



ENGRAVED BY C. W. CHADWICK.

QUAIL-CATCHING IN NETS AT DOME CUTA.

“HOME OF THE INDOLENT.”

THE ISLAND OF CAPRI.

BY FRANK D. MILLET.

WITH PICTURES BY CHARLES CARYL COLEMAN.

AMONG the deck-passengers on the little steamer crossing the Gulf of Naples to Capri, one afternoon, a Tyrolean peasant in his native costume, complete from the black cock-feather in his rough felt hat to his heavy-soled boots, sat, undisturbed and almost unnoticed, gazing at the beautiful outline of the island as it gradually melted into the warm glow of twilight. To me, returning after a long absence, this figure was an object of some curiosity; and as I noticed that he did not speak to any one in the crowd of Capri peasants on board, I made my way along the deck, and addressed him. At the sound of German, which broke into the music of the Capri patois like the clash of cymbals in the harmony of stringed instruments, he started from his reverie, and began to ply me with questions about the island. Soon, finding me a willing listener, he grew communicative, and spoke freely of his experiences on the way to this the goal of his wanderings. Far away in the north, in a quiet hamlet in the Tyrolean mountains, the fame of this earthly paradise had reached his ears, and had so stimulated his imagination that he could not resist the impulse to see for himself this wonderful spot. So he started

forth on his first journey into the world, provided with one excursion ticket, armed with a heavy stick, and encumbered with no other impedimenta except his pipe and tobacco-pouch. Until he reached Naples, and caught his first view of the gulf, he saw nothing finer than his own native valley; but now, crossing the beautiful bay, he felt that his journey was reaching a proper climax, and that he should find Capri to be all that his imagination pictured. I saw him safely ashore, gave him in charge of the first German waiter I found and, avoiding the persistent cabmen, intrusted my portmanteau to a sturdy peasant girl, and climbed the hill by the old footpath toward the twinkling lights of the town.

This incident of the Tyrolean had irritated me somewhat, because it indicated the strength of the Teutonic invasion, and marked the extent of the conquest of the island. But in Capri no mental irritation remains long at burning-heat, and the insinuating charms of the place, revived and quickened by every familiar odor and sound, soon captivated my spirit. I felt that the island was my own again.

Every one must discover Capri for himself, and a jealous sense of ownership moves all

who really come within the influence of its unique and potent charm. For them the withered ilex puts forth fresh buds, repeating the omen which led Cæsar Augustus to purchase the island; for them the story of the world-weary Tiberius has infinite pathos; and for them the tales of awful cruelties which have long branded, in the popular mind, this emperor as one of the basest of all human monsters, are but cheap and feeble inventions. When the island became the private property of the imperial family, in the height of the reign of Augustus, it was

years. Traces of his villas, gardens, and baths are abundant all over the island, and fragments of precious marbles, mosaics, artistically engraved glass, and other relics, are found to this time, testifying to the grandeur and luxury of the improvements which, we may well believe, furnished a healthy and constant diversion for the care-ridden and melancholy ruler. The placid Bay of Naples, its luxuriant shores dotted with villas and flourishing seaside resorts, made then, as it makes now, an ever-varying, always fascinatingly beautiful pano-



ENGRAVED BY PETER AITKEN.

CAPRI GIRLS GATHERING FIG-VINE LEAVES FOR FEEDING CATTLE

a barren rock, inhabited only by a few goat-herds with their flocks; hence the name. Its advantages as an isolated, yet accessible, retreat brought it to the notice of Augustus. He erected a large villa there, and it became known as "Apragopolis," or "Home of the Indolent." Tiberius, who had long looked forward to retirement from the nervous whirl and confusion of life in Rome, enlarged the villa of Augustus, and built a number of summer-houses, baths, and other edifices of more or less importance. A tired old man, overwhelmed with the cares of government, and tortured by family troubles, he found there a quiet and soothing retreat. An echo of the turbulence of Roman politics necessarily penetrated, on occasions, even to this water-girt and cliff-bound rock; but it did not break the spell that chained the aged emperor to the spot, nor long disturb the peace of mind so grateful to his declining

