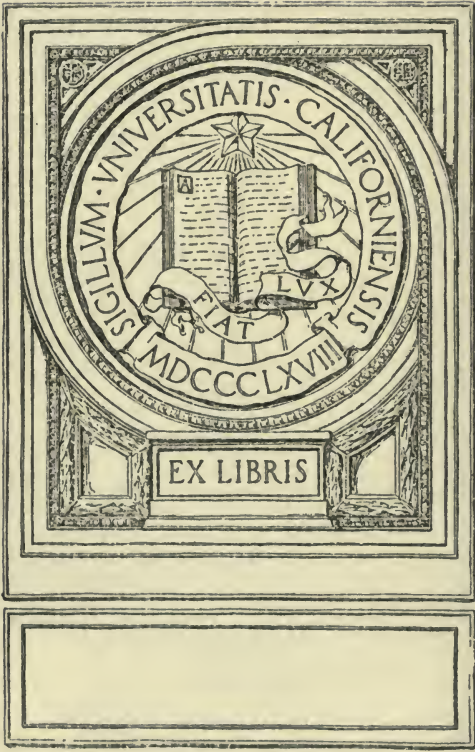
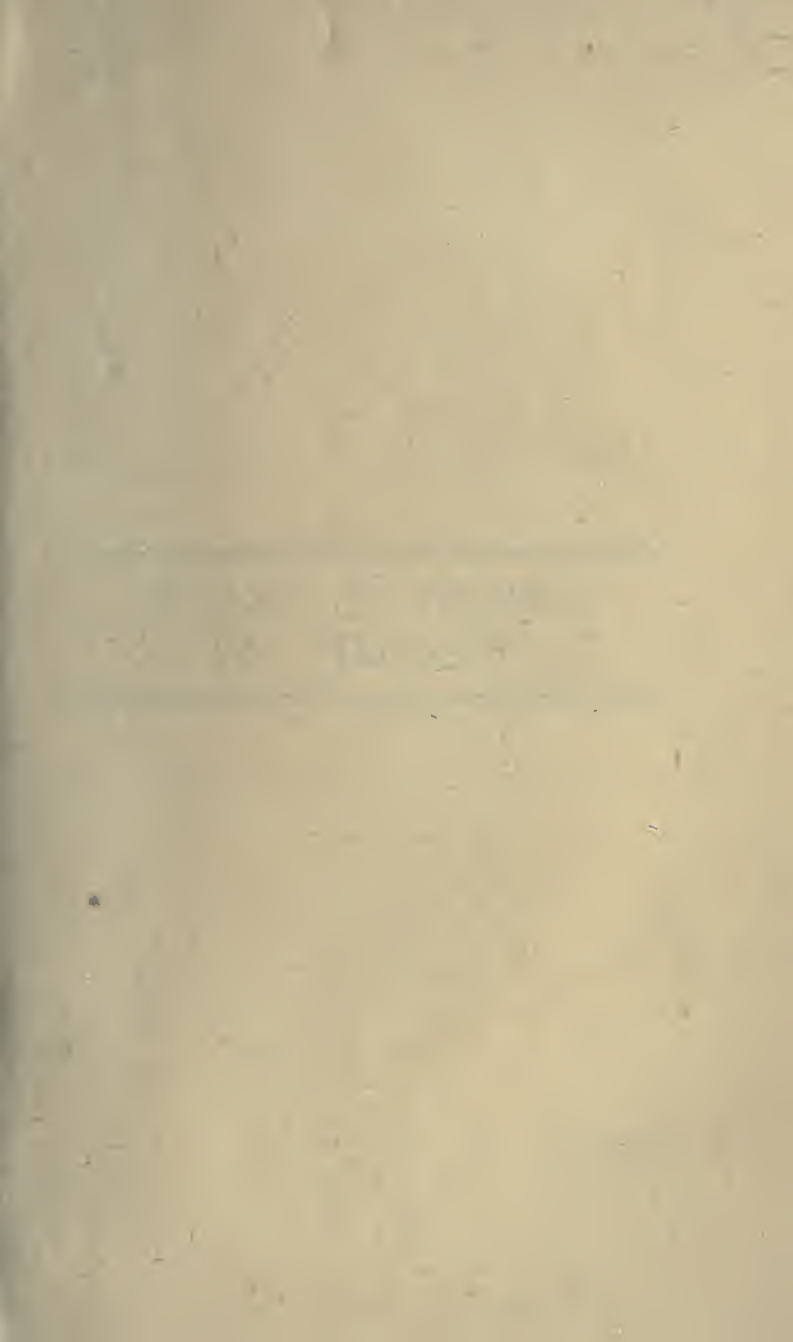


WALKS & PEOPLE
IN TUSCANY 
By SIR FRANCIS VANE, B.T.





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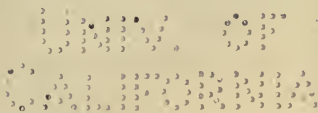
TO THE
ASSEMBLY



MY FRIEND BEPPI.

WALKS & PEOPLE IN TUSCANY

*BY SIR FRANCIS VANE, BT.
WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS*



*LONDON: JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
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1910.

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TO WHOM
IT MAY COME

DEDICATION

I OFFER this book with my homage firstly to my friends and cousins the Italian people of all classes, in memory of the many pleasant hours I have spent while enjoying their hospitality, and secondly to all those travellers among my own fellow-subjects who are intelligent enough to wish to learn something of the people, as well as the monuments, of Italy, and by doing so helping to bring into yet closer accord two countries which in the past have learnt not a little the one from the other.

FRANCIS VANE OF HUTTON.

TOYNBEE HALL, E.,
20 Feb., 1910.

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PREFACE

IT is only fair to the reader to emphasise in the clearest possible manner that this book does not pretend to do other than describe certain walks, the people encountered by the Author, and his thoughts on persons and places. Very many books have been produced recently that concern Italian art: indeed now, at this present time, art criticism is more than ever indulged and indulgent. As the present writer, though an admirer of all beautiful things, does not claim an expert knowledge of this subject, he has thought fit to leave it to more competent critics. And he has a suspicion that to-day, even now, the subject has been dealt with superficially and overmuch: extraneous opinion seems to confirm this impression. For example, a lady, who had just returned from a three weeks' visit to Florence, informed the Author that as now she had learnt all that was to be known about Italian pictures, she intended to write a clear description of

Preface

them. There is certainly no field open to the Author in this direction. On the other hand, as he has lived in Italy for four or five years, walked or cycled almost in every part of Tuscany, delighted himself by a somewhat intimate friendship with many of the people of all classes, and, moreover, through his family connections has been enabled to know them perhaps more closely than the ordinary tourist, he has thought it worth while to set forth his impressions.

While the picture galleries and museums in Italy contain some of the most beautiful works of art and the most interesting records of antiquity in the world, apart from the mere pleasure they afford, the chief interest in them lies in the manner in which they illustrate the history of the past so that they may illuminate the history of the present. The study of any one subject, unless it be made with a due sense of its proportionate value in the entire and complex scheme of things, has the effect of producing an artisan rather than an artist, or a politician rather than a statesman. Special pleading tends towards a narrowing of the intellect.

In whatever light readers may view this

Preface

subject, there can be no doubt but that the people of Italy are of exceptional interest, if for no other reason than that they represent the oldest civilisation in Europe. There are other and less obvious grounds for studying them, for it must be remembered that of all races they represent the one which has possessed for the longest period free institutions. This may seem a bold statement when we remember the intermittent tyrannies of the Middle Ages, but these were only occasional, and between the falls and risings of these liberty prevailed to an extraordinary extent. Then, again, feudalism has never attained to a pre-eminent condition in Italy since the suppression of the predatory barons by the Commercial Corporations. When, therefore, arises the question of the dignity, and the naturally inherent easy politeness which the traveller observes among the peasantry, it seems that this circumstance must be taken into account. For who are the rudest—the least cultivated people? Without doubt those who have been the most recently freed, for such confuse roughness and coarseness with their recently acquired independence; they confuse civility with servility. Unless very careful

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attention is paid to the instruction of the children in public conduct in the schools, it naturally takes generations to eradicate the cause of this false and unfortunate attitude ; but when time has effected this, then gradually the truth emerges, and they learn that independence can best be maintained by unwavering courtesy, as is generally the case in Italy.

There is another excuse for the Author in writing this account of his walks. He came to Italy straight from South Africa, from the war, and from the political strife which succeeded the war. He was somewhat saddened by their results, and had learnt there a good deal of the workings of the human heart, not always to its credit. Therefore, when in touch with the people of Italy, he was continually and subconsciously reverting to his African experience, and this gave him at any rate a recent object of comparison. Again, in many countries he had seen the lives of the poor, in Whitechapel, in lonely and destroyed Transvaal farms, among Breton peasants, among his family tenants, and in north-country industrial towns, and he was naturally anxious to understand also the hard-working and poor-living *contadini* of the

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mountains. The foregoing is to be taken as the excuse for his discursiveness in the volume. As he met all sorts of people in all sorts of places, he has expressed what he thought of them at the time, and the ideas they suggested, much as he did in his letters from Africa during the war.

Now in respect to the arrangement of the chapters. Some of these have appeared separately in the local Italian press, some in the form of a much smaller book published in Florence; but the present volume has been entirely rearranged and systematised on geographical lines. It is hardly necessary to say that the walks described only represent a tithe of those taken, but these have been selected so as to cover as wide a field as possible. The principle maintained has been to divide the twenty-five chapters by starting, roughly speaking, from two centres. Firstly, Florence, the capital; secondly, Bagni di Lucca, the summer resort. By this means, I think, it will be found that the country has been fairly well covered by a network of expeditions characteristic of the whole. It must be confessed that had the Author had the opportunity of dealing with the whole book at

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one and the same time a better arrangement might have been devised. Nevertheless, he believes that a perusal of the volume will give to the reader a general impression of the country and of the people who dwell therein.

At the end of each chapter some practical information will be found in respect to hotels wherein the Author has rested, and these only. As this does not pretend to be a guide-book, and as it is advisable to avoid giving the impression that it is in any sense a medium for advertisement, this arrangement has been deemed necessary. There are no doubt many other equally good hotels in each place than those mentioned, but as they have not been tried by the writer they have not been included.

A slight historical sketch of the dates of births and deaths of historical characters mentioned in the book is added to assist the reader's memory.

Above all, the desire of the Author to effect a little in increasing the good understanding between the Italians and his own race has been kept in view, and not only between these but between all sojourners of whatever race whom he has met by the way.

F. V.

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WALKS & PEOPLE
:: IN TUSCANY ::



WALKS AND PEOPLE
: : IN TUSCANY : :

CHAPTER I—*People in Florence*

IT would be quite useless, if not even impertinent at this period, to add to the literature describing Florence, except perhaps in one direction, namely the people residing there.

Walks in, around, through, probably under, Florence abound and can be had at all book-stalls, but very little has been said by the masters of the scribbling art about the residents themselves. It is true that this city has often been caricatured in works of fiction, from Charles Lever to Ouida ; but justice has seldom been done to the importance of the subject.

The importance lies in this, that Florence to-day probably contains the largest number of foreign residents of the leisured classes of any

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town in Europe. When this fact is taken into consideration with the part which the Tuscan capital has played in history, more especially in stimulating the imagination of northern people both in literature and art, we may justly wonder how it is this subject has been so long neglected. In the Middle Ages our writers, lacking perhaps colour and imagination, came to Italy to gain them, with the result we all know and admire in our Elizabethan poets. These latter learnt from the Florentines how truth might be disguised in the romantic cloth of untruth and yet remain a semblance of the original structure. Sometimes indeed they assimilated the lie and rejected the fundamental verity, a process which has not ceased even to this day.

It has been said that a person may walk much in Florence and yet unless of peculiar courage never put pen to paper to describe his experiences, because so many literary giants have been before him in this work. But indeed at the present time, apart from fear of trespassing on already occupied ground, it would be difficult to describe in polite language a promenade in this City of Flowers. The frame of mind of the literary aspirant, who in

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the narrow streets has been run into by trams, spiked by aggressive umbrellas, deafened by gramophones, and forced into the gutter by a conclave of amiable gentlemen occupying the whole of the scanty pavement while placidly discussing the dress of the passing ladies, is likely to be anything but judicial.

But the people of Florence, both native and foreign, deserve some notice, even if only on the ground that the place is a sort of clearing-house of international thought. Here you have people of every nationality, British, German, Russian, American, French, etc., spending most of their leisured lives in the town, besides a considerable number of busy artists both of the pen and the brush.

On the whole I suppose it would not be an exaggeration to say that in and around the city is to be found a society as interesting, as educated, and as cultured as in any place outside one of the great world capitals, and probably of more diverse races. Moreover, besides this vast body of foreign residents, practically every educated man or woman passes through the city at some period.

Then, further, there are the native Italians, the Tuscan gentry who still look upon this

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city as a capital, and still reside in their ancient palaces, and the large and learned professional class, among whom are to be found many men with European reputations in the world of science.

With all these advantages in the personnel of the residents one might anticipate that the society of Florence would be among the most agreeable in Europe, and not only agreeable, but of high value in the cause of international good understanding. As the people of the various nations represented generally belong to the cultured and influential classes of their respective countries, and a large number of them at any rate have the capacity to express their views either through the press or in their books, much solid work might be done by this community.

And it would be none the less valuable because unconscious. Without doubt in the past, when the Grand Ducal Court existed, this good work was achieved, and to the society then formed may be ascribed much of the European sympathy for the Italians, which was in no country more remarkable than in our own.

It is one of the ironies of history that the

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little court of Florence, opposed as it naturally was to the Italian dream of an united country, should have greatly benefited by the social life it induced in informing the people of the world in the reasonableness of the national ideal.

Unfortunately to-day there is no central point at which the various races which form the society of Florence can meet, and in meeting sort themselves. There are many British cliques, many Italian, and many American. I am sure there are many Russian and German, but I do not know them. The fact remains that what should be a charming and international society is very generally run on racial lines, and in many cases on antagonistic ones.

“’Tis true, ’tis pity ; and pity ’tis, ’tis true.”
As a consequence of this there are many excellent and intelligent persons of our race who live the best part of their lives in Florence without really knowing one single Italian. Some of these indeed will tell you that they dislike the people of the country, and are not backward in expressing this ungenerous opinion. But in truth I do not believe them, for often their charitable actions give the lie to their words. What they mean is that for some reason or

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other they are not in sympathy with the Italian society of the place.

Let us examine into this a little, for it must be clear to any of my readers that this is not a desirable thing. These good people who might acquaint themselves, and through them their compatriots, with the feelings, sentiments, and aspirations with the Florentines, stand obstinately aloof from the life of the inhabitants or natives. Is it their fault? I think not.

At any rate I have mixed very widely in all kinds of society from bakers to marchesi, and can say this, that I have hardly ever met an Italian who was not anxious to sympathise and to be of assistance. Moreover, as both in the remote and in the immediate past my forbears have married into Italian families, I am certainly not prejudiced.

There are three chief causes why there is not more general intimacy between the Italians and the British of the town. The first of these is that there exists no central authority in whose house all the various races that make up the population of Florence would naturally assemble. Of this I have spoken before.

The second is that without doubt there are

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a certain number of nondescript English in the place whose pernicious energy is directed towards keeping the races apart. These people are without exception socially undesirable from the British point of view, but as they are mostly rich, they have edged themselves into the Italian circles. That they invariably do their best to malign their own country people to the Italians there is not the slightest doubt. I have been told by Italian friends actually what they have said, and one of their favourite expressions respecting us is "the shabby English." And in truth our country people in Florence are not at their best in the matter of dress.

Thirdly, the enormous number of the titles used by Italians undoubtedly causes confusion. Nearly all the titular distinctions are comparatively modern, for under the Republic no ranks were recognised, and were generally created by the Holy Roman Emperors. The patents granted by these potentates descend to heirs general, which means that practically every descendant male or female of the original grantee has a right to the style of marchese or marchesa, conte or contessa.

Now, as usually with us only one member of

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a family possesses a title, it can easily be seen that an Englishman without any other style than that of Esquire may yet have rank before the cadet marchesi. The feeling which this anomalous position causes, though seldom expressed in words, is a very real one, for on the one side mistakes are constantly being made, and on the other there exists an uncomfortable suspicion that the English think very little of Italian degrees.

I am informed that the King of Italy is doing his best to limit the number of these titles, and I notice that in the official Army and Navy lists very few are acknowledged. But hereditary distinctions increasing by geometrical progression very soon lose their value.

But to return to the society of our compatriots in Florence. There are, of course, many sets : the old English one, very pleasant, whose only vice is an inexhaustible appetite for tea ; the new smart one, whose sole qualification for membership is the possession of a motor-car and a taste for bridge ; and of course the nondescripts whose liking for Italian society is largely due to their rejection by their own compatriots.

On the whole there exist in Florence all

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the elements of a very charming society. It is indeed a pity that, owing to cliques and jealousies, the newcomer must undertake an enormous amount of spade work to achieve an enjoyable circle of friends, and he must meet a great number of people—and many who will not interest him—before he can discover his natural circle.

All that is wanted is for some philanthropist to devote his money to entertaining widely and internationally.

When this man arrives, Florence will become, as it ought to become, one of the most agreeable social centres in Europe, and perform the work which it was certainly intended to perform, namely that of a great International Social Exchange.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR FLORENCE

Hotels and Pensions :

Hôtel de France, Via Solferino. English landlady. Single-bedded rooms 3 frcs. ; double-bedded 6 frcs. First breakfast 1 frc. Lunch with wine 4 frcs. Pension 9 frcs.

Pension Quisinana, Lung' Arno della Borsa. Pension from 8 to 10 frcs.

Pension Villa Trollope. Pension 9 to 10 frcs.

Pension Idone, 24 Lung' Arno Acciaiuoli.

Miss Plucknett, Palazzo Ruspoli, Via Martelli.

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Circulating Library :

Vieusseux' (one of the best out of England), 5 Via Vecchietti.

English-speaking Physicians :

Dr. Yule Giglioli, 2 Via del Campidoglio.

