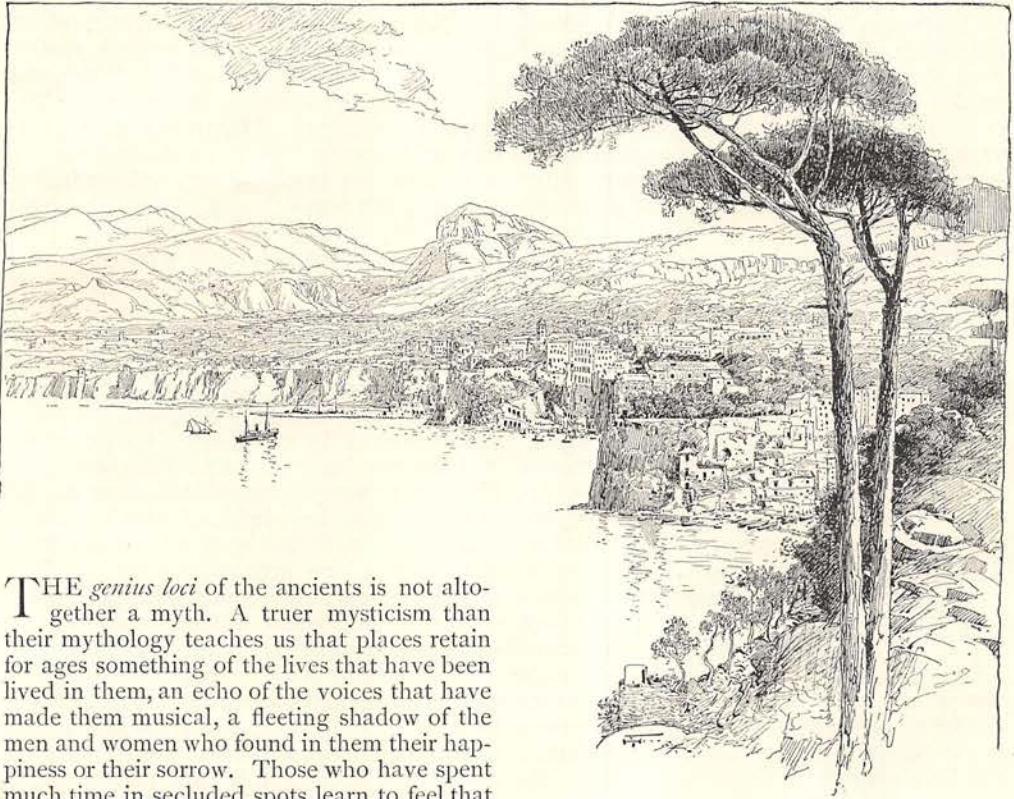


COASTING BY SORRENTO AND AMALFI.

WITH PICTURES BY HARRY FENN.



SORRENTO.

THE *genius loci* of the ancients is not altogether a myth. A truer mysticism than their mythology teaches us that places retain for ages something of the lives that have been lived in them, an echo of the voices that have made them musical, a fleeting shadow of the men and women who found in them their happiness or their sorrow. Those who have spent much time in secluded spots learn to feel that lonely places have souls; and the soul of a place is indeed its *genius loci*, its familiar spirit, its peculiar essence, as real a thing as the scent of a rose or the smell of the sea. There are rose-gardens in the East that are fair with the accumulated happiness of past generations. There are shady ilex-groves in Italy wherein still dwells the silent spirit of contemplation; perhaps the phantasms of tragic loves sigh out their little day beneath the ancient trees. In Italy, in Greece, in Asia, in distant Indian glens, dim temples stand to this day, haunted or blest, perhaps, by the presence of that mystic spirit which outlasts all ages. And the market-place has its familiar genius also, the busy center of the crowded city, the broad thoroughfare of the great metropolis, silent for a few hours under the summer moonlight or the winter rain. Old castles too, deserted villages, uninhabited homes of dead populations — all have wraiths,

the ghosts of what they have been, silent to the many, but more eloquent to the few than any human speech can ever be. And besides all these, there are spots where nature has never been molded by man, where she is sovereign and he is subject—lonely places by the sea, great sunlit silences where man has not dared to dwell because nature there would give him nothing, nor was he able to take anything from her. And the spirit of those places is more lonely, and grander, and mightier, than the *genius loci* of the market-place, or of the deserted Italian villa, “where the red dog-star cracks the speechless statues,” or even of the shady cloister or of the wind-swept temples of banished gods. The song of songs is still unwritten, though nature’s music makes man’s grandest symphonies ridiculous, and sounds night and

morning in the ears of him who has ears to hear.

But those are not the ears of the Cook's tourist, the German water-color painter, or the English spinster, all of whom come yearly southward to the Sorrento coast, as regular in their migration as the swallow, and far more welcome to the bankrupt hotel-keeper and the starving boatman, though less suggestive of poetic thoughts when a prominent object in the landscape. They come, they eat, they sleep, and their scarlet guide-books catch the sun and mark them for the native's prey. And then, thank heaven! they go. But it is easy to get away from them, for they keep to the beaten track, a vast flock of sheep for most of whose actions Mr. John Murray of Albemarle street will be held responsible at the last judgment. It may be doubted whether any church, any creed, or any despotic form of government which the world has ever seen, has disposed more completely of men's consciences, men's money, and men's movements, than the compilers and publishers of famous guide-books. Mr. Murray says to the tourist, "Go," and he goeth, or, "Do this," and he doeth it, in the certain consciousness that he cannot do wrong, which is more than the spiritual pastors and masters of the world generally succeed in accomplishing without assistance. I will not venture to impugn the judgment of the great guide-books, but I will venture to say that the average tourist in Italy sees very little that is distinctively Italian. The places he visits have been visited by such an infinite number of tourists before him that they have acquired a certain tourist color, so to say, and have suffered a certain localization of small iniquity which passes in the eyes of foreigners for native character. The least prejudiced of tourists is perhaps the German artist. He is also as a rule the most ready to undergo small hardships and considerable fatigue in the pursuit of the beautiful. But even he sees little. To him Capri seems wild, Naples picturesque, and Vesuvius romantic, and when he has painted the Capri Needles, has eaten shell-fish at Santa Lucia, and has picked up a handful of scoræ on the edge of the crater, he has generally had his fill of southern Italy, and goes home to talk about it. So far as Sorrento is concerned, he and his colleagues in the land come to the most beautiful place in the world, stay three days in the modern hotel, drive a dozen miles or so over a modern road in a particularly shaky modern carriage, read "Agnes of Sorrento," and go to the next place mentioned in the guide-book. It never seems to strike them that they could hire a little boat with a couple of men for a week, and wander in and out among the rocks and caves and beaches