rama. Where the menacing black cone of Vesuvius now stands as an impressive monument over buried cities, rich olive-groves and vineyards covered gentle slopes, and the blue waters of the gulf rippled against the walls of Pompeii, now a mile inland. The dark cloud that hovered over the peninsula during the middle ages shrouded the little island as well; neglect, decay, and the ruthless hand of the barbarian wrought each its havoc, and nature claimed its own again. In modern times it has become a new and revived Apragopolis, not through the caprice of an autocrat, but by the slower and more lasting methods of gradual increase of population, and the consequent rise in its political and commercial importance. Before the steamers made communication with the mainland more or less sure and regular, the semi-stagnation of the little community was seldom broken by any event worthy the notice of the

chronicler. The simple-minded people, content within the limits of the great rock, gazed with unruffled spirit on the rapid changes in the face of the landscape across

echoes any desire to exchange the sweet peace of the island for the turmoil and struggle of busy life. Almost forgotten in their solitude, the islanders developed into



ENGRAVED BY H. DAVIDSON.

PEASANT GIRL UNDER AN OLIVE-TREE.

the bay, wrought by the forces of modern progress. Rumors of the wonderful railway through the lava-beds on the flanks of Vesuvius did not awake their slumbering imaginations to activity, nor did the hoarse roar of the great steam leviathans, as they swept majestically across the gulf, stir with its

something like a clan, distinctly superior to their neighbors in type and physique. They retained in purity their costume, customs, and habits of life, and remained generations behind the age in many of the commonest elements of civilization. Their patois, enriched, like that of the Neapolitans, by a



ENGRAVED BY F. H. WELLINGTON.

GIRLS PRUNING VINES, TOWN OF CAPRI IN THE DISTANCE.

large proportion of guttural words of Arabic origin, kept a decidedly local and insular flavor, which, notwithstanding the modernization of the island, remains to this day prominently characteristic of their speech.

Commerce, with its attendant train of tourists, at last found its way across the gulf; and the rumor of the enchanting beauties of the scenery, and the classical perfection of the type of peasant, soon spread abroad, and artists of all nationalities began to frequent the island, and many of them made it their fixed abode. From this incursion dates the decadence of one of the chief original charms of Capri, its primitive simplicity. The sentimental Teuton, the blasé Celt, and the enterprising Anglo-Saxon, each found here his own special delights, and all speedily fell under the old-time spell that remained active in spite of all changes, and still remains irresistible. Until 1874 no horse and no wheeled vehicle had ever been seen on the island, for the good reason that there were no roads, and the foot-paths were often interrupted by flights of steps cut in the rock. The exigencies of the tourist system demanded easier communications to the points of interest; and commercial enterprise, ignoring, as it always does, all sentiment, and mindful only of present advantages, constructed, at

great expense and considerable disfigurement of the landscape, an excellent road from the water-front through the town of Capri to the upper plateau of the rock, where stands the village of Ana Capri, which was hitherto inaccessible except by a flight of steps over three hundred in number. After the building of this road, the transformation of the island was, of course, very rapid. At nearly every point from which there is a choice view over land and sea, the ubiquitous publican opened his rustic beer-house, and soon glaring placards called the traveler's attention to the advantages of a halt to enjoy the prospect and to quench the thirst.

The indigenous style of the architecture of the island is partly Moorish and partly Roman, and in its original simplicity gave a decidedly Oriental aspect to the place. But the villa, with its terra-cotta sphinxes and cheap busts and vases, its red-tiled roofs and outside walls decorated after the Munich fashion, now frequently breaks the agreeable continuity of the whitewashed façades, and gives a garish note of false color against the delicate hazy greens of the terraced slopes and the refined gray of the limestone cliffs. Nature, however, is too strong to permit these persistent efforts of man to disturb her harmonies, and in the great exaltation that possesses the visitor as the glorious

landscape unfolds itself before him, changing at every step, varying with every phase of the weather and with every degree of the sun's progress across the wide blue dome of the heavens—in this exaltation, which carries with it an absorbing sense of peace and a sweet, inexpressible longing, the discords of modernization lose much of their irritating force. Altered as the island is in the direction I have briefly indicated, the change is, happily, thus far only superficial, and possibly the stream of travel may be diverted to some other novel spot before the florid exotic growth completely smothers the simple and primitive nature of the place. In the last two decades, unfortunately for the artist, all characteristic articles of costume have disappeared, and in this short period has faded away in a marked degree the peculiar type of race which belonged to the island, and which was its great pride. Once famous for women beautiful in form and in feature, it can now lay claim to no greater distinction in this respect than that which abides with the adjacent promontory on the mainland. In this decadence the leveling influence of modernization is seen more than in anything else. The healthy, robust peasant girls still perform the larger part of the manual labor, and are the hod-carriers, the navvies, and the