Dr. Coldstream, 11 Lung' Arno Acciaioli.

Dr. Gerald Garry, 2 Via Vecchietti.

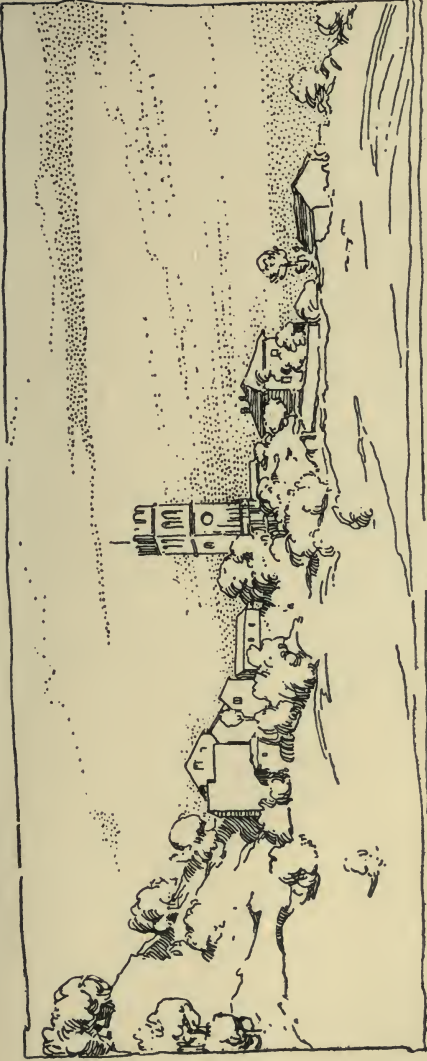
Dr. E. A. Gates, A Via Palestro.

Lady doctor : Dr. Mary Harriss, Hotel Berchielli, 11 Lung' Arno Acciaioli.

Bankers and Agents :

Messrs. French, Lemon and Co., Via Tornabuoni.

The Anglo-Italian Agency, Via Vigna Nuova.



APENNINE VILLAGE.

NO. 1000
ANNEX

CHAPTER II—*Florence to San Marino*

I WONDER how many of the British and American residents in Florence have scaled the heights of the little mediæval republic which seems to defy time and the windy ways of man. To the writer, at any rate, this small state, this little *imperium in imperio*, has many and great fascinations, and so on a cold October morning, accompanied by a young friend on leave from India, he started to walk from Vallombrosa to the Adriatic coast, without indeed much knowledge of the way except that which can be gained by the study of a map.

Vallombrosa on that cold morning illustrated much of what Milton said about it in the matter of leaves, and the roads were frozen to the consistency of iron, making the climb up through the woods from the old Monastery, by the Paradiso to the pass of Montemignajo, somewhat of a struggle. Fortunately on the way we met a little man who in the summer acts as guide to travellers, and he volunteered

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to take us over the hill to that village. He was a cheerful little guide, and, had our Italian savoured less of dog Latin and more of the tongue of Dante, no doubt he would have given us much information. In spite of this difficulty, he told us much, especially about those persons for whom he had during the last summer acted as *cicerone*. After a couple of hours' tramp, we found ourselves at the pass, and took that opportunity of enjoying the magnificent view both towards Florence and the sea and in the Casentino direction. From here to the little mountain village of Montemignajo is but a half-hour or so, and we arrived there certainly as prepared to enjoy the material pleasures of lunch as the more æsthetic pleasures of landscape.

After lunch and a hurried visit to the small church, in which there is a Della Robbian work, we proceeded down the rugged valley of the Upper Arno, passing, I presume, by the source of the Florence river, into the real Casentino country. Here the villages are nearly all protected by their castles, round which they still cluster as if the old fortresses were now as able to protect them as they were in old time. Curious indeed are these old husks of castles,

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so eloquent in their lessons respecting the history of the country, so stimulating to human imagination. Dead they are now, as dead as their lords, the Conte Guidi, but yet standing upright though gutted, permanent protests against the commercial age which has no place for them or the virile if somewhat predatory ideals which they represent. Through several of these villages we passed until at last we struck the great Consuma road and followed it till just at sundown we arrived at the ancient town of Poppi.

My young Indian friend, though he had started with high hopes of a twenty-five miles' walk, now took a more modest view as to the distance to be covered, for he comes from a land in which it is degrading to a white Sahib to use his legs. I think when he arrived at the town he accepted this, the Eastern opinion. Poppi everyone knows, so I need not describe it, beyond saying that we found refuge in a hotel which had been closed for the winter months, and at which our advent caused no little embarrassment. After dinner we visited all the quaint arcaded streets, and went round the wonderful castle on the hill, which in old time must have been a formidable and a

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threatening object in the landscape. Before leaving the next morning we had time to visit the magnificent staircase of the castle and to admire the wonderfully artistic coats-of-arms which everywhere decorate its entrance hall.

From here to Bibbiena is a level walk of four miles, and there we found a fair and market in progress, so much so indeed that it was difficult to move through its narrow and picturesque streets. At this town we chartered a carriage for La Verna. Everyone knows it is a tremendous pull up to the sanctified hill of St. Francis, and a pull which our horse could not do, so we had in the end to walk nearly all the way. At about two we arrived at the foot of the precipice on which the convent is placed, hungry and tired, willing to do honour to our patron saint—we are both of his name—but after lunch! We stayed at the small inn, and later visited the monastery, surely one of the most interesting monuments of the past. The *fratres minores* showed us every attention, and we concluded our inspection of the place by a walk at sunset to the top of the pine-covered hill of La Penna, from which one gets the widest view of the lovely valley of the

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Casentino, and towards the Adriatic to the east.

Before sunrise next morning—some snow had fallen in the night—we marched on white roads over the hill, again through the monastery, taking a path which leads to the Tiber valley, on the upper part of which is situated the little town of San Stefano, some eight or nine miles farther on, and remarkably picturesque it looked, as we saw it from above through silver mists broken by golden sunshine. Here we had an excellent lunch, in an inn which from the outside reminded us of a mortuary chapel, but was cheery enough internally. But my comrade's feet caused me anxiety, and I sallied forth to buy for him some of those medicaments which I know from experience in war soothe the troubled toes of man.

I think that in buying those things I must have interviewed every leading citizen of the place. Firstly the Syndic, of whom I asked the way to a chemist, then the officer of gendarmerie; and both of these accompanied me to the shop. Here were the usual *habitués* of such places and in addition, when it had become known that a *forestiero* wanted boracic

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acid, etc., it happened that most of the leading people too strolled into the place to offer sympathy and advice. This was very nice, but made it somewhat of an official function, for which I was hardly prepared by linguistic attainment! My gaiters also afforded much interest and satisfaction, though what happened at one place did not happen here. There I was politely requested to take them off to enable a gentleman's shoemaker to copy them! We continued our walk for two miles or so down the valley of the Tiber, then striking east over a pass which leads to the valley of the Marecchia. We had no definite plans as to where we would spend the night, but there were several villages marked on the map which seemed to secure us a roof.

Before arriving at the pass, some eight or nine miles from San Stefano, we took a final look at the Tiber valley, which we could follow with the eyes as far as San Sepolcro, not, alas! to Rome. On the other side we found a wilder country, sparsely inhabited. The first village, Viamaggio, had but a very few houses, though at a tiny *albergo* we were able to make an excellent meal of quite the best sausages I have ever eaten. Then on five miles to Badia, which,

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however, I walked alone, my friend's feet commanding his remaining there until a country cart could be found to take him. This I obtained at the small village of Badia, where just as it was becoming dark I secured lodging for the night. It was in a house in which there were more children and more cats than I had ever seen before in one habitation, extremely nice children and amiable if somewhat shy cats. The kitchen and the dining-room were one and the same, and its ancient ceiling was decorated with strings of sausages, hams, chickens, and other inviting provender. I waited here for the arrival of my comrade, and witnessed the whole of this immense family partaking of their evening meal, the seven or eight cats sitting meanwhile on an unused table in anxious expectation of doles. At last my friend arrived in the country cart, and we slept that night in excellent beds, in cleanly and well-appointed rooms above.

It was clear from the state of my friend's feet that a long walk the next day was out of the question, so we arranged with a man in the village to drive us to the ancient little episcopal village of Pennabili, and thence to walk on to San Leo. The drive down the Marecchia valley

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was interesting, and the scenery grandiose if somewhat sombre. Little grows here, and few villages are passed ; but on the way I saw what I had never seen before—the noble sport of truffle hunting. This was carried on by a man armed with a sort of golf club and accompanied by a dog. Truffles are plentiful here and sold at 5 lire a kilo.

Pennabili differs little from many other of these towns. Perched high up on a hill, with quaint gates and a formidable castle, the approach to it has been made even more difficult, since the main road was swept away in a landslip. Market day was in full swing, and we lunched at a little inn, into which by two steps we descended from the street and refreshed ourselves in the company of twenty or so farmers and their wives or sweethearts. We walked on from this place, but at some six miles, having turned out of the way to enquire the route, on my return I found my friend had vanished, whether forward or backward I knew not. As his Italian was even less respectable than mine, I felt alarmed for his safety. Much as I searched, yet he was not to be found ; so I decided that the only thing to do was to go

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ahead for San Leo. Leaving the road I took a path towards this wonderful mountain fastness, which was visible from here. Night, however, was now closing in, and I have known too many men lost at night on the veld to look with any pleasure at a night walk where no roads exist. Moreover, the whole country here about is cut up by mountain torrents making their noisy way towards the main valley. I met a farmer on his way home, and commandeered his service as a guide. We passed over tracks deep in mud and over incredible rocks (crossing two streams), and in time found ourselves at the base of the great precipices which form the rampart walls of San Leo. Curious and mysterious indeed looks this place at night, its grim fort crowning these walls of rock, its town perched upon a shoulder of the ridge, the only entrance into which latter is a threatening gate of tunnel-like appearance. We were not challenged at the gate as we should have been had the authorities possessed historical imagination; and we made straight for a café, there being no hotel. My friend was not there, but rooms had to be arranged for.

At once I sent scouts out from the café to search for sleeping accommodation, but they

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all reported none existed, and still no friend. At this moment a swinging light was seen coming up the road, and my mud-stained and bedraggled comrade marched in, escorted by two peasants of ferocious appearance. He had hired these men to lead him to safety. At the moment he had the appearance of a High Church curate who had taken to brigandage and found it an arduous profession.

Now for the rooms. A happy thought struck me. Happening to be possessed of a Roman Catholic order of knighthood, I might appeal to the senior priest as a stranger and a fellow-worker. My card was despatched, and at once came a most courteous reply putting two rooms at our disposal.

Quartermastering duties being settled, then to dinner and to bed in the quaint old town in which Cagliostro, that eighteenth-century magician, spent the last years of his romantic life as a prisoner of state.¹

About twelve miles separate the fortress of San Leo from the mountain on which is situated the "città" which is the capital of the

¹ It will be remembered that the Liberals or "thinkers," as they were called, of Bologna and other towns under Papal Government, when they thought deeply, used to be sent here.

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Republic of San Marino—some twelve miles of rough walking over many ridges and through two streams. We started early, leaving with regret the wonderful little mediæval town of San Leo, and in due course arrived at the capital of the oldest state in Europe, the only existing example of a fourteenth-century Italian republic, with its Captain of the Nobles and Captain of the People, their Excellencies the Regent Captains, its *Senatus Populusque Sammarinensis*, its magnificent situation, and its ancient streets illumined by electric light!

When we were enjoying the hospitality of our clerical host at San Leo, I had an opportunity of speaking to him about the country. I was much interested to observe during that conversation with what intense pride he reminded me that he was not an Italian, but a Republican. At first I hardly grasped his meaning, until it was recalled that I was approaching the frontiers of the Republic of San Marino. This made me think that perhaps it is not the size of states which makes men proud, but rather their history. Being myself one of those old-fashioned people who are rather revolted at the modern worship of

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“bigness” rather than virtue, it was with considerable pleasure that I noticed this intense pride of country exhibited by all the people of this microscopic state.

Once before when passing through this country I had employed a boy of some twelve years to wheel my bicycle up the steep hill, and he then had amused and instructed me during the walk with an account of various events in the history of San Marino, from the legendary founding of the state by Saint Marinus in the fifth century and onwards. I discovered later that the Senate did everything it could to foster this pride, for in every shop can be bought cheap history books, and I have now before me a most excellent historical calendar of the Republic which gives the chief events chronicled month by month.

We arrived at the small but excellent inn, which is perched up against the steep side of Monte Titano, somewhat out of breath owing to the steep pull up from the valley. It was not long before knowledge of the arrival of two *forestieri* had spread, the youth whose services I had formerly employed having proclaimed the exciting news, and so, while we

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were resting before lunch, there gathered in the bar of the inn quite a considerable audience of men and boys, all anxious to hear from us of our walk. One of these, more travelled than his compatriots, had passed through Florence, and it may interest our Florentine friends to know that he gave it as his opinion that we live in a "bella città."

In describing San Marino, a little time ago, in the pages of the *Manchester Guardian*, for my good northcountrymen, I told them to imagine a little town perched up on the top and on one side of Skiddaw. This gives a fairly good idea of the position, for though Monte Titano is not quite so high as our Cumberland mountain (it is 2450 feet), it is not much less. The situation, however, is unique in one way, for between its eastern side and the Adriatic there exists a low-lying strip of land, allowing therefore a full view of this sea. Indeed, if you are lucky, on a clear morning not only the whole coastline from Venice to Pesaro can be seen, including the towns of Ferrara, Ravenna, Cesena, Rimini, and others, but also the mountains of Dalmatia on the other side of the Adriatic.

Looking over the parapet at the highest

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point of the "Città" (this latter being the name usually given to the small town which dominates, and which is the capital of, the Republic), a curious optical effect was observed. All the land which the sea had deserted, namely that strip which runs between Ravenna, Rimini, and the Adriatic, by distance again appeared as water. So the coastline, as it discovered itself to me from the summit of San Marino, appeared the same as that which was the actual one in the Middle Ages, appropriate enough as seen from this anachronistic place.

Looking from this point inland, however, practically all the mountains which we had crossed from La Verna were visible. A threatening country it looked, and one over which a general would think twice before leading a hostile army. This thought occurred to me when I was looking over the scene of our recent walk, and knowing well the hardness and bravery of my Italian friends, a conversation which I had had with an Austrian chauvinist in Vienna a few months ago recurred to me. He was saying with that gay ignorance characteristic of such people that if a war between the two countries broke out,

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he reckoned the Austrians would be in Rome in three days. I calmly replied that I did not think the Italians would let them pass very easily, but I was quite sure that even without opposition the Italian railways as I knew them would not convey them that distance in so short a time. I think this was conclusive.

The straggling narrow street, the principal one of the "Città," winds up the hill, passing by the unfortunately modern Parliament House. Of course we visited this building, which is handsomely decorated, and which contains, by the way, an excellent picture of our late Queen Victoria presented by herself; and we sat in the seats of the mighty by reposing on the thrones of the Regent Captains of San Marino. These officials represent the dignity of the Republic, and are elected for only six months, a time sufficiently short to prevent the creation of undue pride in their minds, and which I presume is a security against their blossoming into tyrants. Taking into consideration that the whole population of the Republic according to the 1900 census is only 11,002, this short term of office must give every male adult inhabitant a very fair chance of ruling it at one time or another. They

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may say more plausibly than the French soldier who has the baton of a marshal in his knapsack, that they have the cap of a prince captain very near their heads.

San Marino in the past has had its troubles like other states. As recently as the eighteenth century it was invaded by the Papal troops, under Clement XII. An appeal to this Pontiff, however, obtained the concession that the people should themselves decide the question, and the Sanmarinesi soon settled that matter by voting *unanimously* for independence. But especially to Napoleon the Great is due the gratitude of the Republicans. Something in the history of this state must have especially attracted this famous landgrabber, and no doubt the outspoken opinion of the Sanmarinese patriot, Onofri, contributed, for this latter on being asked by Napoleon what he could do for the people, very frankly said, "Sire, the best thing you can do is to leave us alone." At any rate throughout his reign Napoleon supported the independence of the Republic, a line of conduct which became traditional with the Bonapartes, for Napoleon III afterwards adopted the same policy.

It should not be forgotten that this little

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state of San Marino has even in recent years shown that independent courage which won for it the respect of the great land conquerors of the world. Garibaldi, after his defence of the Roman Republic in 1849, with the remnant of his army retreated through the mountains, and eventually being harassed and surrounded by the Austrians claimed the protection of the San Marino Republic. This protection was offered freely, and, at the risk of their own independence, they defied the stronger powers. It is pleasant to remember that among the most faithful of Garibaldi's followers was Colonel Hugh Forbes, late of the Grenadier Guards, and resident in Florence. He was accompanied all through this campaign by his son, a boy of thirteen years.

The courage which has protected the Sanmarinesi through the centuries was displayed conspicuously at this time, and no doubt this display of it has saved it from absorption in United Italy. It is a most interesting matter in the philosophy of history.

The next morning I left for Rimini, walking through the lower town called Borgo, and thence through another Sanmarinese village called Serravalle. Shortly after that, however,

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we ceased to breathe the free air of the Republic by crossing the frontier into the Kingdom of Italy.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR SAN MARINO

It is as well under this heading to include a short sketch of the history of this little independent Republic, because this is not too well known. Moreover, there is another reason. People may go, and very generally do go, to places like Florence, Siena, etc., without any real knowledge of the past of these places. They go to see beautiful pictures or fine architecture, or to say they have been. But the pilgrim who makes the ascent of Monte Titano, on which the capital of the Republic is built, goes there with the reverent intention of paying homage to the history of the place. This must be his primary reason, and for that he should have in his mind the dates of the chief events of its lengthy past.

A.D. 350 Marinus, a stonemason of Dalmatia, became Christian. Marinus crossed to Rimini, where he lived for thirty years. To escape persecution for his religion he fled to Monte Titano, where he lived the life of a hermit. His fame became known, and he was given the mountain by a princess, and in lieu of founding a monastery established a Republic.