and fishing-villages all the way from Sorrento to Pæstum, seeing sights not dreamed of in their guide-books, and calling up visions of the great romantic past, of Amalfi's doges, of Robert Guiscard, Tancred, and Pope Hildebrand, or else idle away half a day with the old fishermen of Crapolla or Prajano, listening to their strange tales, their stories of Arabian Nights in Italian dress, their amazing versions of Scripture history, and, more interesting still to those who love the sea, to their accounts of hairbreadth escapes in winter storms and summer squalls. And yet it is very easy to do all these things, and very pleasant, and there is no particular hardship to be undergone. Macaroni is not bad eating, and to most people it is a pleasant novelty to dine on mackerel, lobster, red mullet, or *murænæ*, just out of the sea. There is nothing particularly uncomfortable, either, in sleeping in the warm, dry sand, or in a boat-house on a pile of nets, or even in the bottom of the boat itself, with the Bay of Naples or the Gulf of Salerno for a bathtub in the morning, and the Southern moonlight for a bedroom candle.

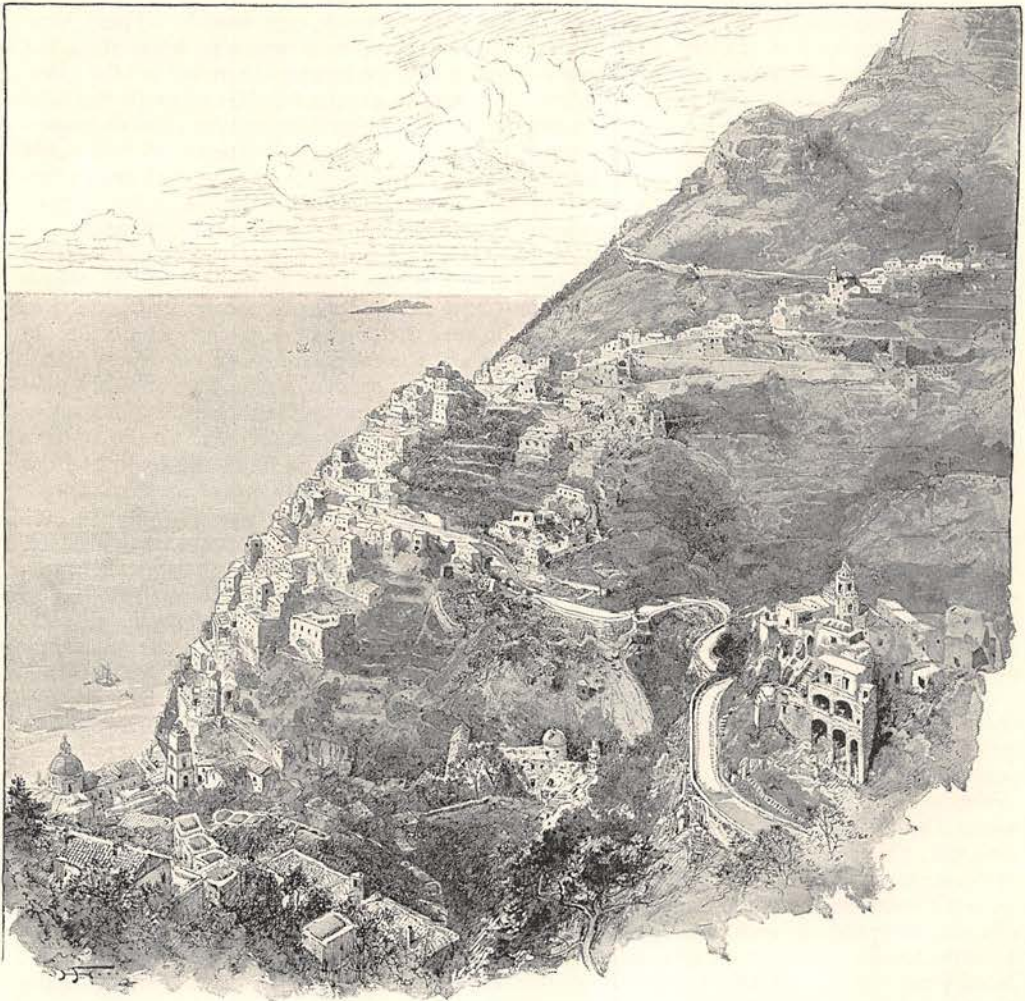
Far be it from me to inflict upon any one who reads this sketch a history of Sorrento, or a dissertation upon the antiquities of the peninsula and the republic of Amalfi. The charm that clings to so many spots in Italy does not lie in the accurate knowledge of what has been, so much as in dreaming of what might have been, or may have been, or may yet be. The memory of one or two names, great, romantic, or even mythological, which live in the tales told by the people, has power to call up wonderful pictures. And sometimes wild places, rugged and lonely, to which no shadow of definite tradition belongs, appeal even more directly to the human heart.

Here the sirens still breathe the sea spray, and sing in the enchanted moonlight as Ulysses, lashed to the mast, sweeps by in his dark ship. Still, in the misty dawn, or in the purple twilight, the Barbary pirate's shadowy craft steals silently shoreward, laden with murder and fire and sudden death, but watched from a hundred towers, from which the warning beacon of smoke or flame will presently shoot up to the Southern sky. On those same sirens' isles, blind wretches still starve out their life on the remembrance of the greatness they misused for a little while over there in Amalfi, the price of which was blindness, hunger, and solitude. Here, under the Sorrento Cape, in the rock-girt bath of Joanna, the laughter of the queen and her court ladies still rings in tune with the ripple of the wind-blown water. Far back in the other gulf to southward, above Atrani, stands the solitary Devil's Tower wherein, in darker moods, Joanna performed her incantations; while farther still, away in Salerno, in Guis-

card's city, her mother, Margaret of Anjou, sleeps beneath the marble canopy of her lovely tomb.

It is easy to fancy them alive again as one lies under the shadow of the rocks at noon-day, or by the water's edge when the moon is full, or as one steers in and out along the fantastic

hardly worth while to enter into a description of what many will allow to be the most beautiful spot in the world. As a rule, too, all description is a failure unless it appeals in some slight degree to memory. I might give a long account of its strange geological conformation;



POSITANO.

shore; the truth of history becomes a very secondary consideration, and the weird tales of the old man of Ellera seem very probable. The story-teller of the crew gives us an appalling version of Sinbad's adventure with the roc, as the embers of the camp-fire die away, and none of us would be much surprised if the gigantic bird loomed up suddenly behind the tower on the cliff, to descend bodily in the very midst of us with an Eastern prince or two in his beak. It is fairy-land, after all, and why should anything be too improbable to happen?