burden-bearers generally. But while the type has degenerated in a marked degree, the Capri girls still retain a reputation for remarkable qualities of physical strength and endurance, and for mental capacity, which no other Italian peasants can claim to equal. This decadence of beauty may be set down, first, to the process of selection which has been going on for many years, for the natives sadly acknowledge that the foreigners marry all the pretty girls and carry them away; and, secondly, it may be charged to the account of commerce, for the popularity of the island has attracted a notable immigration from the mainland, and this leaven has made visible changes in the population.

From the point of view of the artist, whom, for the sake of argument, we may consider as looking upon the islanders from the purely Platonic view of models, and as so many agreeable objects of human interest in landscape or interior, the loss of local costume is almost as serious as decadence of type. The blue bodice, the gay kerchief, and the elaborate coiffure which were in use a decade ago, when the drawings which illustrate this article were made, have given place to the corset, the shirt-waist, and the latest twist of the hair. Like the Japanese dancing-girls who became aware of their bare feet in



ENGRAVED BY J. W. EVANS.

GATHERING OLIVES NEAR ANA CAPRI.

the Chicago Exposition and refused to appear in public unless chastely dressed, as to their legs, in white-cotton stockings, and became common and almost vulgar in consequence, so the Capri girls are fast becoming aware of their ankles, and they will all of them soon cramp their pretty toes in ready-made shoes. Once adopted, the distorting foot-gear, which machinery has brought within the means of the humblest laborer, will be there to stay, and almost the only remaining examples of uncivilized feet on the continent of Europe will be lost to the artist for all time.

As for the patois, I am informed by Dr. Cerio, a native of Capri, who is a cultivated archæologist, and has made an exhaustive and intelligent study of everything pertaining to the island, that in the short space of twenty years more than two hundred words have been lost from the common vocabulary.

I should, indeed, be disloyal to a ripe sentiment of love for the island if I refrained from insisting that the transalpine invasion has not spoiled the island, while it has, no doubt, disturbed its purity and diminished some of its charms. Most of the facets of this gem of the Mediterranean are still untarnished and flawless. The primitive life of the peasant remains much the same in all essential features; he employs the traditional methods in cultivating his vineyards, in making his oil and his wine, and in building his

houses, undisturbed by the gleam of the white umbrella or the red flash of the Baedeker, and sets up his quail-nets close to the white ribbon of the new road, apparently unaware of the noise of traffic or the chatter of enthusiastic tourists. A few steps away from the bustle of the landing-place or the hum of the little square in the town, all is calm and placid; a soothing murmur of the sea breaking at the foot of the cliffs is always heard, rising and falling with the breezes that play about the headlands, broken only by the piping of the goatherds and the song of the girls as they carry their water-jars, or file along in stately procession, laden with building-material or produce. In this Apragopolis the senses are dulled to all irritating externals, and a refreshing peace steals unconsciously into the mind harassed by anxiety and vexed by sordid cares. There is much in its situation as a sentinel at the entrance to the most beautiful bay in the world, much in its lofty domination over the sea, much in its climate and in the gentle nature of its people, that enchains the heart and captivates the spirit; but its real charm cannot be communicated by pen or by brush. Those who become captives to its fascinations soon loathe the turbulent clamor of the great city across the gulf, and, undisturbed in their aery, regard the mainland almost as another planet. This is the true Apragopolitan sentiment, and who shall say it is not a rejuvenating and a salutary one?



CARE.

BY VIRGINIA WOODWARD CLOUD.

ALL in the leafy darkness, when sleep had passed me by,
 I knew the surging of the sea—
 Though never wave were nigh.
 All in the leafy darkness, unbroken by a star,
 There came the clamorous call of day,
 While yet the day was far.
 All in the leafy darkness, woven with hushes deep,
 I heard the vulture-wings of Fear
 Above me tireless sweep;
 The sea of Doubt, the dread of day, upon me surged and swept,
 All in the leafy darkness,
 And while the whole world slept.