During the Middle Ages, the Republic's dangerous neighbours, the Malatestas, often attempted to invade it, but the courage of the people effectually secured its independence. Towards the end of the eighteenth century Cardinal Alberoni, the Pope's Governor of Romagna, invaded and captured it, but an appeal having been made

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to the Pope, Clement XII, it was decided that the inhabitants should be given their choice. They voted unanimously for independence. It was, however, largely due to the devoted services of Antonio Onofri that the Republic gained the admiration and support of Napoleon the Great. When it had been determined to suppress it, Onofri went to the Emperor to plead for his native state. On being asked what he wanted, he replied boldly: "Sire, the only thing you can do for us is to leave us just where we are." And Napoleon did. However, the Republic throughout the wars maintained a strict neutrality, so that at the Congress of Vienna, Onofri, who again represented it there, was able to obtain the recognition of its independence. In 1849 the remnant of Garibaldi's army took refuge in the state, surrendering their arms to the Regent Captains. The part the state played in this matter gained for it the respect of Victor Emmanuel, and it is now certainly unlikely that its independence will ever again be threatened.

The whole territory of the Republic is but 32 square miles in extent, and it is governed by two Regent Captains elected twice a year, a Council, and a Chamber of Representatives.

Hotels:

San Marino : Albergo Titano ; rooms from 1.50 frcs.

Rimini : Aquila d'Oro, 10 % reduction for members of the Italian Touring Club.

San Stefano : Albergo Stella.

Poppi : Albergo Conte Guidi.

CHAPTER III—*From Florence to Empoli and Fucecchio*

LAST year I was in Hungary with a party of politicians visiting the historic country of the Magyars, and of our circle was Professor Oscar Browning. A discussion arose at dinner the first night on the position of Napoleon the Great in history, and it happened that my contribution to the debate was the proposition that he was one of the three or four real geniuses which the world had produced in a thousand years. This statement was a too attractive one for the author of *The Boyhood and Youth of Napoleon*, *The Fall of Napoleon*, etc., to resist, so after dinner we went off and had a Bonaparte talk. Never having read Browning's work, I enquired of him if the family of Bonaparte, the one whose name appears on the walls of the old inn at San Miniato al Tedesco, was in any way related to the Imperial family, and he told me they were undoubtedly the same. He said the family



IN THE ARNO VALLEY.

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originally were from Fucecchio, a town near San Miniato, and that many years ago he had met a waiter in a hotel in Florence of the name whose father had been a resident of this place and was, very likely, collaterally of the family. On my return I determined to make an expedition to Fucecchio, a place which up to then I had not visited; so I mounted my bicycle one fine morning and rode from Florence, passing through the Pisan Gate. The road to Lastra a Signa is too well known to need any description, and though of much interest is one of the very worst for bicycles in the neighbourhood of the city. To those who have not seen Lastra, however, this miniature walled town deserves a visit, which of course can be easily effected by tramway. Such a tiny fortalice it is with its sombre streets and built-in church, that truly one might imagine it to-day blocking the expansion of Florence towards the sea, or defending an outpost of the banker city. But there are no men-at-arms guarding its narrow gate, and my bicycle with its warning bell does not call out a guard, but only scatters a horde of children playing with halfpennies in the road.

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Beyond here the road runs to the picturesque village called Porto, and passes the old bridge leading to Signa, now of straw-hat fame but anciently of greater renown. Hence the road follows the river through a gorge in the mountains, a very beautiful ride, through wood, village, and prairie until the split hills of Montelupo come into sight. Here is the Medicean Villa of Ambrogiana, now usefully but somewhat ignobly used as a criminal lunatic asylum. I remembered in passing through the tortuous streets of this place that somewhere I had read the story of its name, the Mount of the Wolf. In old time the village and district was the hunting ground of a particularly voracious she-wolf, who specially affected young and tender children, of which, I can witness, the place has an abundant supply. Many had been the attempts to rid the country of this incubus, but without success. At last the kindly old priest had an idea. He had seen many human wolves converted to reasonable living through Christianity; why, then, not this beast? Had not Holy Francis a brother in a wolf? So he sallied forth and interviewed the animal, who it may be presumed had either respect

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for his office or no taste for priestly flesh. The outcome of the conversation was the complete recognition of the Catholic truths by the lupine bandit. The latter became a responsible citizen, indeed, setting a much-required example to many contemporary bipeds. One night, however, having an intuition of coming disaster, which the writer has frequently observed to be peculiar to the lower animals, he entered the village and warned the people that an earthquake was to be expected, and advised that the persons dwelling in the upper village should quit their homes for the lower. The catastrophe happened, the whole country was convulsed like the sea in a great storm, and the mountain was split into two parts. Yet not a life was lost, and the town was so named after its saviour.

Crossing the river here by a romantic old bridge, the road undulates towards Empoli, a town which is much more interesting than it looks from the railway.

It is a market town, and when I entered it, it was crowded with traffickers, of whom the women were habited in picturesque dress, while the men were in awkward black, no

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more attractive than is a Florentine in the Via Tornabuoni. Why, oh why do the women put up with it? Can they not refuse to go a-courting with men less becomingly garbed than themselves? But after all, this query might be addressed appropriately to other classes as well as to the good peasants of the Arno valley.

The little town has many quaint and lovely houses, and its ancient Duomo with its arcaded piazza is especially deserving of a visit.

The road runs flat and straight through the vineyards from Empoli to Fucecchio, crossing the river by a bridge near Marcignana, and latterly skirting the lower hills on which are many hamlets and villas. The town itself with its ancient fortress is on a spur of these same hills looking down on the Arno and across it to San Miniato. As soon as I had rested and refreshed myself I proceeded to the Municipio to make my enquiries as to the Bonapartes. It appeared there were records of a family of this name styled *nobile* (or principal burgher). It seems necessary now to explain this word, and it is the more interesting in that it will be remembered that until quite recently it was commonly stated

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that Bonaparte was of mean birth. The truth is that his origin was neither very high nor very low. Probably his family followed a superior trade, nearly all the members of such trades being allowed the right to the style noble (or gentle).

It is difficult for us coming from countries of feudal origin to realise the position. Moreover, the confusion is the source of some injustice to the Italians, whose multitudinous titular distinctions are with us a source of surprise and sometimes of ridicule. It must be remembered that in Italy nobility had nothing to do with feudal power and not always with the bearing of coat armour. To understand that circumstance we have to consider the condition of England, which has today become what Italy was in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a commercial country. Of the hereditary honours granted in the last birthday list, every single person so advanced is or was in some form of trade. So it was in Italy, two, three, and four hundred years ago, with this difference, that then all distinctions were granted much more freely, and as under the republics the only title (except a few Holy Roman ones) was that of *nobile* (equiva-

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lent to our *gentleman*) it may easily be seen how these have been increased and abused. In England, in spite of the *novi homines*, there are still some ancient houses left, and so there are in Italy. In neither case are they all either ancient or respectable.

This is of especial interest in respect to the status of the Bonapartes. It will be remembered that when Charles Bonaparte wished to place the future Emperor, then a boy of twelve years, at the military school of Brienne, it was necessary to prove that he was entitled to bear arms (*noblesse*) and that he was poor. The Brienne school was for the training of officers, who were educated free of cost. Charles did this by explaining that Italian ranks differed from French, but he showed he had the necessary qualification of four generations—with the coronet of a count. This statement has caused some of the guide-books wrongly to assert that the Bonapartes were counts of Fucecchio. As a matter of fact, there were not any such counts. And coronets are a comparatively new invention. English barons who are peers of the realm were not elevated thus until 1672, before which they wore the cap-of-maintenance, the

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ancient insignia of a tenant-in-chief. If I am not mistaken the cap of the doge of Venice is a cap-of-maintenance, or a development from it.

But in Italy above all other countries the rank coronet is misunderstood. I have seen a barone's crown worn by a marchese, a marchese's by a simple gentleman, and a count's by a barone. In fact, seldom is it correctly worn, which is a good enough thing, for, properly speaking, the coronet should signify areas of land governed, and should only belong to those who actually govern the respective territories.

At Fucecchio to-day I could find no people of the name, though one old man informed me that he remembered a Bonaparte who was a shoemaker. Obviously they have done better elsewhere.

Leaving this town by the road which crosses the wide Arno valley one passes through and under one of the most beautiful of avenues. Literally the trees form a complete roof above your head, making it the coolest of resorts in warm weather and one of the most lovely. Looking through the dark arch of trees I could discern high up on its rocky home the

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palace of the legates of the Emperor—the Holy Roman Emperor. Without undue historical imagination I was compelled by the situation to ponder on the curious fact that this later Empire of Rome, the creation of Charlemagne, one of the noblest conceptions of the human mind—did it not stand for unity and brotherhood?—came to naught, nay was the cause of bloodshed, superstition, and tyranny through ten centuries because the central authority lacked just one simple thing, *force*. Centralised power was required to compel the units to learn and to respect the great principles of unity and brotherhood of which it was a witness, and the Emperor had it not. Force, brute force, after all, is necessary in human affairs—even to protect our spoons—and I wonder if the conferences of the Hague, which in essence have the same object as had the Empire, namely fraternity, will be successful without it? Charlemagne, Cromwell, and Bonaparte thought otherwise. *Tempora mutantur et nos*, etc. etc.

The proverb says we change with the times—a superficial view: we evolve, both individual and race, harden or soften, but change

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never. I could illustrate this by many anecdotes, but, as Kipling says, that is another story.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Empoli : Hôtel Giappone ; rooms 1.50 frcs. ; lunch 2 frcs. ; dinner 3 frcs. ; pension 5 frcs. ; 10 per cent reduction for members of the Italian Touring Club.

Fucecchio : Hôtel de la Couronne, dinner 3 frcs., pension 5 frcs. Garage. Ten per cent reduction for members of the Italian Touring Club.

The road out of Florence runs by the Borgo San Jacopo to the Pisan Gate. For bicycling, however, there is a better way through the Cascine over the small bridge near the Indian Statue and thence along the embankments on the northern side of the Arno, to Signa.

Where you cross the south bank of river, this way is a difficult one for a stranger to find.

Distances : Lastra 8 miles, Empoli 20 miles, Fucecchio 27 miles.

CHAPTER IV—*Florence to Leghorn by Pontederra*

MY principal object in descending on the good town of Livorno (I wonder how in the world it became nicknamed Leghorn by the British : is it caused, perhaps, by an association of ideas with the appearance of the leg of Italy on the school maps?) was due to philanthropic mental aberration. A poor man in whom I had taken some interest had lost his all in the earthquake at Messina, and moreover his wife had been severely injured there. It happened that we were able to help him towards getting a job at Naples, but in the meantime, for reasons which belong to the inscrutable ways of governments, his wife had been sent to the hospital at Leghorn. As my refugee friend could not visit the poor woman, it was borne in on me that it would be a kindly thing if I did so. My adventures in search of her I will recount later.

I collected together a young friend of mine

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who is a good bicyclist, and an elderly one who suffers from a liver, as companions for this trip. You see I was in a philanthropic mood, and my philanthropy extended even to bad old men with quite unnecessary livers. It is true that I was told the expedition might finish him, so it did so far as bicycling with me was concerned, but also I had a strong feeling that it would improve his health. Indeed, it did this too, and he has been happily married since.

We started along the Pisan road from Florence, which I have described in another place, and taking a hurried lunch at Empoli, followed the main road towards San Miniato di Tedesco. For miles along this road the Castle of the Emperor's Legate, and the campanili of this quaint semi-circular village, can be seen looking down on the Arno valley and the innumerable villages and vineyards which this fruitful land produces.

One remembers in enjoying the real beauties of this scene, that all was not well with this happy land—even if all is well now—a few centuries ago. In this plain were decided some of the bloodiest of the battles fought between petty contending states, and we may be allowed to wonder how long the human

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race will endure even the modified and less frequent warfare of our own times. In the past these small states of Florence, of Pisa, of Lucca and Siena, were at least divided by difficulties in transport and intercommunication. Florence was farther from Lucca, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, than Berlin is from London at the present moment, and infinitely more distant in the human and kindly intercourse between man and man. Yet even now the silly old game of war goes on, and peoples are divided without knowing why they are divided.

Everyone should remember that it takes exactly the same number of hours to travel from London to Rome to-day as when our fathers were boys it took them to go from our capital to the north of England—and a county in our grandfathers' time was more essentially separate from another than is Russia from Germany, or Italy from England, in our present year of grace.

Many such subjects we discussed in pedalling along the valley of the Arno and over and along the spurs of the hills which here throw out these impedimenta in the track of the main road. We journeyed through S. Romano

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and between there and Rotta, passed by several handsome villas which before I had never seen. They are nearly all eighteenth-century ones, but must, from the situation commanding passes, have been built on the foundation of ancient fortresses, and in some cases with the stones, I imagine. The gradual evolution of the defensive castle into the peaceful country house is better seen in our English family architecture than elsewhere. In Italy either a castle was allowed to go to ruin, or, when the age of the policeman arrived, it was totally destroyed and a modern and somewhat bourgeois structure erected on its foundations, and often with its respectable stones.

At the village of Rotta, as also in Pontederra farther on, while passing these places by train, I had always noticed an abnormal number of children.

It seems that these, so my informant said, are employed in the cotton factories as half-timers, which, I should imagine, is not a good thing for them. But the question of child labour has not yet been solved in any country, though perhaps it is nearer solution in Germany than anywhere else.

The first sight of Pontederra from the hills,

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a few miles away, suggests to the observer a little Manchester, a cleaner Manchester it is true, and a small one. Big chimneys are visible everywhere, though the dryness of the air causes less smoke to linger. And in its way it is a little Manchester, for here are many of the cotton industries of Tuscany—the rising trade which is looked on with jealous eyes by some trading patriots among us. Yet really they need not fear competition, for the very charm of the Italian climate is a sufficient guarantee against any loss to us. Water has to be brought to moisten the cotton at enormous trouble and expense. In our country this is not necessary. Naturally, there is competition in the rougher work, there must be, and we should be a very greedy people if we found fault with it. Until our coal fields cease (for their coal has to be brought from Cardiff), and the enormous water power exploited, Italy can never become a purely industrial country, and when that time comes, I for one will not care to go there.

The people of the little industrial town of Pontederra are a free and independent lot, as I have experienced more than once while lunching and dining in their cheap restaurants. Yet they

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are extraordinarily receptive of kindly attention offered in the right spirit. For example, once it happened that I was having lunch at a cheap restaurant, and my neighbour was a workman of the superior artisan class. He took not the slightest notice of me on my entry, and I rather despaired of getting into friendly intercourse with him. Salt, or rather the absence of it, however, broke down our class barriers in this case. I could not find any, so I turned to him and said, "Signore, I beg you to pass me salt." At once he jumped up, there being no salt on our table, and seized the salt-cellar from another—and going one better, said, "Signor Marchese, I regret that I had not thought of this before." We chattered for half an hour on the best of terms.

This leads me to think that in England where, generally speaking, public manners are worse than in any other country in Europe—for in no country would you have seen what I witnessed to-day, namely, five men enter a restaurant, quite a restaurant of the rich, and pass table after table where ladies were seated without salutation and without uncovering—perhaps our rudeness is due to a sense of inferiority, not of superiority. They fear to

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salute because they think it may be a sign of servility. If this be true, probably the best antidote for this would be for the higher ranks to do the saluting first.

I cannot leave Pontederra without remembering what the free and independent citizens of this town did when I was here before, on a friendly inspection of the cotton works by invitation from my friend Mr. Dino Dini, their manager. There arrived Mr. Pierpont Morgan in a motor, and in the narrow street his car knocked over and injured a little boy. It was no police question there; the whole people rose in their might and held up the party, and the authorities had the greatest difficulty in preventing the populace from revenging themselves on the occupants of the offending motor. Now Mr. Morgan is the kindest of men, and I am sure he was as sorry for the accident as anyone could be, yet I am sure that the scrape he fell into at Pontederra, surrounded as he was by an angry crowd, had a more salutary effect on his chauffeur than many actions at law.

Especially in Italy is motoring dangerous, for the narrow streets in the villages, nearly always unadorned by pavements, make the

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approach of the inconsiderate motorist a real peril to the youngsters. For this reason I have never really enjoyed a motor ride in that country.

We had a late lunch, a second one, at Pontederra, and our elder friend being dead-beat, we packed him home to Florence in the train, and resumed our journey to Leghorn. But the road across the level plain, caused by siltage from the Arno, is not so simple as it appears on the map. The whole of this plain is gridironed by canals, either for navigation or irrigation, and the roads are of the worst, for the reason that the canals are of the best. It is easier to go by canal than by road, and much less fatiguing!

In this country one has at times, especially when the maize or the flax is growing high, the curious illusion of seeing three or four lateen-sailed boats apparently gliding over solid earth, the waterways being entirely hidden. I remember seeing a similar thing in the Suez Canal once, when a great liner appeared on the horizon steaming on and through the desert, no water being visible from where we watched her.

But our trip, though rough (for at many

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places we had to push our bicycles through the sand), was agreeable and interesting enough, and at nightfall we arrived at the gates of Leghorn. There was nothing to be done that night but to find accommodation, which we did at the Hotel Giappone, satisfy the inner man, which can be well done here, and sleep. Stay, something more was done, for in that digestive interval between food and bed we visited a cinematograph, the most realistic one I have seen. The subject was a bull-fight: it happens I have seen a real bull-fight in Spain and hated it from start to finish, but the representation of this sport, with its sickening and unchivalrous details, caused me to detest it more and more. For this reason: in the bull-fight I witnessed my mind was concentrated on, almost projected into, the contest in the ring. No one who has seen this show, if properly conducted, can refrain from admiring the courage and dexterity of the professionals who take a leading part in it. They are paid for it, it is true, but so is the soldier, and quite unduly the footballer.