So much has been said of Sorrento itself, and so many people see it nowadays, that it seems

I might talk of its marvelous climate, for the Bay of Naples is the coolest place in Italy on the sea-level; I could describe its more or less civilized people, its oranges and lemons and olives, and even its extremely modern hotels: but he who sees and knows Italy dwells not in large buildings illuminated by electric light, and made lively by the perpetual whisk of the waiter's coat-tails, and though a man might spend many months in Sorrento, and gaze to satiety upon the lovely view, he might not see anything that would strike him as strange if he had much experience of the world, nor hear anything more amusing than the conversation

of his fellow-tourists. We all know what that is like. Two of the species meet in their own country. "Where have you been?" "Egypt." "Ah, yes; Egypt. I remember Cairo. Capital steak at Shepheard's." But even in progressive Sorrento there are quiet villas far from electric lights and steak-critics, and underneath the villas at the base of the long perpendicular cliffs are green and blue caves, and natural arches, and deep openings to unfathomable Roman quarries. And there are gorges, too, in the hills, and lovely walks when one has got above the range of the narrow, high-walled lanes among which it is so hard to find one's way. There are endless fruit-trees, besides the orange and lemon, and there is everywhere and all summer an abundance of fruit—real Italian fruit, always unripe or over-ripe, but pretty to look at, and not poisonous. About Sorrento also there is something of a Neapolitan flavor in the air. The Neapolitan small boy is half monkey, half comedian, and all thief, and here as elsewhere the boy is father to the man. In Sorrento there is the municipal band, more inexorable in Italy than death itself; there are little companies of men and women who dance the tarantella in costume on the terraces of the hotels, and sing vulgar songs, which the foreigner takes for national airs. There are not, indeed, so many beggars as in Naples itself and its neighborhood, but the perpetual attempt to extract small coin from the visitor occupies the sole and undivided attention of at least one portion of the population. Here, as in Naples, the guide guides not, but chatters, butchering what he supposes to be the foreigner's language in order to make himself a holiday. Here, as elsewhere, the lively donkey boy twists the patient ass's tail, ultimately requests you to dismount at the steep places, and gets on himself. Here, as in all southern Italy, the small deceptions of a very poor and not very clever people bring a smile to the keen but often good-natured Northerner's face. All this I might describe at endless length had it not been done so often, and in one or two instances so well. There it all is, more or less lovely as to its surroundings, more or less modern in its buildings, more or less civilized by the people that move upon the scene. And below it, and before it, and facing it, stretches the sea, the eternal, ever-changing, ever-abiding sea. The splashes of human-wrought color, and the deeper tones of man-planted orange-gardens, and olive-groves, and vines, are forever contrasted with God's own palette, with that broad water wherein are mingled the precious things of day and night, the maiden rose-mallow of dawn, and the gorgeous purple of imperial evening, the gold of the sun and silver of the moon and the precious

stones of the stars, all blending at last in the depths of the great liquid sapphire of that sea which wise men of old believed to be the source of all living things.

Here at least, if he chooses, man can leave dusty lanes and gorges, Neapolitan dances and improved hotels behind, and be alone with the sea a day, a week, or a month. There is no lack of boats, or of men who know the coast better than the lanes up there behind the town. There is no waiting for ebb or flow by this tideless water; by day or night, when fancy whispers the word, you may be borne swiftly and safely westward, by the rocks, round the Capo di Sorrento, past the Capo di Massa, in full sight of Capri, and altogether beyond civilization.

The first bold rock that juts out beyond Massa is the Cala Grande, with its ruined tower. Then comes the cape itself, and just beyond it the sequestered bay where the old man of Ellera lives alone in his cave. Ellera, or Erete, is a strange place, and the old man who dwells among the rocks there is a queer character. The second point of the Sorrentine peninsula is known as the Cape of Minerva, or more familiarly as the Campanella, from a tradition that a bell once hung in the beacon-tower, just above the modern lighthouse. The Barbary pirates stole the bell one day, but a storm came up, and they were obliged to drop it overboard to lighten their felucca. It is still heard to ring at the bottom of the sea on St. John's eve, or, as some say, on the eve of Sant' Antonino. None of my crew have ever heard it, but they admit the fact reluctantly and with grave faces, as though it were rather a reproach to them. Behind the tower again are the Roman ruins of Minerva's temple, and ancient cisterns of which the hard cement will turn the edge of a modern chisel. Then round the point below the desolate cliff, and in a moment you are in one of those spots where man never dwelt—except the old man of Ellera, who lives in his cave over the sea from May to November, and retires higher up the mountains in the winter. The beach is long and straight, but not deep, ending abruptly at each side below gigantic cliffs, and backed by a perpendicular wall of flinty rock. The little gulf runs in fully three quarters of a mile, and, if the wind is not south-westerly, is a perfect natural harbor. On the right are a few small caves at the water's edge, and higher up one larger than the rest, before which the old man has built up a wall of loose stones.

It is impossible to describe the utter loneliness and desolation of the place, and it is not easy to see at first wherein lies its special charm. Possibly that is due to the combination of the most rugged scenery conceivable with the softest and most beautiful shades of color, varying



AMALFI.

with each hour of the moon and sunlight, and then at last, when the full moon rises, turning all at once to the magnificent simplicity of black and white. There is hardly ever a living thing to be seen. Now and then, indeed, the gulls shoot in on level wings, and sail away again in a disappointed sort of way. Now and then, too, a solitary hawk drops from the cliff to the water, and flies upward again almost as suddenly. Last year a pair of blackbirds had built their nests, and reared their young, in an inaccessible cranny high up among the rocks. That is all—except the old man. He is the oldest, the dirtiest, the most dried-up, the most miserably clad specimen I have ever seen. He must be at least eighty years of age, and has

lived in this solitude the greater part of that time. He gets a very precarious living by cutting, drying, and storing the scanty grass that grows along the top of the ridge, and by cultivating a few miserable fig-trees, which produce little bullet-like figs, dried by the southerly winds and the hot, rocky soil on which they grow. Somehow the old fellow keeps himself alive, and for many years, whenever I have run my boat to the lonely beach, he has not failed to appear, climbing down over places on which many a young man would find it hard to get a foothold. At first we looked at the old man in surprise. He seemed to be a creature from another world, a sort of animated brier, as dry and dusty as the rocks themselves. He was very grateful

for a little hardtack and a drink of wine, and used to sit at a short distance from us, watching us with his curious, bleared old eyes. One night, a year or two ago, we suddenly discovered that he possessed a remarkable talent. He can tell stories and repeat verses, and possesses a most surprising memory, a keen sense of humor, and considerable power of acting. He sits by the camp-fire, doubled up like the Quangle-Wangle in Lear's story of the "Four Children," and in a cracked voice goes on without hesitation from one tale to another until most of us are asleep. Ghost-stories, tales from the Arabian Nights, and of the "Lives of the Saints," scripture history, and endless yarns in very fair Italian verse, succeed one another with a fluency that is positively startling. It is true that as he lives in almost total solitude, and has only two or three chances in every summer of hearing himself talk, one would naturally expect him to make the best of them. One dreams of the old creature's stories after listening to them a whole evening. There is one about a man who cheats death again and again which, I think, exists in Northern folk-lore, and it is strange that so many of the Arabian Nights' Tales should have found their way into his collection. I have been told, indeed, that many years ago the master of a felucca procured an Italian version of the "Thousand and One Nights," which he read aloud—a rare accomplishment—to his crew in the long evenings when the boat was beached on the Calabrian shores; but I do not think that this solitary instance accounts for the number of these stories extant among the Southern fishermen and sailors. It is more than possible that they may have found their way by oral tradition from their Eastern home to the ears of the old man of Ellera. The question can never be settled, and few indeed of the few foreigners who stray to these out-of-the-way places could understand half a dozen words of the dialect in which the story-tellers express themselves. As we glide away from the beach in the mist of the early morning, the dried-up old chip of humanity stands at the water's edge, all black against the gray rock behind him, waving his ragged hat to us, and wishing us a pleasant voyage; and we sail away, wondering at the still smoldering sparks thrown off by the fire of civilization, which passed as a whirlwind along the Southern coast.

Leaving Ellera behind, and skirting the bold rock to eastward, one comes suddenly upon the great anchored nets of a tunny fishery. There are many of these along the shore from Sorrento to Salerno. They are lowered and anchored out in the springtime, and taken up in the late autumn, when the heavy weather sets in. On the surface of the sea one sees long

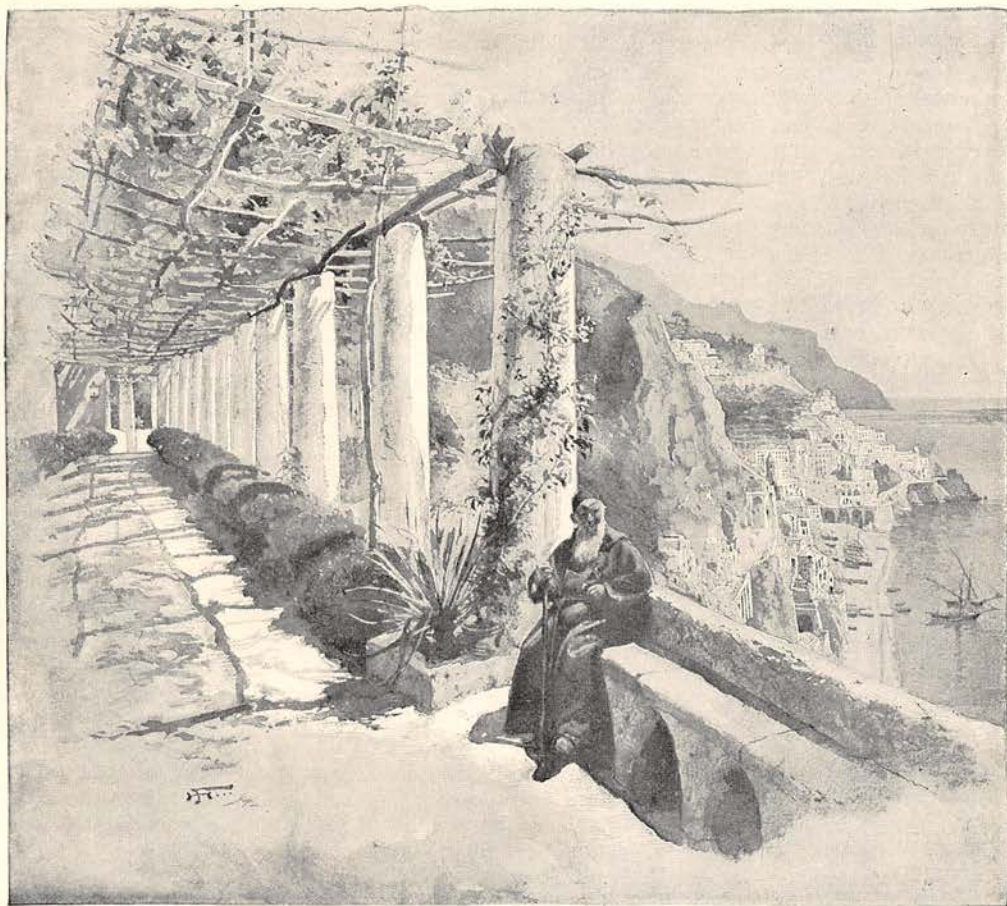
rows of cork floats stretching star-like in many directions from the three old boats which are moored in the middle. Below the surface there is a great labyrinth of corridors and traps of netting, extending to the bottom of the sea, and all leading to the central trap, a net finer and stronger than the rest. This is about sixty yards long and ten yards wide, the net coming up at each end of one of the old boats. All day long in the summer's sun, three or four old men lean over the gunwale, their heads and shoulders shielded by sacks, or coverings of old canvas, while they peer down into the clear water, and keep a look-out for fish. When a certain number have found their way into the net, from which they cannot escape, it is hauled up on board one of the boats, which is thus gradually brought alongside of the other, the fish being constantly forced into the ever-narrowing sack until at the end they fall alive into the boat itself. The fish caught are by no means always tunny, though these are the most valuable, and the strength of the nets is calculated to match theirs. Vast numbers of *scolmi* and *palamiti*—the former a coarser, and the latter a very fine, variety of herring, I believe—are taken out daily, and instantly carried ashore by the third boat, which is always in waiting. From the nearest fishing-village, which from this point is Nerano, they are carried by men on foot across the steep hill to Sorrento, whence they are sent to Naples by steamer. The owners of the nets generally pay a considerable sum to the owners of the nearest land—sometimes as much as three thousand dollars yearly for the right of mooring.