Here in the bull-ring you have much of the formal and the picturesque courtesy of

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the Middle Ages—and were it not for the bull and his sufferings it would indeed be a noble sport. But the bull has not a chance in the end, nor have the poor horses—I respect the fighters, the matadors, the picadors, and the rest, I also feel intensely for the horses, and with my whole heart I am with the bull, on his side at all times and everywhere. But now as to the onlookers—the comfortable and safe onlookers at this strife. These the cinematograph gave me as I had not seen them in the Plaza del Torro at San Sebastian. While the horses were being disembowelled, while men for shillings were risking their lives, while a gallant animal was being badgered and driven for man's pleasure to his death, fair and apparently gentle women and little children were seen smiling and eating ices and bonbons in the boxes overlooking this carnage. This is what is really terrible in it, the human degradation of it, a side of it which I did not see in Spain, and only the humble cinematograph of Leghorn brought it home to me. In saying this, believe me, I have no share in our failing of national hypocrisy. I hate and despise the hunting English woman who sees a fox

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unearthed and broken up before her eyes without a shudder as much as I do the Spanish woman who rejoices in a kill of bull or horse. The whole thing to me is degrading. If these cruelties have to be, at least let us keep our women out of them and perform ourselves. For surely women and little children were never intended by Divine Providence to be butchers or the patrons and applauders of butchers. Really I am indebted to the proprietor of the cinematograph at Leghorn for having caused me to review my outlook on what is an important matter, so important indeed that it touches every spring of life.

The next morning I went early to see my friend the Consul, Mr. Carmichael, so well known as a writer on Italian subjects, and armed with his authority visited the two hospitals where the refugees had been taken. It seems incredible, but it is a fact, that though I had the woman's name and description, though I knew she was in a hospital in the place, yet the officials were unable to find her for me. So I wandered through innumerable wards to no purpose. We spent the rest of the day visiting different parts of the town, which is unique in one sense, for it is the only

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place I know which combines the interests of a commercial port with those of a pleasure and bathing resort. It will not be forgotten that its harbour was planned and constructed by an Englishman three centuries ago. Robert Dudley, called Duke of Northumberland on the Continent, had a remarkable and romantic career. The son, and I believe the eldest son, of Elizabeth's favourite, the Earl of Leicester, for some political reason he was refused acknowledgment by the Government and apparently by his father, so leaving England and deserting his wife, he retired to the Court of Tuscany, accompanied by one of Queen Elizabeth's maids of honour disguised as a page. He married this lady with the blessing of the Catholic Church, as the Pope conveniently refused to acknowledge the prior Protestant marriage, and they settled in Florence. The title of Duca di Northumberland was conferred on him by the Emperor (there is no reason to doubt that he was the heir to his father), so at the same time there were two Dukes of Northumberland, the one acknowledged on the Continent, the other accepted in England.

It was much the same position as at the

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present time exists in the Catholic and the Protestant branches of the order of St. John of Jerusalem, for if you are a knight of the former branch you can wear your insignia abroad but not in England, and if of the latter, in England but not on the Continent.

The Grand Duke of Tuscany became much attached to him, and it was owing to Dudley's enterprise that the Leghorn harbour was constructed. He was indeed an engineer of no mean ability. As to the recreative and social side of Leghorn there are few places to equal it in attractiveness. Three miles of bathing, with innumerable establishments along the whole line, fine gardens to the water's edge, and all the popular amusements which are to be found in such places in Italy. Before leaving Leghorn I visited the "Factory" cemetery—the English colony was styled "the Factory" in times past—where are buried a considerable number of representatives of all classes of Britons. Up to comparatively recent years it was the only burial place in the country for Protestants, it being a free port, consequently all our non-Catholic compatriots who died in Italy were taken there for interment. A most interesting little history of this cemetery has

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been written by my friend Mr. Montgomery Carmichael.

We returned by train to Florence that night.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Empoli, see chapter iii.

Leghorn : Hotel Giappone, with excellent restaurant.

CHAPTER V—*Certaldo, Siena, and Val
d' Elsa.*

SOME time ago it was our privilege to be asked to stay at the house of an English lady at Certaldo. Our hostess had bought all the inhabitable part of the old castle, which can be seen from the railway to Siena crowning the hill in the centre of the little town. But she had done more than purchase a mediæval stronghold, for she had made it into a comfortable residence, and had introduced into that part of the world not only some of the comforts of English country-house life, but the hospitality and amenities which we are accustomed to associate with such a dwelling in our land. Our hostess had made friends with all classes, and entertained them all in patriarchal fashion. Therefore, at any rate to me fresh from Africa, no house could have been more congenial. We had balls for the gentry and the better sort of townsfolk, advocates, and Government officials, and games for the youngsters, while



VILLAGE LIFE.

to read
around it

Certaldo, Siena, and Val d' Elsa

an excellent little theatre was erected in which the natural talent of the Italians for acting was very charmingly displayed. Indeed, the *castello* itself was an inspiration in such work, for had not Boccaccio dwelt for some time in one of the towers?

The first dance I was privileged to attend there remains in my memory. The guests consisted of a marchese or two, a few lawyers, one or two of the leading merchants in the town, all, of course, with their families. The latter generally were handsome young ladies and men attired in a variety of styles, which pleasantly recalled the fashion plates from 1840 to 1860.

The company was quite obviously composed of different orders, and I am quite sure many of these excellent people were saying to themselves that "it is curious we should have been asked to meet so-and-so." But having been asked, they all behaved amiably.

It was not easy for some of us with a limited knowledge of the language of Dante to help our kind hostess in her hospitable efforts. A brilliant idea struck me. It happened that we had bought a book on Italian conversation, the author of which

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assured the world in his preface that every requirement of modern life was dealt with in his dialogues. That night I danced with many very charming ladies, and every word addressed to them was from this book. The questions were somewhat startling at times, but it really did not matter, for I could not follow the answers. At any rate it is fairly certain that had I been a Voltaire I could hardly have expected to create more amusement.

But we made many friends there, and one of my pleasantest recollections of the place is the fact that during my election fight in England I heard that many of the Certaldo people were following with interest the course of that distant battle.

Surrounding the hill on which the *castello* of Certaldo is situate there are crowded the poorest houses of the town, and poverty can be very severe in these small places. Just as in old days the unprotected came for safety close up to the walls of the feudal stronghold, so now they occupy the same place and often the same houses. And what dwellings they are ! I have seen much of the condition of the outcast in London, and indeed nothing can be

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more terrible than the lives of the workers in our mammoth city ; yet here in sunny Italy habitations as vile and insanitary can be seen where few of the decencies and none of the comforts of modern existence are possible. These people and their children I saw much of while staying there, and possibly I made myself a nuisance to my hostess in so doing, for they got to look upon me as a friend, and in regarding me in that capacity they were, no doubt, sometimes troublesome.

Of the house party there were several who were as interested in visiting the Val d' Elsa as myself. A retired English general and his two charming daughters at one time came to us and visited many of the places around ; at another four very lively and attractive American girls from school in Florence, whose vitality caused us to renew our youth, and again two studious undergraduates from Oxford.

At last, however, arrived here a man with whom I could walk, bicycle, and incidentally talk. The first expedition we made was to San Gimignano, that hill-town of towers, and thence through Poggibonsi to Siena. The road from Certaldo to San Gimignano crosses the river Elsa, and gradually ascends the hills on the

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left bank of this stream. Our start was early, and the rising sun shone behind the thirteen towers of San Gimignano as we approached this fortalice. Someone has said that this place is no more beautiful than is a manufacturing town in Lancashire or Staffordshire, and that its turrets resemble nothing more than the high chimneys of commercial places. There is much truth in the criticism, but none in its intention, for Turner and Ruskin knew what this critic did not know, that there can be as much beauty in Stockton, Stafford, or Blackpool, as in Rome, if you have eyes to see it. Nevertheless the fact remains that it is not what you take out of a view which counts, but what you put into it; and undoubtedly San Gimignano calls up visions of mediæval warfare, while Stockton reminds one of the eternal struggle for "daily bread." And we forget that "daily bread" was as important to the becomingly dressed persons of the fifteenth century as it is to the homely clad ones of the twentieth.

San Gimignano is a delightful town, charming in situation, full of the artistic treasures of early Italy, and beyond aught else characteristic of the conditions of life in the fourteenth

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and fifteenth centuries. Here you recognise at once the presence of a small community, of a self-supporting state in fact, with all the pride which such a condition of affairs engenders.

Strong in position and self-reliant—and yet its conquest by the ever-encroaching forces of modernism (some call it commercialism) was inevitable! But the local patriotism, the overmastering feeling of originality, now, I believe, called “village pumpism,” is there, and forcibly there—and the worshippers of bigness stand aghast. We are told we belong to a great Empire, fall down and pay reverence to it, while all the time we are thinking not of an empire or a country, but of a castle, a suburban villa, or a cottage, which to us is a more important thing than the Empire is to a Briton, or United Italy is to an inhabitant of San Gimignano.

From here we had a pleasant descent to the old frontier town of Poggibonsi, the frontier between the two contending republics of Florence and Siena. One remembers how they fought for it, and how the good inhabitants played off their position on the contending parties. Now it is all peace, or as peaceful as it could be on market day.

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The road to Siena leads through the town and follows the beautiful valley of the Elsa for some four kilometres and then to the left to the delightful little ancient town of Staggia-Senese, if you please, and still of Siena in sentiment. A little beyond this may be observed a hill to the left of the road with what appear to be the ruins of a great castle dominating it. This is Monteregione, of which history has much to say ; for was it not taken and retaken by Florentine and Sienese times without number ? Now it appears deserted until you pass through the gate, whereupon the visitor is startled by finding a populous village within the precincts of the ancient castle walls.

From here it is but a pleasant ride to Siena partly through a forest, partly between vineyards. But of this I must speak another time. We returned by tram somewhat late, and on our approach to the great gate of the castle of Certaldo were surrounded by the dirtiest but most charming crowd of children clamouring for coppers. We escaped without much financial loss, however, and the great door clanged behind us, sounding in its emphasis the eternal note to the little ones, no more—no more.

CHAPTER VI—*From Florence to Ravenna, Ferrara, and Venice*

WITH a few days to spare and a trusty bicycle a great deal can be accomplished. So from Florence in spring I started on my jaunt with only as much luggage as my long-enduring wheel would carry. I decided to make no scheme of route, but to go where fancy listed.

Taking the road over the Apennines to Faenza, my first halt was the ancient mountain village of Maraddi, and, as in most of these upland communities, I found a place undefiled by the tourist. Maraddi, with its quaint, if sombre, houses overhanging a torrential stream, certainly lacks nothing of the picturesque. And the people were curiously in harmony with the scene, and extraordinarily polite to the stranger. Wherever I have wandered through the rugged and beautiful valleys of Northern Italy, it has been my fortune to meet with sympathetic people and, no less a consideration, inns good and clean.

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Here the *albergo*, formerly no doubt a palace of some petty noble, possesses a fine hall, now a kitchen through which one passes to the dwelling part of the house, and on through awesome rooms of magnificent proportions, until one is projected into a cheery and well-lit dining-room of the conventional type. The landlady, a stout and jovial person, attended by her husband as aide-de-camp, welcomed me with a smile, and rapidly produced a comfortable meal.

My sole comrade at the inn was of the commercial traveller genus, a lively being who seemed to conduct his business pleasantly by means of the ubiquitous bicycle. His conversation, or such of it as penetrated to my British hardened brain, seemed in praise of his English goods made in Germany from his depôt at Milan.

Leaving the next morning the steep and stony streets of this town, I made my way down the valley of the Lamone, a charming ride through a charming country. The valley itself gradually widens out, and in it villages are scarce, though from the number of small white farms on the hillsides and the solitary chapels by the roadside, one must believe that it is a well-peopled

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country. These peasant farmers of Italy are to me a continual source of interest. When I think of the parlous condition of our own country-side, their tiny farms of thirty or forty acres, their large and pretty families, and withal the decent comfort in which they live, invariably give me pause. Indeed, in appearance these people resemble not a little our own peasantry, the round fair type seeming to prevail. Our insular prejudice and cant have caused us to believe this people idle. All I can say about this is—and I know the life of the Italian farmer well—that I wish I had a little more of their complaint.

But to resume my pedalling. Presently I passed through the charming village of Fognano, perched up on a precipitous rock overlooking the Lamone river and the valley. Here, while snapshotting, I was surrounded by a well-bred, interested, and altogether charming little audience of children. Their large enquiring blue eyes were fixed on my camera, and the few questions I put to them were answered with delightful frankness. But this village has other interest to me than that of its youthful inhabitants. Here it was, if I remember rightly, that our freebooting compatriot, Sir

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John Hawkwood, and his merry men, four hundred and fifty years ago or so, received a rebuff in their attempt to storm the stronghold. Indeed, from a military point of view, one wonders that so experienced a warrior should have attempted so threatening a place. I suppose he had had so few reverses in a singular life of adventure, crime, and generosity, that he had come to believe himself irresistible.

We soon pass through another village of a similar kind, Brisighella by name, and thence from a mountain valley of the Apennines to the flat Romagnian plain. The country, as we proceed northwards, reminds one not a little of Holland. Here are the same straight tree-lined roads, the innumerable canals, the country well wooded and laid out with geometrical exactitude. In a month hence, however, the resemblance will be less striking, for even now (I am recalling the month of May, when I was making my ramble) they are beginning to festoon the vines. No doubt later we shall find here scenes reminding a Londoner of the stage effects of an Italian opera.

Far off over the trees are now seen some

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stately and massive towers, which from their numbers I conclude belong to the city of Faenza, and as we approach the ancient gate, and move through the narrow streets, we remember the place for its pillage and looting by Sir John Hawkwood. Though evidently this act of our enterprising compatriot has been not a little exaggerated by the chroniclers, nevertheless there is no doubt that some four thousand persons were wantonly put to death, and that there were other enormities not to be mentioned here.

As a pure matter of business—and our fourteenth-century mercenaries were, above all, men of business—here they must have reaped a golden harvest, for Faenza in the Middle Ages was noted as a centre of industry. What puzzles me, however, is how these gentry secured their loot. Did they bury it, or spend it there and then? At any rate silver and gold plate is not an easy thing with which to trek over a hostile country.

Faenza is walled and gated, and has a long and narrow arcaded *piazza* for its central point. This is somewhat grotesquely named—this fifteenth-century square—after an estimable monarch of the nineteenth. It is as if

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the London County Council renamed Tower Hill after Gladstone or Disraeli. This exuberant energy in anachronism has been displayed everywhere by the municipal councils of the new Italy.

After paying a visit to the principal churches and having a talk at the inn over lunch with several of the neighbouring farmers about (for it was market day), I mounted, and took the road towards Ravenna and the Adriatic.

The road is straight and good, the country seemingly very fruitful. The only village of any size which I passed was Rossi, which has at least one gate of architectural interest. After a twenty-mile ride we reached the walls of Ravenna about four.

One cannot help being surprised at the smallness of Ravenna, once the capital of the Western Empire and the seat of Theodoric's rule. After stabling my machine at the hotel, I sought at once the sixth-century mosaics in the churches of San Vitale, Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, and in the tomb of Galla Placidia. Indeed, these are beyond comparison the most wonderful examples of early art which it has been my fortune to view. As fresh as if they had been made yesterday, the colours as pro-

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found and as clear as any in the pictures of Raphael, and the designs, especially the one of the Virgin and Child in Sant' Apollinare, exquisitely drawn when the difficulty to be overcome is considered—these together cause one to rub one's eyes and wonder whether it is really true that they were made before Ethelbert founded the Northumbrian kingdom. I do not know anything, except perhaps some of the lighter wall sketches at Pompeii, that throws the mind back to past ages as completely as do these same mosaics.

But perhaps the octagonal basilica of San Vitale, perfect as it is in its proportions, is the early monument of chief interest both from its intrinsic beauty and from the fact that it was built as far back as the reign of the Emperor Justinian. It is a perfect example of Oriental architecture.

Ravenna has other interests owing to its having been the favourite residence of Byron as well as the long resting-place of Dante. Many stories are current here as to Byron's life in the town, and from all these it would appear that much of his life was devoted to good works and kindly acts. Part of the house in which the English poet lived is now

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given up to a "Sports Club," a somewhat curious development for the residence of one who, as far as I remember, was but little of a sportsman. The rest of the house is now a café, and in it I was witness of an amusing and very animated discussion between some of the townspeople. The subject was political, and, I should imagine, of a very extreme order. During the discussion a farmer came in to speak to a man who looked like a commercial traveller, and here, as elsewhere in Italy, I was struck with the condescending, even overbearing manners of the citizen in addressing the agriculturist.

Remembering that in our country the farmer despises the tradesman, one cannot help wondering whether this attitude in Italy is due to the fact that the centre of gravitation and power has from a very early period been in the cities rather than in the country.

Before leaving Ravenna it is perhaps necessary to remind the military reader that this place has a special interest in military history. In the war between the Spaniards and the French the infantry of the former beat the knights and cavalry of France under Gaston

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de Foix. Here died the idea of cavalry as a tactical force. Afterwards it became a valuable strategical arm, however.

I left Ravenna at 8 o'clock in the morning, taking the road to Ferrara on the only wet day of my tour. It is a level country, of course, and the roads are good. My appearance on a bicycle in a brown hat of Boer suggestion, a cavalry mackintosh, and gaiters, was a source of unfailing but kindly curiosity to the inhabitants. The several villages as far as Argenta, where I lunched, were of comparatively little interest for a country in which nearly every hamlet has a history of its own. The little town of Argenta has some two thousand people in it, the greater portion of the males being engaged, when I entered it, in loosing off guns and squibs in noisy honour of Christ being risen. It was the Saturday after Good Friday. A rather odd way of saluting the Prince of Peace. Argenta is a quaint place, and has at least two good towers and an ancient gate. I wondered how it acquired its name, but the inhabitants could not tell me, nor the guide-book. Here for one and a half francs I had an excellent meal, including the palatable wine of the country.