At Nerano there is a break in the cliffs, and the overhanging hills slope more gently down to the water's edge. Above, in the shoulder of the mountain, below the sharp-peaked Santo Costanzo, lies a little village called Termini. The fishermen say and believe that Christ, when he had walked over the whole earth with his disciples, reached this point, and declared that it was the end of the world; hence the name.

Soon the rocks rise sharply from the sea again to break at the deep beach of Lucumona, haunted, as every one knows, by the specter of a mounted carbineer. Then rocks again, and then the hidden gorge of Crapolla, scarcely distinguishable from the sea, an abrupt and almost perpendicular cleft in the enormous rock wall facing the Isles of the Sirens. There are ghosts here, too, in plenty, of men and boys who, in the pursuit of quails with hand-nets, have fallen some fifteen hundred feet to the bottom of the gorge. Here also lives a solitary old man, a sort of familiar spirit of the place, nicknamed Garibaldi from his supposed resemblance to the national hero. He lives in one of the three or four little vaulted stone boat-houses which are said to have been built to shelter a handful of

soldiers who guarded the approach from this point in the days of King Joachim Murat. "Garibaldi" tells me, and the fact is known to every one, that he came down to live in Crapolla in 1860, from Sant' Agata on the hills above, and has scarcely ever spent a night away from the place in thirty-four years. But Crapolla is not so lonely a spot as Ellera. A winding path and steep stone steps lead from it to

tell: the one of his precipitate departure from the navy in 1860, and the other of the young fellow who fell from the cliff almost at his feet on a September evening. He tells them over and over again without any apparent consciousness that he is repeating himself, and his dullness has made him an object of the most intense hatred to the story-teller of my crew. After supper he is sometimes a little absent-minded.



AMALFI, FROM THE CAPUCHIN MONASTERY.

the heights above, and its sheltered position makes it a first-rate harbor and beach for about twenty little *gozzi*, or fishing-boats. The fishermen descend from Sant' Agata at night, and most of them go back in the morning, taking with them what they have caught to the market there. Garibaldi gets a pretty fair livelihood by setting night-lines, with which he catches the big bass so highly prized in Naples. He is in all respects an absolute contrast to the old man at Ellera, for he is a jovial soul, with a big white beard, red cheeks, small beady eyes, and intensely black eyebrows; hale and hearty in spite of his sixty years. He has only two stories to

I remember that on one moonlight night some years ago he and I launched his little boat for a nocturnal fishing expedition. Before we had pulled two hundred yards from the shore the water was up to my knees in the skiff. Garibaldi had quite forgotten to plug the hole in the bottom, which is always opened to drain the boat when she is beached. I got very wet, and we caught no fish, but the story is still told as a joke against the old man, and has acquired that permanent and historical quality which distinguishes fishermen's tales. There is a ruin on the little point at the west side of the gorge, the ruin of an ancient church, the destruction of which is of course attributed

to Napoleon; and the spot is pointed out from which an immense treasure was carried off in 1798, though it has always struck me as improbable that any one possessing vast wealth should have deposited it in such a particularly unprotected neighborhood. It is of very little use to describe minutely all the ins and outs of abrupt cliffs and little coves beyond Crapolla. The coast is very wild and rugged, and it is only when half a mile to seaward that one sees the green, velvet-like carpet which covers the top of the great promontory, and the dark, glistening carob-trees and soft gray olives, which grow out so thickly wherever a few feet of soil will feed a root. Before reaching Positano, however, it is worth while, to run out to the Isles of the Sirens, and to lie an hour in the shadow of the rocks, to call up visions of Amalfi's doges, or to dream of the sister singers who lured the wanderer of old. There are ruins still on two of the three islets, and at night one hears strange echoes and breathings from the sea as it rocks the seaweed to sleep.

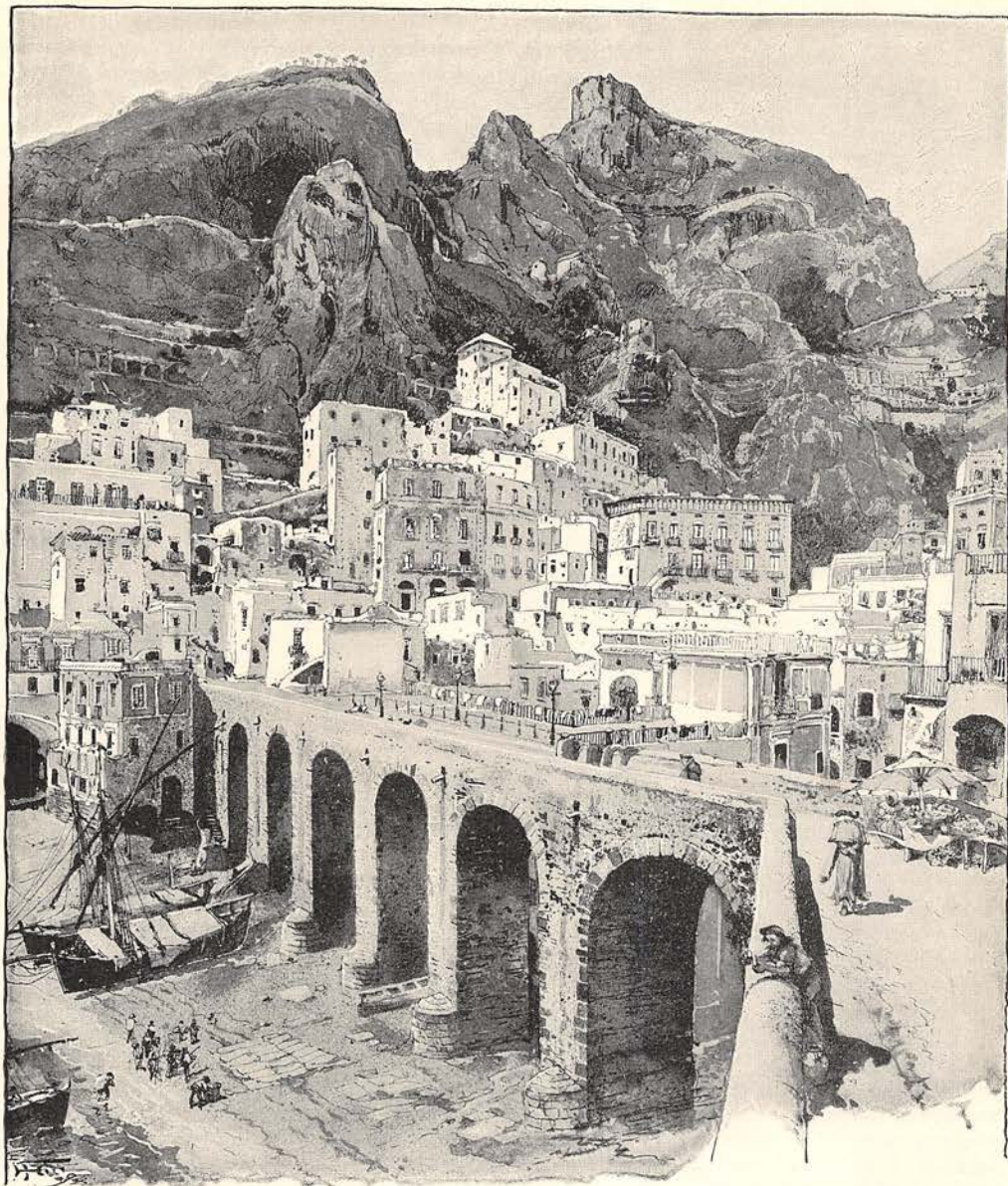
Almost opposite the islands lies the deep amphitheater of Positano, with its half deserted town built up from the water's edge to the base of the cliffs. Until a few years ago this place had no connection with any other except by sea, or by a steep and almost impracticable bridle-path leading up into the overhanging mountain. The inhabitants emigrated almost in a body, removing the doors and windows from their dwellings in order to escape paying taxes. Some went to other parts of Italy, many to North or South America, leaving whole streets of silent habitations windowless and doorless, while the few people who remained congregated together by the beach. Now that a magnificently planned but poorly executed road connects Positano with Sorrento on the one hand, and is to join it with Amalfi before long on the other, the little place has begun to revive. An enterprising individual has opened a nice little inn under the somewhat ambitious sign of "Pension du Paradis." It is prettily situated, with a terrace, and is not a bad place in its way; and as for the name, the blessed who attain to paradise may perhaps be less fastidious than we in the question of food and lodging. Positano, as I have said, lies in the coast like an amphitheater—the stage was the sea, the scenery the Isles of the Sirens, the actors were the doges and merchants, the sailors and the slaves, of Amalfi, pitted for ages against their mighty Pisan adversaries, before whose ships and beneath whose blades the great southern republic sank at last, overpowered, into the waves out of which it had arisen. And in a more literal sense, too, Amalfi has subsided into the blue water, which in the course of centuries has washed away its harbors, its breakwaters,