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From this place to Ferrara the roads had become truly wretched, the rain having had time to convert them into sloughs of mud. I do not pretend to have seen Ferrara. I was anxious to push on to Padua by train that night. Nevertheless there was time to visit perhaps the most ideal castle in Europe, the most magnificently domineering military structure it is possible to imagine. If you recall the early imaginings of your youth in respect to castles, stimulated by such reading as that of Scott and Harrison Ainsworth, then you can figure to yourself the castle of Ferrara. In the centre of the town, moated, machicolated, and bastioned, it rears itself up a giant among pigmies, a Gulliver armed cap-à-pie in the midst of peaceful and mercantile Lilliputians. It is verily the dream of a castle.

Late that night I arrived at Padua, and in the early morning I visited the Palazzo della Ragione. With its arches and *loggia* it is one of the most characteristically mediæval Italian buildings in the country, and for beauty of line and curve I should think hardly surpassed.

The fruit market is on one side of this colossal hall, lending to the scene that colour

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and life which in Italy so often adds beauty to the most magnificent of monuments.

I arrived in Venice by eleven, in time to attend the Easter service at St. Mark's, a religious effort devoid of a devotional result, for owing to the crowd I was penalised throughout the service by the pointed end of an old lady's umbrella in the small of my back.

This was my first visit to the Queen of the Adriatic since she lost her Campanile, and I was much struck by the height which the façade has gained by the absence of the dominating tower. I suppose I am a Goth, but I prefer the church as it is now.

Having but twenty-four hours to give to the city, I refrained from revisiting any of the well-known sights, contenting myself with exploring the out-of-the-way corners on the southern side of the Grand Canal. Yet I had time for a flying visit to the Lido, and an equally rapid survey of the new Art Exhibition. I had never seen the place so full of curiously dressed tourists. Our own country people are usually eccentric enough in this respect, but, though it may be prejudice, yet I think they are surpassed by the Germans

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and Austrians. Sitting at Florian's Café, it was my fortune to see Monsieur Tartarin de Tarascon in the flesh. As my waiter said, "he is certainly Tartarin, *mais il vient d'Autriche*"—a stout and short figure, clothed in a green velvet hat with a white feather, grey hunting-tunic faced with light blue, brown knickerbockers, putty leggings, and a red tie. Around him and about him were strung many things, knives, alpenstocks, ice-axes, etc., as heterogeneous a collection indeed as some of us took to South Africa and left behind us on the veld.

I was very much struck also by observing the manœuvres of a young Italian beau, very young and exquisite, and so assured of his irresistibility in respect to the fair sex, that he should have been employed by Government as a type to copy—or as a warning.

But the more one sees of these people the more one is impressed with their great good nature. Walking in one of the narrowest of the alleys, I noticed a dirty little errand boy trundling a barrow, and unable to push it over a bridge. Two smart young Italians, yellow-gloved and taper-waisted, were passing, and without a moment's hesitation took the boy's

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burden from him, and helped him out of his difficulty.

What a wonderfully speculative people it is ! Not to speak of the lotteries and *tombola* which are advertised everywhere, and the boys playing on walls for centime pieces, I was further amused by standing at a barrow in one of the lowest streets and watching youngsters of from five to nine years gambling at a sort of roulette for sweets and toys. And their excitement was intense as the wheel spun round and losses or gains were made.

One thing struck me in the hotels crowded by our countrymen, namely that the English voice is changing. We used to have some pride in a certain softness of tone, modulation and self-restraint in our voices.

Now, however, it seems that the voices, especially of those who are more gaudily dressed, have taken a shriller and harsher note. I am thinking now of two people, a man and a woman, who breakfasted in the same room with me at our hotel on the Grand Canal. I was as far away from them as anyone in that large room could be, and there were any number of small tables between us, occupied by people of various nationalities ; yet it was im-

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possible for me, with the best intention in the world, to lose one syllable of their conversation. What made it particularly exasperating was that it was a discourse of a kind in which no one, not even themselves, I should imagine, could in any way be interested, for it was about stale and unprofitable parties which they had attended during the season before, then nearly a year ago. Nevertheless they spoke in a way to suggest that they were giving us a treat by allowing us to listen to their experiences in what no doubt they considered was the world of fashion, probably, nay certainly, Bayswater! Something really ought to be done to get rid of the "smart" voice, even if we have to bear with the vulgarities of the "smart" people.

Before leaving Venice, I was privileged to entertain at dinner an American ladies' school. There is no scandal in this! I had met the mistress of the school in Florence, and finding her charges in Venice, some of us had a cheery little dinner together.

I was amused beyond measure at the poor opinion some of my young friends entertained of English youth. They had met two especially shy and awkward young Oxford "men" at a country-house recently, and, as they said, had

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these been Americans they would have been at the feet of some of the girls in twenty-four hours. Our undergraduates preserved, however, a shy self-restraint which was puzzling and exasperating to my young friends. Perhaps, however, under the cool demeanour these undergraduates concealed an ardent passion. I explained to the young ladies that the youths were probably, however, what in my time were called "smugs," and that this class as a rule was without imagination or even human affection, and had to do the best I could to vindicate my countrymen in the eyes of these fair American cousins by my personal homage, for which no doubt I shall be rewarded with the Imperial Service Order.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Hotels and Restaurants :

From May to October : Villa Bagnolo, Rifredo, Appennino Mugellese. Nearest railway station, S. Piero a Sieve (Florence-Faenza line). 3000 ft. above the sea. Pension from 6 francs. Mr. Bartlett Begg, manager.

Marradi : Albergo Lamone.

Faenza : Albergo della Corona.

Ravenna : Hotel Roma, Hotel Byron, Café Byron.

Argenta : Hotel d' Italia.

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Hotels and Restaurants (continued):

Ferrara : Hotel Stella d' Oro.

Padua : Hotel Stella d' Oro.

Venice : Hotel Roma, Grand Canal (prices moderate).

Roads :

Leave Florence by the Porta S. Gallo (by the Via Cavour).
Borgo S. Lorenzo 16 miles. Marradi 39 miles. (A rough
up-and-down road, chiefly up.)

From Marradi

to Brisighella 15 miles.

to Faenza 23 miles.

to Ravenna 48 miles.

From Ravenna

to Argenta 25 miles.

to Ferrara 20 miles.

Good bicycling roads all the way from Florence ; no
reasonable man need fear the inns, even the meanest of them.

CHAPTER VII—*Venice, and return by Mantua, Parma, Bologna to Florence*

MY stay at Venice (no doubt owing to the attractions of the American school *en tour*, and no less my sincere interest in the ways of the people, and the lowest of the people there) had, from the proposed twenty-four hours, extended to three days. Moreover, I had encountered a young naval officer, the Count L——, who was in charge of the Marconi station, and he, it is true, interested me in the “fairy tales of science” connected with his especial work. I visited his station, which, though an effective one, cannot throw out messages to any great distance, but what he told me (and I have only his authority for it, though I have no reason to doubt his good faith), that he could often at nights pick up messages intended for England from America, and which, I presume, had overshot their mark, certainly surprised me. If this be true one wonders where the privacy of life will be in

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the future, now that stray messages can wander over Europe in this irresponsible fashion.

But owing to the delay here—it will be remembered that my holiday on a bicycle was made in the interval between sending in the manuscript of a certain book and receiving the proofs for correction—I determined to take the train to Mantua, and thence bicycle as far as I could to Florence. Late in the afternoon I started for the City in the Lake, and arrived there just in time for the table d'hôte at the "Golden Cross." I found my reception at this inn quite all that I expected in the ancient city—mine host, an elderly man, really seemed to take a personal interest in his guests, and took it upon himself to see them to their rooms. It is in this that the new hotel, gaudily magnificent as it is, can never equal the older and more homely one. In the latter you feel that you are a personage, in the former you are a number. I wonder when the great hotels in England will learn this true art of hotel-keeping—practised even in some of the equally large or larger hotels in Switzerland and Italy, that to the guest arriving after a long journey, the personal equation, the friendly and courteous reception is everything.

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It is no equivalent for the lack of this that you may have a gaudily fitted bathroom, or the *système moderne* in every other matter, for if you are coldly received by a supercilious hotel clerk all the rest goes for nothing. The traveller wants human and personal consideration, which makes him feel that he is a welcome guest and not a money-spending unit only.

I throw this out as a hint to the management of some big hotels I know where, though they exploit your name in the newspapers as an advertisement for their establishment, yet while you are in it they appear to ignore your existence.

At dinner that night in this delightfully quaint and historic city we were all thrilled by the incongruous arrival of an enormous motor-car, filled with blatant Americans. They simply poured out of it, talking, and as far as I could gather, complaining of everything they had seen or experienced in Italy. There was nothing right from the hotels to the cathedrals. Of course everything was better in Chicago! There is a certain sort of American, as there is a certain sort of Englishman, whom a true philanthropist ought to shoot

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on sight for the sake of the others—for the sake of the others! It really is quite as naughty to destroy your dreams as it is to commit ordinary homicide, and these people are the iconoclasts of dream-idols. Their presence literally degrades the world into a loathly, gruesomely mean place when you have just made of it a palace of joy, a goodly heritage. It is a bigger crime to kill ideals than to kill men, and it has a much more lasting effect.

At any rate these screaming, grumbling, egregious gentry spoilt my taste for dinner, so to be rid of them I strolled out into the arcaded streets and found my way to the keep of the city of the Gonzagas. In one of these threatening streets no doubt it was that the Admirable Crichton was done to death, and it was more the pity, for he left a world he adorned and loved, where life was really worth living before the invention of vulgar English and Americans in self-propelled tin-kettles.

It is certain I am becoming as dyspeptic and as grumbling as the Americans themselves, but the truth is the Admirable Crichton and modern vulgarity do not assimilate, so my mental digestion is upset.

I noted with pleasure the policemen of

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Mantua who parade the streets in a dress which I had previously considered belonged exclusively to the Grand Inquisitors and their myrmidons. It is to be hoped that the municipality will never allow these dresses to be modernised, for they are so delightfully in harmony with the whole place.

The next morning after visiting the usual churches (for detailed accounts of these please refer to guide-books), I started early again, passing the old keep, of which I took some futile snapshots, and followed the road to Borgo Forte. I had especially wished to pay a visit to Virgil's farm, with a view to seeing how uncomfortable the tormentor of my youth must have been in a farm which was constantly liable to be washed away by the river Po, but after passing through many impossible lanes gave it up and returned to the highroad. This latter highway is here, and for miles, almost French in its characteristics, as straight as a die, as flat as a billiard table, and lined by the inevitable poplar. Quite clearly the strong hand of Napoleon is seen in one way or another from Constanti-nople to Calais. What a man!

As we near the great river of the Po, more

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and still more are the evidences of man's attempt at defence against nature visible. This stream, coming straight from the high Alps as it does, is for this reason of variable conduct. From a shallow, inoffensive river in the winter, it rises to a height of general naughtiness in the spring.

The low-lying country would be at the mercy of the river god were it not that he has been strait-laced by these miles and miles of banks. During the financial crisis in Italy in the early nineties of last century, a friend of mine remarked that the banks of the Po were the only ones in the country which had not smashed. But these are a nuisance to the traveller, because they close in his view of the country which he has come to see. I overcame this difficulty, for I did not wish to be imprisoned like the river, by finding quite a good path on one of the banks, and as it seemed to lead in the way I wished to go, I followed it. This action of mine brought me a friend. Uncertain of my way, I looked out for someone to catechise, and presently I saw an old man, apparently digging into the bank on which I rode. He had a sort of band on his cap, and so I pre-

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sumed that he was an official of some kind. So he proved to be, for he was a guardian of the defences, employed to see that the ramparts were secure. In appearance, however, he looked like a general of the "Grande Armée," with his bristling moustache and his long white imperial. To him I spoke. "Signore, is this the way to Borgo Forte?" "Ci, signoria, straight on and then to the left." Now the expression "signoria," though frequently used by the peasantry, is seldom used by officials, however humble. It means something like "your lordship," more common of course, and granted as a courtesy and not as a right, and it interested me because of its historic connection. Moreover, the old man fascinated me with his keen eyes, his martial appearance, and the obviously useful work he was doing.

So I dismounted for a chat with him. He told me he had been a soldier in four campaigns, had fought at Montebello and Milan, had fought hereby at Borgo Forte even, and now in the evening of his days had been made by the Government he had served so well a sentinel of the river. It was a good ending to a patriotic career, and I wish that

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we had some posts of the kind to give our ancient warriors in England instead of making of them flunkeys at shop doors and messengers of the humbler sort. I see red whenever a man with four or five medals on his breast hands me to a cab or opens the door for me to enter a fashionable restaurant. Where is the reward of patriotic service? However, leaving my friend, I pedalled on towards Borgo Forte, and presently arrived there.

Sure enough, as my warrior had told me, here is a monument to some Austrians who had been killed at this place, clearly in defending the passage of the Po. For from here to the river is but a short way, and arriving at it I found a bridge of boats, which is the means by which the road travellers cross. There is, of course, a high railway bridge, but up to now it has been found more convenient to have a boat bridge for the others, owing to the change of levels of the waters. It is a picturesque scene, this passage of the historic river, and if we forget the railway bridge it is not difficult to imagine oneself back a century or two.

From this point I followed the road up the stream to the quaint village of Luzzaro, and

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thence to the little "Grand Ducal" town of Guastalla. Is the story remembered of the fair Pauline Bonaparte and the worried Emperor? Pauline, the favourite and spoilt sister of the creator of kings, had just heard that Elizabeth, her sister, had been made Grand Duchess of Tuscany, and a desire to be a Grand Duchess, too, possessed her. Why should all her family have kingdoms and she be left out? So she went to the Emperor, who was engaged in planning the conquest of the world, and in tears she besought him to give her a kingdom all to herself. One can imagine the pitying patience of the Great Man, weighed down by responsibilities greater than ever were borne before by one of the human race, while listening to the little grievance of the loved one. "You are appointed Grand Duchess of Guastalla, Pauline; you can go to your territory." And she went, but found not the pomp of a court and the dignity of cringing ministers of state, but a little walled city governed by a fat Sindaco and his attendant city councillors. Poor Pauline, I fancy she hardly appreciated the humour of her great brother!

However, Guastalla is by no means a place

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which anyone less ambitious than the Princess need disdain to govern. A quaint little town, with many churches and picturesque campanili, walled and gated as of old time, and as I saw it on market day, full of bustle and importance. I lunched there in the company of some farmers, and with them discussed the agricultural problems of the universe. At table there were not only four agriculturists, but two commercial travellers and an officer of Carabinieri, and on entry into this select circle I was much impressed by the formality of the reception. As I sat down they each and all bowed to me quite courtly bows worthy of a Grand Ducal town, and I returned them with due solemnity. We all drank each other's healths, and before the end of an excellent meal had become quite good comrades.

Leaving my new friends and the little town with regret, I cycled on the road to Parma, keeping near to the river as far as Brescello, but there struck south and west. Near the latter town I encountered a boy who was having much difficulty with his bicycle. Alighting, I lent him a hand. His name was Pio. He was the son of a small restaurant keeper in

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the village of Brescello, and he was returning from Parma, where he had gone for supplies. He volunteered to go back with me to Parma to show me the best road. This I vetoed, for it would have involved his being very late in his return home. However, he rode a little way back with me, and I was glad of his company.

It is wonderful the politeness one receives sometimes on the road. Some years since I was bicycling through Arras towards Lille, and those who know that country will remember that the highroads are cobbled for miles. Tired of these dreadful stones I went into a small bicycle shop hoping to be told of some side road by which I could avoid the eternal bumping of the cobbles. The man said: "Wait a moment, monsieur, two of my boys will show you the way." And they did, for they rode sixteen kilometres with me and would not accept a sou or even a drink as a reward.

The road to Parma from here is flat of course, and were it not for the frequent villages, the signs of prosperity, the friendliness of the people, and the distant views of the high Apennines, it would be uninteresting

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enough. But in Italy, to those who have eyes to see and hearts to understand, the country is never dull, it is too full of world history and of a kindly people. The most lovely scenes to me are made repellent if the inhabitants look sullen, hostile, or discontented!

It was sunset as I arrived in sight of the domes and spires of Parma. The whole landscape, wide as it is, was tintured by the setting sun; the church tower gleamed, the windows twinkled like stars, and I was tempted, as never before, to throw up everything and remain in this fair and cheerful land.

In my pocket I had a wire from England calling me back to political work—my duty. I began to dream that duty was but self-love; that it really mattered not at all whether I took part in wordy warfare with generally prejudiced and often ignorant men; that duty was a delusion and a snare to keep one in a groove and force one to do uncongenial tasks. Why should I not stay and help these people who seem so much more grateful than my own? And then I shook myself and awoke to remember I was an Englishman, and so went in under the great gates of Parma in my right (or possibly my wrong) mind.

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At the hotel that night I was lucky enough to meet two very agreeable officers, professors at the military school here, and they, of course, were immensely interested in anything I could tell them of the Boer War. It would have given me considerable pleasure to have accepted their kind invitation to visit the college, had not that horrid boggy-man of duty now enforced my departure early the next morning.

After dinner, when taking my leisure at the café, watching the quiet animated crowd of officers, soldiers, civilians, male and female, who paraded in front for our inspection, I noticed next me a man who in twenty minutes consumed, I believe this is true, three absinthes. He was a fine-looking elderly man, evidently well bred, so presently we found ourselves in conversation. With that delightful absence of false reserve which characterises his people, he told me within the first five minutes that he was (1) a count; (2) an orphan; (3) a poor noble, the head of an ancient house; (4) where he lived; (5) and that his only near relative was a sister, who resided with him. In the same way he expected the same frank expansiveness from me, and this I offered him,

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as far as an Anglo-Norman could. We sat up chatting for a long time. Later I learnt his whole history from some friends in Parma, and it was sad enough, for his father had been killed before his birth in '48, fighting the Republicans, and the mother, and the child when it arrived, had for many years in those upsetting times barely enough to eat. Eventually he was given a commission, and money came in from somewhere.