its arsenals, and its fortifications, leaving the long, pebbled beach in the undisturbed possession of the fishermen, and of the light craft which carry the macaroni of Amalfi up and down the coast of Italy; for the descendants of the doges and the admirals are macaroni-makers and wine-growers, and if the sword has not literally been beaten into a plowshare, it has at least, metaphorically, been turned into a press for squeezing dough through little holes. Perhaps in Italy no better symbol could be taken for peace and plenty than a double fringe of the thin, tawny paste hung on a reed to dry in the sun.

Amalfi is much more a paradise for foreigners than the little inn at Positano is ever likely to be. Its white walls, tiled domes, and shady *loggie* look southward, facing the blazing sun in winter, and the great old Capuchin monastery, which runs along a level terrace above the western end of the town, has become an inn and a city of refuge for rheumatic Englishmen and consumptive Russians at the Christmas season.

The many people who have been there have found plenty to say about it, and the scarlet vision of the guide-book rises up and warns me to silence. Nevertheless, few places in the world have survived so much visiting without receiving and retaining the deadly impression of the tourist's cloven foot. Perhaps I owe the tourist some slight apology for the simile, but, all things considered, I prefer to remain his debtor, since I can owe him nothing else. I cannot put out his eyes, and leave him with his white helmet, his cotton umbrella, and his guide-book, to perish on the rocks in the sea, as he deserves, and as I heartily wish that he might. But I will not apologize to him for hating him. For my own part, when I go to Amalfi, I make my visits in July and August, in weather of which the spring tourist can form no adequate conception—as yet.

The deep blue bay is treacherous and squally here, and, indeed, all the way from Positano to Salerno. The changes are sudden, violent, and sometimes wonderful to see. Thunder-storms roll booming up from the deep pass of La Cava, and break in torrents of rain and small, mad, aimless hurricanes, to disappear an hour later into blue space, leaving no trace behind except perhaps a deeper sapphire tint on the crisped water, and a fresher greenness upon the orange-trees and vine-leaves of fertile Amalfi. One of the most violent little storms I remember to have met with in any sea broke upon the bay one night two years ago, as I was coming up from Calabria in an open boat, and was still five or six miles from land. Though the moon was past the first quarter, the darkness for five hours, during which time the storm lasted, was



ATRANI, NEAR AMALFI.

so thick that, seated in the stern-sheets, I could see neither mast nor sail, nor the faces of the men close to me, though I knew their exact positions from each quick succeeding flash of lightning. We were beginning to consider the question of "saving our legs," as the Italian sailors put it, when the storm suddenly vanished without the slightest warning, the sky cleared, the moon shone out brightly, and cast a magnificent moon-bow, without break or dimness, upon the misty air astern of us — the only complete moon-bow I ever saw, except at Niagara. The colors, as I remember, were

vivid and distinct, but were those of the opal rather than those of the prism. The bow was high, and its arc was considerably greater than half a circle.

Flavio Gioja, a citizen of the Amalfitan republic, and born in Positano, a few miles to the westward, is said to have invented the mariner's compass at a time when Amalfi was the first naval power in European waters; but its needle was not destined to guide his fellow-republicans to victory in their endless struggles with Pisa. Even the possession of St. Andrew's body could not save them from defeat, humiliation, and

ultimate destruction. Nor could the splendid bronze doors of the cathedral, cast by Staurachios in Constantinople, preserve the dead Apostle himself from decapitation. It was Pius II., I believe, who carried St. Andrew's head to Rome, where it is now preserved among the Vatican relics.

Amalfi must have been very magnificent once, rich in wealth and strength and beauty, as each of the gorgeous medieval republics became in turn. But Amalfi goes in rags to-day, and its inhabitants do a small trade in macaroni, wine, and coarse brown paper. They are very good sailors still, however, and their small boats may be found on every beach from Naples to southern Calabria. As for the aspect of the place itself as seen from the sea and from some little distance, it reminds me of a ragged Eastern carpet caught, as it were, on jagged rocks, and left to the mercies of wind and sun and rain — a carpet of Ispahan, ragged, time-worn, thread-bare, and soft, once wonderful, and beautiful still to the very last, in its harmony of color and originality of design. It has still that something which is never lost so long as one stone stands upon another in places once gilded by the splendor of the middle ages, once inhabited by that daring, gifted, generous, and magnificent cross-breed of Latin, Goth, and Norman, whose rise and fall were Italy's second life. The romance of Italy began when Alaric, twice merciful, stormed Rome at last in vengeance upon thrice-false Honorius, and it ended with Garibaldi's exile to Caprera.