It is possible that the reader before this has discovered that I am far from having the tastes of the ordinary sightseer. To me at least, speaking generally, living men are more interesting than most dead things, whether works of art or not. But all those things which vividly recall the life of the past or the thoughts of men of antiquity have a peculiar fascination for me. For this reason in my estimation of the many wonders of Parma there is not one to equal the Tabula of the Emperor Trajan, on which are inscribed his gifts of land for the maintenance of 290 poor children in the unfair proportion of rather more than five boys to one girl. It is a very human document and gift, and it might have been made to-day by a prudish and munificent

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philanthropist, for it carefully distinguishes between legitimate children and bastards, the latter receiving considerably less than the former. However, there is this to be said, that under Roman Law divorce and legitimation were so easy that the numbers of irregularly born children cannot have been considerable.

I found time to visit this and a few churches before starting next morning, and I confess to the greatest admiration of Correggio's *Assumption* in spite of its many detractors. I suppose that I resemble a friend of mine who was discovered in absorbed attention when a lady was playing something difficult from Wagner. As it was well known that he did not know one note of music from another, I enquired of his wife what possessed him. "Oh, it is not the music he cares for, but he is much interested in the mechanism of playing," she replied. So with me in respect to this picture : though I admire also the grand colouring (it must have been glorious before it was allowed to fall into decay), my mind in looking at it is chiefly exercised by the marvellous perspective and the extraordinary width, almost universality, of it.

Towards ten o'clock I jumped on to my

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bicycle and started south-eastward along the Æmilian Way, towards Bologna. On the right for all this ride you have the peaks of the Apennines as neighbours, and I thought I recognised some old and friendly peaks, especially Cimone and Tre Potense up above the Abétone. Rapidly along this historic road, first made eighty-seven years before Christ, which has supported Roman legions on their way to the conquest of Gaul and of Britain, I pedalled, passing the delightful vine-village of S. Ilario to Reggio. Here I dismounted for a little 'sight-seeing and stumbled upon that wonderful church of cupolas and frescoes—the Madonna della Ghiara. I had never before seen so many of these wall-paintings in one church ; indeed, the whole interior was ablaze with them, some appearing especially good to my unpretending eyes. Then I visited the house where Ariosto was born, and walked through the quaint market-place and streets. Then, duty calling on again, through a hemp-growing country to the delightful old fortified village of Rubiera.

On my arrival all the children of the place were playing ball on a green at the foot of the ruined keep, and I joined in a game of catch,

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and discovered to my satisfaction that I could do it rather better than the youngsters. The Italian children in the villages play with remarkable energy many complicated games, and I think their teachers have not adopted the vicious system of making the play compulsory. I cannot imagine a better means of giving children a distaste for healthy exercise than that of forcing them to join whether they wish to or not. I remember the only period of my life when football was made distasteful to me was when at school I was commanded to take part in the game.

This is one reason why many clear thinkers and convinced advocates of peace are in favour of universal military training. The element of compulsion causes a distaste for militarism.

At a homely but comfortable little inn I lunched, drinking the sparkling sweet red wine of Modena for the first time, and having for dessert the excellent sponge-cake which is a speciality of the place. Afterwards strolling out into the garden I discovered a party, of which the village doctor and a Signor Barone were the chiefs, playing an absorbing game of bowls.

This little village of Rubiera has played its

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part in history, for placed near the frontier of the states of Modena and Parma, it got a good deal more of the mediæval kicks than it did of its halfpence.

I started for Modena about two o'clock, and gently wheeled into this now hopelessly renovated city. One recalls so much, thinking of Modena, that it is rather a shock to be confronted with spick-and-span streets, built some of them in the spirit of Hausmann of infamous memory. But there was one modern thing which cyclists will appreciate. A public stand for bicycles in the square where, for the sum of a sou, they take charge of your machine, placing it under lock and key.

There was just time to rush through the picture gallery and to admire the Murillos, and especially my favourite artist Schedone. I consider the latter's *Christian Charity*, at Naples, contains the finest head of a woman to be seen.

To Castel Franco from Modena is but seven miles, and thence through the villages of Samoggia, Lavino to Bologna twenty-four. The view of the latter place as you approach it from the Via Æmilia is very striking; the campanile, the high palaces, and, above all, that

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extraordinary covered pilgrimage road to the church on the hill gives to the city an especial character of its own. On this journey I saw nothing of it, for I rushed to the hotel for dinner, and was barely in time to catch the last train to Florence afterwards. It is a pleasing city, and I would like to describe it had not everybody else done so before me, so I will confine myself to giving two incidents of the train which carried my tired self and my dusty bicycle to Florence. As we were waiting in the carriage before starting they shunted us back to change lines. A young man who was going to some up-country station, seeing that we were moving in the wrong direction, became terribly excited, and before he could be stopped, seized and threw first his hat-box, then his umbrella, then a small case out of the window, and then, the door being locked, proceeded to go through the window head foremost. I just caught him by the legs and drew him back, for he certainly would have been killed, and held him, though he whined like a baby that he would never see his poor mother again. He was quite all right, for the train was bound for his destination.

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As we went up through the innumerable tunnels towards Pistoija, in one of them something happened to our devoted locomotive. At any rate, we remained about three-quarters of an hour in that dark hole. My friend again lost his head, and I could only prevent him from getting out by engaging his interest in my adventures in Africa, which, God forgive me, I coloured to such an extent and for a good purpose, that he must have thought me a veritable John Mandeville or a Marco Polo. However, by this means he was kept quiet, which was something gained.

During the six days I had been away from Florence it had been my lot to pass through eight formerly independent states, which seems a sufficient justification for those gallant men who struggled and suffered so long to unite Italy under one rule.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Hotels and Inns :

Mantua : Albergo Croce d' Oro.

Guastalla : Hotel Pellegrini.

Parma : Hotel d' Italia.

Rubiera : Albergo Stella d' Oro.

Bologna : Hotel Pellegrini.

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Distances :

From Mantua

to Borgo Forte 9 miles.

to Guastalla 23 miles.

to Parma 43 miles.

From Parma

to Reggio 17 miles.

to Rubiera 25 miles.

to Modena 32 miles.

to Bologna 56 miles.

CHAPTER VIII—*Florence to Rignano
sul Arno via Bagno a Ripoli*

IT became my fate to become involved in the relief work connected with that world disaster, the Sicilian and Calabrian earthquake. And this catastrophe to me alone perhaps among men has been an undiluted good—for it caused me to make so many friends, especially young ones, among the refugees. It will be remembered that the Italian Government—wisely, I think—sent a large number of the survivors to all the towns in Northern Italy, and of course Florence had its share. In returning to that city from England for a six weeks' holiday, I, on account of the fact of having had to do a good deal with relief work in London and in South Africa, became a member of the British Relief Committee. Now the principle on which we worked, one which I think cannot be criticised, was to make the assistance given as personal and as little mechanical as possible. We were coming to the assistance of people



DOMESTIC SCENE.

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who had lost not only most of those who were dearest to them, but practically at one fell swoop all their available savings and property of all kinds. And we came to them as the representatives of another race, so it was therefore all the more important to give the help as the assistance which one friend might offer to another rather than as something ground out of a charity organisation machine. Therefore so far as the money at our disposal was concerned—supplemented afterwards by a certain share of the Mansion House Fund—all of it was distributed by the members of the Committee themselves or voluntary workers authorised by the Committee, and each of these took under his or her care one or more families. When these willing visitors had made themselves known to the refugees they were instructed to find out in what manner they could assist them best, and apply to the Committee for the money to effect this.

It was in this way I became acquainted with my small friends Guglielmo, Nini, and Attileo, boys of fourteen, thirteen, and twelve respectively, the sons of Signor Lo Curzio, who is a permanent official in the Government railways.

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I had seen the father first in the old barracks in the Corso Tintori, wherein, on their arrival, the refugees were first crowded. The father was then ill in bed, and I went to say a few words to him in the bare room where some fifty of these unfortunate people slept. In a few days, however, my friends were removed to private apartments, and there I often visited them, and there always, on my ringing the bell before ascending the three flights of stairs, was to be heard a sound resembling the descent of an avalanche, which proved to be my three young friends racing to be the first to greet me.

So we soon became friends, and it occurred to me that I could not be more useful to them than by taking them sometimes away from their crowded quarters right out into the country, where they could enjoy pure air and the romps in which tender youth delights.

One day of brilliant sunshine we left the Piazza del Duomo by train to Bagno a Ripoli in the highest spirits. I had prepared the boys for a longish walk, and insisted that they should wear the strong boots which, with the Committee's money, I had bought for them, rather than the towney buttoned ones which

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were their especial delight. My young friends had the uncomfortable habit of always wishing to dress up for me ; they appeared to think it correct that when I took them for a walk, they should don the better of their only two suits, much as if, had the King asked me to go for a tramp with him, I, to pay him respect, had put on my Court dress. It is true I should not have done so, but evidently these little men are more bound by etiquette than I am. But we were a merry party in the tram, and a merrier one when we started up the steep climb from Bagno towards Paterno. The road, or rather the two roads run south-east ; the finer climb with better views is the old road, which, like all the roads made in robuster and pre-motor days, runs over the highest hills it encounters rather than meanly trying to get round them as do modern ones. By this route you pass through the village of Paterno and ascend until you pass a curious ancient villa or monastery, now entirely occupied by working people. It is very curious in Italy, at least to our northern eyes, to find old palaces, monumental villas, and convents, now let out to the poorest people. I suppose it is biblical, but it is much as if one found Warwick Castle con-

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verted into workmen's dwellings (indeed, this may possibly be realised by her socialistic ladyship), or Hatfield let out in lots to the agricultural labourers of Hertfordshire. I remember once being invited to the house of one of my peasant friends and finding the whole family occupying what was evidently the room of state; it was a magnificent room with quite excellent frescoes on the walls, and utilised now by the erection of wooden partitions which separated the four rooms which they had created out of it. Even in the Middle Ages one cannot help thinking that the *noblesse* must have been generally overhoused, more especially when we remember that house parties, such as we know them, were never, and never could have been, a custom among them. For one reason, for while there are always magnificent reception-rooms, beyond anything we know of in England in the matter of grandeur, there is no accommodation for the sleeping guest. In the first instance, nearly all the sleeping apartments, which are generally of mean dimensions, lead the one from the other. Secondly, we know that it is incomprehensible to the Italian mind that a person should of his own will fill his house with guests to remain for days or

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weeks. Not long ago an English friend of mine who is one of the most hospitable of hostesses, and who occupies a villa near Florence, received a demand from the authorities that she should pay the tax which is imposed on all persons who keep hotels and pensions. It was only with the greatest difficulty she could convince the governmental wiseacres that her guests did not pay her for the accommodation they enjoyed.

I recall also a curious incident in the history of my family. A certain forbear at the beginning of the seventeenth century, having travelled in Italy, and being impressed with the beauty of one of the villas near Frascati, determined to erect its counterpart on his property in Kent. Hence arose Mereworth Castle. But when it was finished, though he found he had magnificent rooms, a central hall going up to the roof, etc., there were no apartments in which he could place his guests. Consequently he had to build wings to his Roman villa, which may be seen to-day, making it the most curious of Roman villas which the world has ever seen.

To return to my walk with my Sicilian friends. It was getting very hot as we

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approached the first ridge of our walk, and doing what I always do in like circumstance, I took off my coat. I could see that this somewhat scandalised them, just as the middle classes in England are scandalised by the artisan who sensibly sits at leisure in his generally hot dining-room equally lightly clothed. But as part of my training of these youths was to show the possibility of being natural and well bred (they are exceedingly well bred), I persisted in my own method. They would insist on carrying my coat, however.

When I had divested myself of my coat and collar, the eldest of the boys at once began to take from the youngest, who had a woollen scarf (this is rather nice and natural, he did not take off his own), this article of clothing, and tried to insist on my wearing it. For the Signore Barone will catch cold, he said. With difficulty I persuaded him that there was no immediate danger of such a calamity.

From a point above the first ridge which is crossed, a most magnificent view is obtained of Florence and the Arno valley right down to the Pisan hills. We enjoyed it by resting

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on a bank, where also I taught my young charges the most approved method of descending steep inclines as the guides do in the Alps, with the alpenstock behind as a drag. They were immensely interested, and only came a few croppers in their efforts at imitation.

Soon we approached a little wayside inn, and as we were sufficiently hungry by this time, we entered it. In making these country expeditions, unless you are satisfied with macaroni or other *pasta*, it is always wise to take with you the more solid food, and this we had done. Following the usual custom, you enter an inn of this kind and they provide you with wine, plates, knives and forks, and you eat what you have with you. When it became known to the good people of the inn that the boys were refugees from Messina the greatest interest in, and the greatest kindness towards them, were displayed.

The little inn was one of those which combine the business of catering with that of a general store, nearly all the foodstuffs, sausages, hams, etc., being gracefully attached to the ceiling. But here, as everywhere, a clean tablecloth is provided for the stranger, and napkins of spotless white. We seated our-

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selves as we came in, two of the boys opposite me, the youngest one at my side on my right hand. Presently I saw that Guglielmo the eldest was most agitated, and it appeared that what was troubling him was that I was not in the official place of honour, on the right hand of my guests. So we had to change; but I wonder whether any Eton or Charterhouse boy would know of these little delicacies, and if he knew them would he have been at the pains to change his seat to exemplify them! It must be remembered that these boys had been educated at the public national schools, so that either in these institutions very excellent conduct must be taught or else these niceties of behaviour must be hereditary. Most sincerely I wish we had them in our northern island.

On our leaving the little inn there had assembled quite a number of the villagers who were all anxious to hear the boys' story. This, however interesting, I had to check as time was getting on. Presently, after leaving the road to make a short cut through a *podere* (farm), where we found all the farm hands enjoying their midday meal in the yard, we passed on to the village of S. Donato in Collina, which,

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as its name implies, is on a hill which in fact is the highest ridge between the middle Arno valley and the lower. The middle valley is where this river makes its second change of direction, running as it does first nearly directly south, then nearly directly north, then, as at Florence, to the sea nearly directly west.

S. Donato is a picturesquely situated place on this ridge, and has many summer villas. I had, the year before, spent a pleasant day in one of Mr. Robert Barrett Browning's houses on the other side of the hill, a house called Casalino, which I always envy every time I think of it, for its truly magnificent view over Florence and right down the Arno to the distant Pisan hills and my old friends the Appuan mountain peaks. This Casalino house—a misnomer indeed, for though called "little house" it would comfortably shelter three or four ordinary-sized families—has a most entrancing terraced garden overlooking this magnificent panorama, where, when I was there, we breakfasted and dined in aerial comfort unknown in our land of fogs and rain.

Looking south, south-east, and east from

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San Donato, one can see the whole fertile, vine-clad country to Arezzo closely studded with villas, towns, and farms, making one imagine that it was such a land that Satan placed before the eyes of Christ when he tempted him with the lordship of the material world. In this respect, to me at least, even our country landscapes in England seem sadly wanting in human interest. Follow me, if you will, to the top of one of our own mountains, say Skiddaw, and while the view is superb, yet very few towns and villages are to be seen, and all the country houses are hidden from sight by their surrounding parks. So far as human interest is concerned, and that stimulus to imagination which the sight of human dwelling-places perforce induces, we might be viewing a scene in Africa as well as one in over-peopled England.

This seems to me the striking difference between Italian scenery and British. Everywhere in Italy are to be seen houses and other indications of human existence—and this is a great charm. Take, for example, a trip in a steamer on one of the English lakes and another on one of the Italian or Swiss. Hardly a village is to be seen on the English

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lake : there is indeed hardly a single hotel or inn built on it. But on Maggiore, or Lugano, or Como, or Lucerne, or Geneva the banks are closely sprinkled with picturesque villages, towns, and hotels. I suppose it is caused by the difference of climate or of character, but to me, at least, the evidence of human habitations is more exhilarating than the lack of them.

We left San Donato, descending the hill towards the river. As amusements on the way my youthful friends took kindly to my instructions as to scouting in war. They were thrown out as advanced patrols, and came back to me with vivid reports of enemies located in various positions in the immediate vicinity.

But accidents happen in the best-regulated expeditions, and the eldest boy's boots, never very good, gave out, though he walked on in an heroic manner. We rested in the shade under the olive trees to see what could be done for his relief, and incidentally for me to tell them of my experiences in the South African War. And then the younger ones climbed trees, until Attileo climbed himself into a position from which he could not

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descend, and I was called on to assist in this enterprise. In taking him from his branch and holding him in my arms, he, in the most delightful and natural way possible, put up his little face to be kissed by me, which struck me as a charming way of expressing this small person's gratitude.

We descended into the valley, and presently found that to strike the railway station we had come too far, and had to hark back down the valley to Rignano.

Perched high up on spurs of the Apennines can be seen from here two splendid villas, one the villa S. Merzano, belonging to the Marchese Panciatici, and the other to the representative of a Jewish family, now very well known in Florence, Baron Levi. They are both eighteenth-century houses, but I should say the former was built on the ruins of one of the old castles which commanded the Arno valley when the Counts Guidi held the Casentino country in fee.

As we approached the picturesque town of Rignano (it was a *festa*), we observed that all the country folk were in the streets. There were the various little stalls at which all sorts of articles were being sold, from

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underlinen to hunting knives, and the spinning tables, where a mild sort of gambling in halfpennies could be indulged in. And, as always, orderly conduct prevailed.

While waiting in a peasants' café for the arrival of our train from Florence, I observed that my little friend Nini was very sad, and later I found him in tears in a corner of the station waiting-room. It appeared that he had conceived the very false impression that I favoured his two brothers, so it had to be put right, and he was consoled on our railway journey to Florence by peacefully going to sleep tightly grasping my hand and with his head on my shoulder.

CHAPTER IX—*From Fiesole to Monte Fiano—Castello di Poggio and Compiobbe and the Arno*

THOSE Britons who believe that Fiesole can only be reached by the tramway line or by the old road lose much of the pleasure and nearly all of the romance of this expedition. For Fiesole, while it looks very picturesque as it faces Florence and the Arno, with its towers and pinnacles, yet taken in flank and in rear, like armies so taken, offers surprises of a quite peculiar character. For example, on the rock on which Fiesole stands I have had some quite excellent and very real alpine climbing, of a kind which even a Whymper need not despise, and in the valley of the Mugnone, quite close to Fiesole, but on the backward side of it, I have found village inns Hogarth would have delighted to portray.

On a hot morning in spring, accompanied by two of my *profughi* (my profligates, a

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name I had given to the refugees from Sicily owing to the difficulty which some of us found in pronouncing *profughi* correctly), we made the ascent of the mountain, not in the bourgeois style by tram, nor in the alpine way by rock, but by the Faenza road from Ponte Rossa.

We took, and to this extent derogated, the tramway to Ponte Rossa, and then started on our adventurous career. I think we cared nothing for appearances, though as I have said before, my young friends were full of sartorial prejudice—yet gradually they were losing it through my example—and we journeyed for business in a business-like costume. I in my gaiters, the little men in their knickerbockers. The Signor Barone, like the king in legal fiction, can do no wrong, so I was gradually persuading them that dress should be adapted for the work on hand—and not work for the dress.

At any rate, we started along the narrow streets from the Ponte Rossa towards the Mugello in fitting costume. And how interesting are these streets, even the meanest of them, and you have to pass very poor streets on your way out of Florence.

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The absence of self-consciousness of the people appeals to me, at any rate. In a crowded and very muddy road I saw a baby in a chair, surrounded by a ministering crowd of little sisters and brothers. I addressed the child and asked the others his name. The name came pat enough, Pio, and not a thought of pence. Not a thought of pence, because when chocolates were suggested they were refused!

There are many beggars in Italy, because there are many poor in Italy, and there is no reasonable poor law, but beggars are created by beggary, and no shame to them. When I want a Government post I ask for it. I certainly would not get it if I did not, and I am quite sure that Mr. Carnegie if he wanted a crust of bread would ask for it, as I would. All who want are beggars.

My young friends, Attileo and Nini, had become rather accustomed to my inquisitive nature, and pandered to it. I sent them out as scouts to find matters of interest for me, and this they did with extraordinary fidelity, embarrassing fidelity, which delayed our progress through the interesting and picturesque valley which divides Fiesole from the hills

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to the west. The road itself is of interest historically, for from the sides of these mountains have been taken for six centuries past the rocks which have formed the great and enduring palaces of Florence, the Strozzi, the Riccardi, and the like.

When the ordinary tourist in Florence realises that he in his cheap pension often dwells in a house built before the Black Prince fought the battle of Poitiers, and little altered since, he may realise that he has to deal with a civilisation, and the effects of a civilisation, somewhat more ancient and complicated than any he has yet sampled. If he can realise this, then he will learn ; if he does not, God help him.

We passed through the narrow valley along the road which makes its way upwards to the Apennine passes. Just here the spring was showing, and my young friends brought me flowers at almost every turn of the road. I suppose youth and the evidence of youth, which is spring, become more attractive to us as we have to progress along the road which leads (where does it lead ? Chi sa ?) to middle age, at any rate. But these little men, bringing to me flowers, as a comrade, made me feel

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that something of the golden glory of spring was left.

When you pass beyond the cliff dividing Fiesole from Monte Morello to ascend to its heights, you must follow a path which leads through a farm. From here the highest point of Fiesole can be seen almost vertical, and this point is where at one time the ruling of that extraordinary order of Jesuits emanated. When I first came to Fiesole the "General" of the order lived here, and I presume his head-quarter staff. Now they have gone elsewhere. To me, at least, this Order of Jesus has always had especial attraction from the point of view of organisation. I have had many close friends and some near relations in it, and until now have never discovered any offensive principles among its priests. On the whole I admire their work, while being unable to accept their dogmas ; and I admire it all the more because I have seen in wild countries its practicality. In South Africa good work is done by Jesuits as by no other sect or order, and for that I reverence them.

Then also there is the interest which I feel for an order which is purely socialistic—and has always been so—and admittedly

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powerful, too powerful indeed for many states.

That it is essentially socialistic or collectivist can easily be shown, for so far as its work is concerned every element of socialism prevails. The members of the Order of Jesus are sworn to poverty, no member owns a hat-ribbon or a button. Personal ambition is eliminated, for within my own knowledge the headmaster of one of the most important Jesuit colleges in England was, without a murmur, transferred to the post of a junior mastership in another. Property is communal in the Society of Jesus, and so is personal ambition. Yet of all societies in the world perhaps history will tell you that the Jesuits have had, and still hold, more power, real power, than any other.

Therefore we in ascending the hard mountain track behind Fiesole had something to think about that day. My young friends were not engaged in this—they were hunting—all sorts of beasts, as is the wont of primitive youth. Dragon-flies were shown to me as captives, and always let loose, because, as I told them, the Good God loves dragon-flies probably as well as Sicilian boys. We arrived at Fiesole about noon, and hungry. But there

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was a duty which I felt was necessary, a duty which was also a pleasure—to visit an old lady who had been ill for many months. It occurred to me that my young friends might amuse her. It seemed they did, for she has asked me to bring them again many a time.

We then lunched at the “Aurora,” the hotel which has an unique view over Florence and the Arno valley. And we lunched in the garden of the hotel. My profughi, my little Sicilian boys, are quite wonderful in these cases—these emergencies. You must realise that they are board school boys no more. Yet in being placed, as they were on that day, among a crowd of Italian officers and their wives, many foreigners of all sorts, etc., in no action of theirs, as far as I could observe, was there the slightest *gaucherie* or its cause—false pride. They behaved themselves as little gentlemen, as one might expect, but not always find, a public-school boy to behave.

After lunch, and after we had carefully inspected the Roman theatre and baths (in the latter, when explained to them, my young friends insisted on comparing me with the Romans because I had made it imperative that

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they should bathe regularly), we proceeded up the hill towards Monte Fiano. This latter very charming villa, dominating Fiesole, and therefore super-dominating Florence and the whole valley of the Arno, is owned by a friend of mine who is a very charming combination of the Oxford Don and the Italian vine farmer. An Oxford Don who, like Pliny, has retired to his Tuscan farm and produces an excellent wine, Monte Fiano, not unknown in the clubs of London.

I had first visited Monte Fiano some years ago, when my old leader at Toynbee, Canon Barnett, had taken it for a spell. Up to it I toiled to pay my respects to this veteran in the service of man, and especially of the poorest among men, and was startled to be received by one who had all the external aspects of a stage brigand : long cloak twirled around the shoulders, stage hat of picturesque aspect, and with all the kindly and genial face of the Canon underneath the hat. It seemed that Canon Barnett had been advised to adopt the costume of the country and had done it thoroughly—very thoroughly.

My boys and I arrived at the villa and were received in the most distinguished man-

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ner, the youngsters being put down to mysterious games, while the kindly lady of the house and my friend "Pliny" talked. Afterwards we left our kindly hosts at Monte Fiano, having before leaving been initiated into the art of how the innocent grape can, by a process of natural evolution, be transformed into what some of my friends tell me is the pernicious and soul-destroying wine. And Christ turned water into wine! I wonder much where truth is to be found in this ever-worrying controversy between the teapot and the wine-flask.

From here we proceeded partly through vineyards, always commanding grandiose views over Florence, and towards the Vallombrosan mountains to the east, to the Castello di Poggio. Here I knew also we were assured of a kindly reception. This stronghold must have been in fighting days the pleasant head-quarters of a predatory baron. It commanded many roads—and even now, in these days, it commands many roads, but to offer hospitality, not to extract plunder.

Indeed, my friend who rents this wild fortress entertains so many of her friends that she has already been accused by the authorities

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of predatory instincts—those of a hotel proprietor. For this kind of hospitality, as I have said before, is not known much in this part of Italy. We were welcomed not only by our kind hostess and her daughters, but by an interesting house-party, which included my very dear friend the general utility man of Florence, who, to those of his acquaintance—and it is wide and varied—will easily be recognised, an eminent painter and a German baron. Now this latter—and this was my first introduction to him—became a subject of much interest to me, for not only was he in a position very similar to my own, but no less had he done very similar work in the world. A German cavalry officer who had lived in England and had settled near Florence to farm, and possessed a thorough sympathy with the people. A cosmopolite, if you like, but not one whit the less a good German for that. I am inclined to wonder for how long a time will the village pumpists of the world, the little worldites, be allowed to dominate international policy. For all over the world I have met men, like my friend here, who love their country and the real and best traditions of their country, and yet care not a jot

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or tittle for race as race, or sect as sect. Speaking only my own sentiments now, I am just as liable to become attached to a German, an Italian, a Jew, or a Zulu, as to a man who calls himself British. And yet I wish to see exemplified the best and noblest traditions of my country—and these I think are very noble indeed—just as my friend the German baron wishes to witness his national traditions exemplified. And I admire more especially perhaps the French ideal, without believing for a moment it need run counter to ours. But the silly fools, nay, I fear not fools but interested persons, tell us that racial animosity must exist, and yet every experience of life, and more especially the experience of our cosmopolite empire, tell us it is untrue, and damnably untrue. However, the German baron and I became friends the more especially as he showed great kindness to my little friends, and after tea we proceeded to his farm on the slopes of the hills looking on the other side of Florence towards Vallombrosa.

But before leaving my German friend, which we did at his house, after being introduced to his dogs, of which he is greatly

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proud, I may be allowed to recall a conversation I had with him just before I left for England on my way to take over those duties, political and social, which we all have to accept. The Dreadnought question was on, and eight or ten or twenty Dreadnoughts were being discussed. As it happens (it is possible that I am mad), I very honestly do not believe that Dreadnoughts, however many, are at all likely to be a serious factor in saving England if it require to be saved. I think what will save our country are the men behind the guns in the Dreadnoughts, and I do not think that at the moment we are doing much to build up these men. This is, of course, a matter of opinion, but it may be noted here as mine.

So it was not unnatural in our last talk that the Dreadnought question arose. I proposed that he as a patriotic German, and I as a patriotic Englishman, seeing how great an evil it was to build competitive ships, knowing as we do that in both countries many children must be starved out of life to enable these national luxuries to be indulged in, should agree on a campaign of dynamite—he to agree to blow up the German Dreadnoughts, I to do the same with the British ones. He said this would be

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a good scheme for immediate purposes, but a better one would be for our men to work longer—as long as the German workman does. And he then elaborated his theory. He said that the British clerk and the British manufacturer, owing to their great success in the past, work now on the average about two hours less than the German of the same classes. “You are being beaten,” so he asserted, “by the more strenuous work of our people. You are beginning to feel this, and you think that it will be a less uncomfortable way of beating your competitor by getting hired sailors to smash his navy than by yourselves doing more work.”

I wonder whether there is not some truth in what he said, a substratum of truth.

We parted at his house, and we passed along rough farm-roads, through the vines and through farms, to Compiobbe, a village on the Arno, about five miles from Florence. My little men were getting tired about then, but it was necessary to tramp on another two miles to catch the tramway at Rovezzano, the terminus—and we refreshed ourselves at a café by the river, where the carters and the farmers forgather on their way from Florence

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toward Ponte Sieve. Then they struggled on, and when we got to the tramway the youngsters, dishevelled, dusty, footsore, and tired beyond their wont, settled down on the seats, yet one little hand crept into mine, and a fatigued little voice murmured, "Thank you, Signor Barone, for all your kindness"—and he went to sleep.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Fiesole : Hotel Aurora, with garden and magnificent view.

CHAPTER X—*Florence to Greve and Chianti*

THE day before I started on this expedition I had met the Baroness R——, whose husband is a representative of one of the few remaining genuinely feudal families of Tuscany. When this is said it is not intended to cast any doubt on the antiquity of many of them ; there are very many ancient houses ; but, like the majority of our own families, these have not originated in the land, but in the counting-house. There is this difference, however, which can be observed everywhere, that while the British bourgeois-sprung aristocracy was compelled by custom to leave the shop for the manor, the Italian was not so constrained. The head-quarters of the latter remained in the town, as is witnessed by their palaces to-day, while they went to their often magnificent country villas to spend a few weeks or months, much in the same way as the City man goes now to Brighton or Hastings. It

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was, therefore, interesting to me to meet a family which has always been a rare exception to this rule, not the less so in that this peculiarity may be possibly accounted for by their territorial origin.

It was owing to this meeting that I thought of the journey to their ancient castle of B——, which is in the neighbourhood of Greve, though in fact I never arrived at the house.

The Roman gate out of Florence has a considerable interest in my eyes, owing to the fact that, in spite of trams and motors, its neighbourhood still retains some mediæval characteristics. Now, as in past times, crowd in the wagons of the farmers and form themselves into a market or fair outside the walls. Here, too, also can be seen the lineal descendants and exact reproductions of the mediæval jugglers, buffoons, and improvisers, and here, too, is the confused crowd of aimless loafers mingled with exasperated persons in a hurry, which Hogarth has so well handed down to us in his pictures. Indeed, many of the scenes in Florence (I took a house there once, partly because it was in a Hogarthian street) vividly recall the work of this master.

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Everyone knows the road by the English cemetery to Galluzzo and the Certosa monastery. It was near this latter place I met a friend who has taken many of these walks with me, and I hailed him with joy as a possible companion of the road. Unfortunately this was not to be, because he had just suffered the cruel wrong of having two of his dogs poisoned by some fiends who used phosphorus, and he could not leave one of them who was still alive. At the risk of boring my readers, I must tell the story of this dog, an old friend of mine.

At first he was a farm dog in the farm which is attached to the villa of my friend. Turco—this is his name—is a splendid specimen of a black-and-white sheep dog. Born of an adventurous disposition, he explored the neighbourhood, and one sad day was shot at by a German—this was before the Dreadnought scare—and with such little accuracy that his near hind-leg was destroyed. A kindly English lady had him attended by a vet., and he miraculously recovered, but with three legs only. Yet his indomitable daring was not lessened. He still roamed and fought many battles.

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For a period I occupied the villa, and then, as previously, he practically deserted his master, the farmer, for our garden. Being now useless to his owner, one fine day he was sold, I feared, to the doctors. It was done very secretly, but as soon as it came to my knowledge I offered fifty francs for his return, and he was brought back.

Then came the poison incident. Burglars had arranged to obtain supplies from my friend's house, and had prepared their way by laying down poison. Yet almost by a miracle Turco recovered after weeks of agony, and regained his spirits too, for he sauntered out one night, had an immense battle with a dog larger than himself, and came back to the house with his fore-leg hopelessly broken. So he has only two legs, or had those when I saw him last, yet, though I had not seen him for more than a year, he limped up to greet me in the wildest of welcome. Such is my friend Turco's story, which I must apologise for giving here.

Have any of my readers seen the Certosa monastery from the banks of the Ema river to the west of the road? for if not, they ought to see it, for from that point it has the charm

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of early romance, with its spires and gables, recalling some half-forgotten youthful dream. Of course, I have been into the Certosa many times, yet always with a sense of disappointment due to the splendour of my first view of it. My opinion is that if the first sight of some place strikes some hidden chord in you, it is the wiser policy not to examine the object closely ; take what the gods give and pass on. Two instances I remember : one, Flushing, that on seeing it first had quite an electric effect on me, which was strangely lessened on closer inspection ; and the village of Parys in the Orange Colony, which I never entered—because the Boers objected—and now remains in my mind a dream village in the setting sun.

Fine as is the interior of the Certosa monastery (I am, as an old Carthusian, always specially interested in the order which gave the name to Charterhouse School), there is an inevitable air of melancholy about a vast building now occupied by only two or three pensioner brothers employed to act as Government showmen to the light-hearted tourist. As to the rights and wrongs of the act suppressing these monasteries we need not here enquire, though in speaking of this with

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an Englishman some time ago, who denounced it as an act of "profanation and spoliation," I was forced gently to remind him that the major portion of his own estates in England came to his family by such an act of profanation, etc. I, nevertheless, wonder that such a huge building as is the Certosa is not utilised by the authorities, as, for example, either for the training of children or as an asylum for the aged and infirm.

The views from the road from here to Tavernuzze have that fascination of mediævalism which strikes one so frequently in the neighbourhood of the larger towns in Tuscany. The high walls, the villa-crowned olive hills, some turn or twist in everything one sees, takes us back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. No doubt this is partly due to the pictures of the old masters, but I think there must be something psychic in it too—some faint reminiscence of an experience we have misplaced in our brains and forgotten.

At Tavernuzze, which is the usual Tuscan village, much spoilt by the steam tramway, there is a road to the left which goes up to the old village of Impruneta, with its ancient church, its della Robbias, and its all-pervading

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gardens of irises. A very beautiful road takes you thence back to Florence by Ponte a Ema.

Along the main road, however, the valley of the Greve broadens out, and with its pastureland and copses has much the appearance of an English Midland dale. Just here, unlike most Italian scenes, there is the quietude, the peace, some may say the stagnation, of our own countryside, yet suddenly, to dispel this illusion, comes the snorting abomination of the tram. Yet I wonder why it is in England we do not sacrifice some of our eternal calm in the interest of our people. The contrast between the vivacity of Italian country roads and the sober dullness of our own was expressed by one who is nearest to me when I took her for her first drive in England after a prolonged sojourn abroad. She said, "Dear, but where, oh where are your people?" I wonder where: probably grinding their coaly lives out in the nearest manufacturing town!

At Falciani, some few kilometres on, we left the main road to Rome, which crosses the hills at S. Casciano and goes onward by Poggibonsi to Siena, and still keeping to the winding valley of the Greve river through

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scenes which gradually, by slow transformation, changed from mid-England to mid-Italy. Soon the vines reappeared, and with them the cypress-decked *poderi*, unmistakably Italian. Then more villas came into view, until before we arrived at the large village of Greve we had quite resumed our Italian atmosphere. This latter place is a market town with arcaded streets and a picturesque square. Here I lunched at an old-fashioned inn, where there were many other guests. Most of these had come by tram, either for business or pleasure, and here among them I found a phenomenon which I had not before encountered, the pure and unadulterated Italian bounder. This species has never been treated scientifically and comparatively. To define a bounder I suggest this. A man (or woman) who has no consideration for others, no tact to conceal this lack of consideration, and one who at the outset assumes that he is superior to all others. It happens I have met this curious species in many countries, and sometimes in very high places, but the most prominent examples of this variety are perhaps the British and the German. While the former (*Bounderius Britannicus*) as a characteristic displays passive

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insolence towards strangers, but unless drunk, does not assume the aggressive attitude, the latter (*Bouderius Germanicus*) from the outset is positive in his superiority, and offensive in asserting it. It is, however, only fair to say that a German of this sort is very seldom met with, because the social training, the instruction in public conduct, to which the German student is subjected, is very much more thorough than ours. The young Briton often acquires quite excellent manners within his own circle, and yet not seldom is entirely lacking in consideration outside it, and especially in dealing with classes presumably below it. The Teuton as soon as he joins his university is placed under the care of an elder student, and the latter's duty is to advise and instruct the neophyte, not only how he should behave within the corps and university to which he belongs, but no less how he should conduct himself "for the honour of the university" outside the precincts.