It sometimes seems as though modern civilization tended, broadly speaking, to transfer life from the mountains to the plains, leaving behind just what we are pleased to call romance. In other days no man, as a rule, built in plain or valley when he could possibly build upon the top of a hill. Now, no one who can dwell in the plains takes the trouble to live on the top of the mountain, unless for some very particular reason. The security that once lay in stone walls and iron bars is now sought in strategic position and in earthworks. There are no small, daily dangers in our time against which man barricades himself in towers, and behind iron-studded doors of oak. The great perils of our age are few, far between, and general. Military power once meant an agglomeration of desperate individuals devoted to a common cause, bad or good, not one of whom could find a place in the well-ordered, unreasoning, and mechanically obedient ranks of a modern conqueror's army. The more we live in plains the less we can understand the hills; the more systematically we obey laws and regulations having for their object the greatest good of the greatest number, the less able are we to understand the reasoning of such men as

Alaric, the great Count of Sicily, Tancred, Caesar Borgia, Gonzalvo de Cordova, or Garibaldi. It is singular that while most intelligent people undoubtedly prefer the conditions of modern civilization for their daily life, they should by preference also like to dream of the times when civilization was still unrealized, and of lives lived in circumstances against which modern common sense revolts. These are machine-made times; those were hand-made: and true art is manual, not mechanical.

The southern peninsula is dominated by a central mountain nearly five thousand feet in height, and bearing, of course, the name of Monte St. Angelo, like so many other isolated peaks in Italy. The "holy angel" in question is of course St. Michael, in whose gleaming blade students of mythology will doubtless find the thunderbolt of Jupiter Tonans, god of high places. There is a little lonely chapel on the very summit, dedicated to the archangel, and commanding what is in point of extent one of the most magnificent views in the world. East and west of the peak, and still at a great height above the sea, the land stretches in an undulating plateau inhabited by a race which differs considerably in aspect and tradition from the sailor folk of the coast below. At this high level there is much snow in winter, especially on the eastern side of the mountain, and the houses are all built with very high-peaked roofs, as in old German towns, to prevent the dangerous accumulation of snow on the house-tops. Above Agerola, which itself is almost directly above Prajano on the southern side of the peninsula, stands an enormous palace, visible from the sea at a great distance. It is known as the Palazzo degli Spiriti (the palace of the ghosts), and I once took the trouble to climb up from Prajano, and go all over it. It is entirely deserted, and has neither doors nor windows, a building almost royal in proportions and plan, standing on a vast terrace overlooking the sea, by no means ancient, and in some parts decorated with frescos and stucco work, which are fast falling a prey to the weather. It was built by a personage known as General Avitabile, who came to a tragic end before he had completed his magnificent residence, and whose heirs are, I believe, still quarreling about the division of the property, while the building itself is allowed to fall into ruins. It would be hopeless to attempt to disentangle the tales told about the family by the simple hill-folk. There were women in the case, who poisoned one another and the general, and whose spirits, venomous still, are believed to haunt the vast halls and corridors and staircases and underground regions of the palace. Whether they do or not, a more appropriate place for hobgoblins, banshees, ghouls, and vampires could

scarcely have been created by a diseased imagination in a nightmare. Even at midday, under the Southern sun, the whole place seems as uncanny as a graveyard on St. John's eve. Bits of staircase lead abruptly into blank walls, passages end suddenly in the high air, without window-railing or parapet. Lonely balconies lead round dizzy corners to dismal watch-turrets whence a human voice could hardly find its way to the halls within. The most undaunted explorers of the Society for Psychical Research might learn what "goose-flesh" means in such a place as this.

In all this region one is much struck by the difficulty of communication, and by the disinclination of the inhabitants to communicate, between the little scattered settlements above and below. The character itself of the people and the fishermen seems to differ widely in spots less than a mile apart. In coasting in an open boat one is often obliged by the weather to spend a day or two in one of the deep ravines of which I have spoken. In one place, from the moment the keel grates on the pebbles until the boat is launched again, the people are a perpetual torment, begging, screeching, wrangling, and quarreling, and making life temporarily unbearable. In the next, you will very probably find a set of men and women, quiet, hospitable, and anxious only to help you with your boat, and then to leave you in peace, sending you perhaps a handsome present of fish half an hour later, for which they will indignantly refuse any payment. It is of course impossible that these little distinct populations should have had each a distinct origin. One can only suppose, and it is reasonable enough, that the peculiarities of character are the result of local traditions handed down from father to son by a sort of patriarchal system. The angelic disposition of the small boys in some of these fishing-villages contrasts vividly with the fiendish iniquity of their cousins in the next.

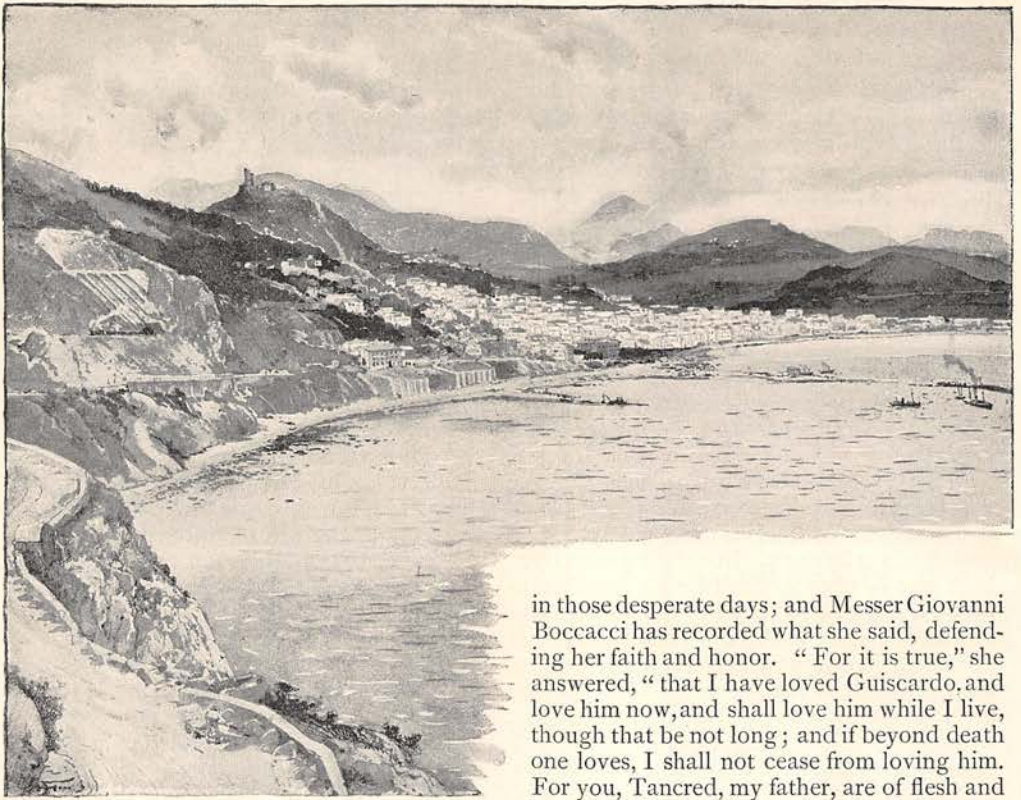
Eastward of Amalfi begins the chain of more or less fertile, orange-growing spots, each with its little town upon the beach, which were once Amalfi's wealth, and which succeed one another all the way to Salerno, interrupted only where the bold point of Capo d'Orso divides the bay of Amalfi from the one beyond, in which Vietri and Salerno lie—the point at which in thunderstorms the heavy squalls meet at an angle, coming from opposite directions, and making the sea very dangerous for small craft. And there at the end of the gulf rises Salerno itself, a pile of white, terraced houses, with narrow, shady streets, crowned by the half-ruined castle which Robert Guiscard wrested from the Lombard princes of Salerno, and long held by Tancred, who, to the Italian mind, is the very embodiment of Italy's romance.

There in the ancient cathedral lies Pope Hildebrand, at rest at last—one of the greatest, and perhaps one of the best, men who played great parts in a great age; a brave man, a reformer, almost a martyr, and now a canonized saint with a hard-earned place in the calendar of the blessed, dead in exile, as he said himself, because he loved justice. And there, beneath a lovely marble canopy, high on a sculptured couch, sleeps Margaret of the house of Anjou, mother of wild Joanna II. of Naples, wife of Charles III. of Durazzo—another tragic figure. For Joanna I. caused, or allowed, her husband, Andrew of Hungary, to be murdered at Aversa, and then caused, or allowed again, that innocent Durazzo to be executed for the deed in which he had no hand. But she paid the penalty at last, for she herself was smothered to death in gloomy Muro, far to southward.

And bishops lie there, too, and archbishops, and one cardinal at least,—Caraffa,—and many more of the great of the earth, in the silent aisles of the cathedral, not least of them all that daring Sigelgaita, Guiscard's wife, who fought by him in battle, and defended castles for him in his endless wars, and then, they say, tried to poison his first wife's son, Bohemund. But no one knows how true that may be, or how false.

Outside the church, the narrow, whitewashed streets lead beneath arches and overhanging eaves by many winding ways, and down by the harbor there are the modern quarter, and pleasant green trees, and the inevitable band-stand, from which, on holidays, discordant brazen instruments play cheap and coarse dance-music and tunes from operettas in the very hearing of the harmonious sea. Doubtless the blare of Guiscard's trumpets was discordant, too, when he besieged the great citadel upon the heights eight hundred years ago, but there must have been passion in it, if little music. Up there beyond the town he got that deep wound in his breast which could not kill him, and seems hardly to have shortened his strong life.

Court within court, rampart behind rampart, tower upon tower, the ancient pile rises from the rocks to the sky, labyrinthine in its intricacy and colossal in its strength. Somewhere beneath one of those deserted courts lies the hidden underground chamber to which Ghismonda went daily by the secret passage from her room above, while Guiscardo, her lover, let himself down by a knotted rope through the aperture, overgrown with shrubs, and with thorns so sharp that he wore leathern clothes to protect himself. Ghismonda was Tancred's daughter, and Guiscardo was one of her father's gentlemen-at-arms. It is a grim and yet a tender story of a very true love. For some reason which deeper students may discover, Ghismonda did not marry again when her husband,



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the Duke of Capua's son, died after a few months of wedlock, and she loved the handsome young soldier to despair, though his station was too far beneath her own for an open alliance.

So they met and loved, and met again, till one day, growing bolder, she led him in an evil hour up the secret stair to her own apartment, where, though she did not guess it, Tancred sat nodding behind a curtain, half asleep in the noonday heat after dinner, and waiting for his daughter, with whom he loved to spend an hour in pleasant conversation during the long afternoons. And as the lovers were there together, Tancred saw them and heard them, unseen and unheard. Being as wise as he was brave, he choked down his anger, and waited a whole day before he spoke. Then Guiscardo was taken at nightfall by two men, and brought secretly to his lord, and Tancred reproached him with tears. But the young man made only one short answer. "Love is far stronger than you or I," he said, and so was led away to his death. And Tancred, heavy at heart, spoke bitterly to his daughter, and most bitterly of all because she had loved one beneath her. Then he was silent, and waited for her reply with bowed head. Ghismonda turned upon him, dry-eyed and brave, as women sometimes were

in those desperate days; and Messer Giovanni Boccacci has recorded what she said, defending her faith and honor. "For it is true," she answered, "that I have loved Guiscardo, and love him now, and shall love him while I live, though that be not long; and if beyond death one loves, I shall not cease from loving him. For you, Tancred, my father, are of flesh and bone and blood, and your daughter is like you, and not of stone or iron; and see, I have lived so little that I am still young"—and much more to a like intent. "And so," she said at last, "if you are grown cruel in your old age, as you used not to be, be cruel now, even to me; for I tell you that if you do not to me as you have done to Guiscardo, my own hands shall do that same mischief on myself."

And Tancred was cruel indeed, for he took Guiscardo's heart, and placed it in a precious golden vessel, and sent it to his daughter. But she brewed poison, when she had wept many tears, and filled the cup, and drank her death from her lover's heart, and lay down to die, pressing it to her own, and crying: "O much-loved heart, my service to thee is fulfilled, nor is there anything left for me to do but to come with my own soul and bear thine company forever." And Tancred came and wept over her, and repented of what he had done; but she spoke bitterly once more, and asked only that her body might be buried with him she loved. Then she pressed the dead heart once more to her bosom. "God be with you," she said, "for I am going." So she died, and was laid beside her lover somewhere in Salerno.

People were in earnest in those days. To love was to live; to be cut off from love was death—real, literal, cruel death.

F. Marion Crawford.