At any rate here at Greve for the first and only time I encountered a party of Italian bounders, male and female, who did everything which their kind of other nations could do to offend the susceptibilities of their neigh-



Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a signature or a list of names, located at the top left of the page. The text is faint and difficult to decipher.

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hours. It was an inspiring sight, because I had come reluctantly to believe that this class of person only came from the north of Europe, where at any rate the habits and customs of the Smart Set very much encourage its development; and now I discovered that even the southern sun does not destroy the germ of this kind of vulgarity.

At Greve I was advised that the road to Broglio was a very bad one, and that it would be difficult to cross the hills from there to the railway in the Arno valley, so decided to go by Castellina in Chianti and thence run down to Poggibonzi and the Val d' Elsa.

It is a long stiff climb of two hours up to this village, but one is rewarded for the trouble of it by most magnificent views on one's arrival, for this village is about 1800 feet above sea-level, and commands the whole country to Siena and even to Arezzo in the east. It is a quaint old place, where I noticed many children, whom I set racing for pennies, and at least two blind beggars. These latter reminded me of a curious Italian saying, which rendered into English is to the effect that "a blind man in a family is as valuable as a farm in Chianti," meaning, of course, the profits from

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his begging are a precious asset. Perhaps these beggars had the farms also, or had acquired them as the result of charity. I do wish that the Italian Government would pay some attention to founding state asylums for the permanently disabled, though now, undoubtedly, there is much less begging than formerly; yet one sees a very great number of cripples, and one wonders where these poor wretches live, and how. While it is a mistake, very commonly made by our countrymen, to assert that there are few public charities in Italy—there are very many and well-conducted ones, some dating as far back as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—yet I cannot think the authorities spend enough in this line. But, perhaps, now that Italy is prospering financially, more will be done.

The road down from Castellina is a beautiful one and fairly well kept, and I arrived at Poggibonzi just in time to swallow down a cup of coffee and catch the train to Florence.

CHAPTER XI—*Bagni di Lucca and a Garibaldi Festival*

THE great heat of the Italian summer forces the people from the towns to the mountains, and among the more old-fashioned of these refuges Bagni di Lucca has a conspicuous place. Formerly its position was a pre-eminent one, for it was the place where the Grand Ducal Court retired to take baths. After that it had a period of social decadence, and it is only of late years that foreigners, at any rate, have begun to return in any numbers. That it is destined to regain much of its lost prestige I feel convinced, because of its magnificent situation among the chestnut-clad hills and from the fact that there are probably more interesting short excursions to be made thence than in any other place of the kind. Moreover the waters are equal to those of many better-known resorts, and living there is remarkably economical. In many ways it resembles the beautiful little watering-place of Hercules Bad in

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Hungary, and its waters are comparable to those of Aix-les-Bains.

When I arrived there I was but fresh from very different scenes in South Africa, and my good friend and physician, Dr. Giglioli, had suggested my spending the summer under his amiable treatment.

However, almost as soon as we arrived, we were launched on a sea of gaiety very different from anything anticipated by either of us. The fact was that the two little villages of Ponte a Serraglio and Bagni di Villa, which together make up the town of Bagni di Lucca, had rejoiced for many centuries in a rivalry almost mediæval in ferocity. I have been assured that this is carried so far that it is considered extremely disloyal for the people of either of them to marry into families of the other. I do not know about this, but, at any rate, I have always found the inhabitants of both remarkably kindly and charming.

However, an effort was to be made to combine the two villages in a common effort to amuse and entertain the visitors. It must be borne in mind that each has its own excellent Casino, and these had been used as weapons sometimes of offence. For example, it was, I

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believe, not uncommon to have balls at both places on the same night. At any rate, apparently we came at the psychological moment, and acting on the principle frequently adopted in mediæval Italian towns of selecting a "foreigner" for Podestà, they elected me chairman of the entertainments and sports generally.

No doubt they were astute enough to see that a prolonged course of South African War and politics had caused in me a mental degeneracy which gave them hopes of succeeding in their object. My friend, Dr. Giglioli, was also elected Secretary, and we together commenced our campaign by nominating a strong Committee of leading residents of the two places, with a due proportion of British and Americans. The first meeting of this Committee in the Villa dei Fiori will long remain in my memory. I have been trained in rather a rigid school of committee discipline by the best chairman of committees I have ever known, the Rev. Canon Samuel Barnett, and I was therefore prepared to keep the meeting to the point and to the agenda. I wish Canon Barnett had been there to try his hand, and he would have left that meeting a sadder man.

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The proceedings began by my being asked by a certain Conte, who had lived at one of these places for some years, to introduce him to a certain marchese, an old resident who had a house within a mile of him. I humbly pointed out that I had arrived a week before and felt myself incompetent to become in so short a time an introducer-general. I think at that meeting we must have discussed nearly every question of importance outside the agenda. We not only discussed all these questions, but we discussed them nearly all at the same time. One group of three, entirely ignoring the chairman's hammer, would be engaged in a lively altercation on the distress in Calabria, another group equally unamenable to discipline would have before them the rights or wrongs of the Russo-Japanese War, while a third, probably British, would be asserting that what was required in Italy was public-school training. As a sort of postscript to the meeting we passed all the resolutions *nemine contradicente* and started on our campaign. The lateness of my arrival at my hotel was very unjustly criticised by my wife!

The members of the Committee were leading men. Two or three marchesi, conti or

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landowners in the neighbourhood, some commendatori and cavalieri, chiefly professional men, and a sprinkling of the citizens generally. They all did excellent work eventually, but to dispel the impression that this account of the first Committee Meeting may have induced, I may say that one of the members came up to me afterwards and said : " It seems to me you are going to put Bagni di Lucca under martial law ! " I wished I could !

At any rate, most of them worked very well. We had a dance or two a week, fancy-dress balls sometimes, paper-chases on donkeys, and tennis tournaments; these things are what are wanted in such places. We are all inclined in these days, or, at any rate, those of us who have to face the seriousness of life, to neglect the social side. A pleasant dance, a boisterous paper-chase, a donkey race even, may effect more in bringing people together than much learned talk on the essential brotherhood of man. I remember two illustrations of this. Once at a social gathering of the poor in the East End of London it happened I was one of the entertainers, one of the most frivolous, it may be, of the hosts. Every possible or impossible game had been

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tried to work them up into a state of sociability, and without effect. Seeing a friend of mine who could strum on the piano I set him down to play a waltz, and chose the prettiest girl in the room as my partner. That night we danced our guests into fraternity in a way which James Paine never achieved by his enunciation of its essential truth.

The second instance was in South Africa. My little force had been trekking for some days through a waterless and a war-burnt country, and it happened to be New Year's Eve. We arrived at a farm in Cape Colony where the people were badly enough off, and as they were suspected of pro-Boer sympathies were not favoured by the military authorities. They loved us but little in that farm, but after talking to the good Vrowe for some time I reminded her it was New Year's Eve, and that we ought to keep it by a dance, and promised that I would bring a few comrades if her girls were willing. That night, tired as we were after a long march, I believe we danced away many prejudices, the cobwebs of a fratricidal war, and, at any rate, we left the farm on the friendliest terms with its

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inmates. In the early hours of the morning, before we marched at dawn, the farmer came to me with a piece of information which probably saved many of my gallant soldiers' lives! Consequently my readers will see that I am a convinced believer that more can be done for good in the world by social intercourse than by lectures.

Bagni di Lucca in that season proved something of this.

To us Britons who care for history there are many things at the Baths of Lucca which recall the past. Here in a house which is now a comfortable pension, the Villa Margherita, dwelt James III of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, whom some call the Old Pretender. Here, too, he was perhaps the last of the Stuart line to receive Royal honours, for he was under the benevolent protection of the Lucca Republic. It is interesting to remember in this connection that the honours paid to James III of Great Britain, etc., by the Lucchesi, were strongly resented by the reigning Hanoverians in England, to the extent that, I believe, they threatened to tax Lucca oil out of the British market. Tariff Reformers will please note. Yet all

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their efforts were of no avail with the people whose faith in the legitimist principle was sufficient to cause them to go every Friday to be cured of the King's Evil by being touched by the Royal and expatriated fingers.

When James performed this ceremony, it is said that he at the same time gave to the invalids a medal, which he placed round their necks. Alas! I have not yet been able to find one of these, and I would give a good deal to get one.

But Bagni di Lucca has a long list of great Britons who resided there, commencing with Byron and Shelley, then to the more recent times of the Brownings, and only within a week of my writing this account I saw poor Ouida laid to rest in the lovely little cemetery of the place. It is a beautiful place, and the people are as kindly as its climate. I could not pay them any greater compliment.

On a steaming hot morning in July I was moved to walk through the chestnut woods up to the village of Monte Fegatesi. The road from Bagni di Lucca first leads along a picturesque valley, through which meanders a delightful stream. A mile or so from the

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Baths, however, the real ascent takes place, at a most charming mill. Round this mill grow the best specimens I have seen in this country of that fern which we call maidenhair and which the Italians style the hair of Venus. Mounting thence by a steep stone *salita* which runs direct, we came, in half an hour, to the little hamlet of Pieve di Villa. The young girl of the inn told me that this was a great day at Monte Fegatesi, as there was high revelry in honour of Garibaldi. Before leaving the village my youthful informant insisted on my seeing all the curious old houses of the place, some of them being cellars with much the suggestion of dungeons. I naturally asked the girl to come with me to the *festa*, but she could not, though she promised to be there later when the dancing commenced. From this place a bridle-path leads along the ridge first to Monte di Villa, which is a straggling long village having the appearance from a distance of being fixed on the razor edge of a cliff. Here one is somewhat astonished to find most of the younger men speaking English, or rather that variation of it which our American cousins insist is the language of Shakespeare. It is certainly true that the

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latter made use, more than once, of the expression, "I guess," so possibly this proves the American case. At any rate they are a good lot of people in this village, and very friendly disposed towards all Anglo-Saxons.

On my way from Monte di Villa I overtook an old couple who were with difficulty walking to the *fiesta*. As soon as they saw me the old man greeted me in this wise :

"Signor Capitano, you go with us to do honour to our hero. You English always helped us in the struggle, and I helped too"—and the veteran showed me two medals on his waistcoat. I was glad to meet him.

As we came within a thousand yards of Monte Fegatesi we could hear that the fun had commenced. Songs and cheers were blown to us by the sympathetic winds, and flags could be seen decorating the houses and even the church.

It is truly a grand position, perched up on a mound commanding the valley, yet surrounded by the higher mountains of the Apennine group, Rondinaio, Tre Potenze, and Monte Fioriti, far enough, however, from these to secure itself in mediæval times. It then held command of a valley which led from the states

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of Modena and Parma to the Republic of Lucca. Without abnormal imagination we could picture the sort of events which took place around here. Modena perhaps wished to damage Lucca, and sent a force over the hills to burn and destroy. They came gaily equipped, but just on the left of their road they found Monte Fegatesi, not within bow-shot, but certainly within striking distance of them. The force which I have imagined was a pleasant prey to the militant villagers, who, I have no doubt, ambuscaded them to their hearts' content in the steep valleys, and obtained loot. When in a village on the Modena side I asked my way to Monte Fegatesi, the information was given, but with the advice that the people of Monte Fegatesi are a "bad people; one has to be careful in dealing with them." So the mediæval tradition holds.

As we arrived at the village we found in the little *piazza* a large concourse of people listening to an eloquent address.

I believe it was eloquent, I am sure it was demonstrative. But whether eloquent or demonstrative or both, it certainly was effective. The orator was the village schoolmaster, and

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he was telling the young Italians their duty to United Italy, illustrating it naturally by the life of Garibaldi. It was an excellent speech in quite the best strain. While listening to it I remembered some incidents in the general's romantic career in which he had shown, even at some risk to the great cause he served, especial consideration for children and for the weak. Has it not been written that he was "the tenderest of the brave: he took thought not only for men and women but even for the joys and sufferings of animals ever since the day when, as a child, he had cried over a wounded grasshopper: he was a brother to every living thing"? "Because," as he said, "the spirit of eternal life is in everything."

When the oratory was over, the organising secretary came to me with a polite offer of hospitality.

So about one o'clock in the little local theatre we all sat down to an extensive repast. On my right there was a veteran Garibaldino, in his red shirt and medals, and on my left a man who had served as an artilleryman in the wars for United Italy. Two or three places from me was the Chairman—the Syndic of the Commune—who in his several speeches

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always referred to the presence of my humble self, *il Capitano Inglese*. After many such references and much cheering it seemed to me to be my duty to say some few words even if these words were ungrammatically expressed. It is quite certain that grammar had nothing to do with my discourse.

My speech seemed to please them, for they cheered a great deal; but what pleased them particularly was an expression of mine respecting the draughtiness of the theatre. I had noticed that most of the older veterans of the wars had put on their hats and caps during the banquet. I with a thin crop of hair had found the winds somewhat trying, so I expressed my views to my two veteran neighbours, something to this effect: "Io trovo che la guerra non è buona per i capelli."

What I meant to say was, of course, that war did not promote the growth of hair. This certainly is true.

After the banquet I visited all the points of interest in this place, including the ruins of the ancient castle.

I was accompanied in my excursions by several of the Garibaldini, one of whom, a gentleman I had known for some time, was an

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exact replica of Cecil Rhodes, as the latter appeared to me when I met him in 1902.

At last we parted with a promise that I should be made an honorary member of the Garibaldian Society. Among my most valued credentials I have the badge of this membership.

I passed from Monte Fegatesi down the valley to Tereglio, a large and interesting village, and thence passed to where the Fegana river runs into the Serchio.

On the whole it was not only a magnificent day in respect to the country I had traversed, but no less interesting in the fact that by chance I had struck a festival of village patriots, had learnt how the ideal of patriotism is inculcated in the young and revered by the old, and moreover I had discovered why it was we English, in spite of our insular prejudices and customs, are always by the Italians better received than men of other races. The reason is clear: we honoured their greatest soldier patriot, Garibaldi, we understood their greatest political idealist, Mazzini, and we supported their greatest statesman, Cavour.

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

At Bagni Caldi, near the Baths :

Hôtel des Thermes. Pension from 6 frcs.

Hotel Savoia. Pension from 6 frcs.

At Ponte a Serraglio :

Royal Casino Hotel. Pension from 6 frcs.

At Bagni di Villa :

Hôtel de la Ville. Pension from 6 frcs.

Hôtel Continental. Pension from 6 frcs.

Hôtel Bellevue. Pension from 5 frcs.

Hotel Cherubini. Pension from 6 frcs.

Villa Margherita. Pension from 6 frcs.

Cafés :

At Ponte a Serraglio :

Café Americano (also restaurant). Good ; excellent ices and pastry.

English Library :

Signor Barbagli at the Villa Stisted.

Physicians :

Dr. Bastiani.

Dr. Cherubini.

Dr. Acone.

Bootmaker (a very necessary person among these hills) :

Signor Valsuani., at Bagni di Villa (excellent).

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Photographer :

Signor Pellegrini, at Ponte a Serraglio.

Road to Monte Fegatesi :

Passing up the hill on which Bagni Caldi (the chief baths) are situate, you pass there and proceed to a small and very picturesque mill called Fronzola. Thence a choice of two roads is offered. Firstly by a *salita* which runs directly behind this mill and steeply ascends the hill to Pieve (about thirty minutes' climb from the mill), and from Pieve to Monte di Villa a fairly level walk of say twenty minutes. Secondly at the mill keep along the small road until the road ceases to be, and there by a *salita* direct to Monte di Villa ; or branching off to the right before arriving at Monte di Villa, by a *salita* which passes through the hamlet at Riolo, and thence up through the woods until you strike the path from Monte di Villa to Monte Fegatesi, which runs nearly along the ridge.

It took me $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours from Bagni Caldi to Monte Fegatesi, but as I am rather a fast walker it may be wiser to count on $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours for the whole excursion.

The return journey by Tereglio and the valley of the Fegana I did in 3 hours. Perhaps 4 hours should be given for average walkers.

At Pieve di Monte di Villa : Café Gabriele Veriade.

At Monte di Villa : Osteria Eugenia Bartolomeo.

At Monte Fegatesi : Albergo Alpino.

CHAPTER XII—*Bagni di Lucca to Ghivizzano*

THE life-story of the *Gran Capitano*, as of all those old warriors who showed by their work that property can only be held by those who are prepared and able to defend it, has always had a peculiar fascination for me. I like the romance of their lives and the exposition of a fundamental truth illustrated by their actions. In a less picturesque way this truth is enforced by the modern company promoter, and will be as long as the majority of our fellow-subjects allow him to ply his trade.

Castruccio Castracani¹ spent the major portion of his life in fighting for hire and incidental looting, and eventually subjugated a

¹ In the *Life of Sir Henry Wotton* I came upon a reference to Castruccio. Three hundred years after his time Wotton travelled with a descendant of his. In spite of the fact that this man travelled incognito he was in constant danger of assassination by the agents of the Republic of Lucca, because they feared that the family of Antelminelli (Castruccio's House) might again become the "Tyrants of Lucca."

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district, over which he ruled with great fairness and justice. The evening of his days he apparently spent in designing and building the most beautiful bridges in the world, those, for example, at Borgo a Mozzano (the Devil's Bridge), at Calavorno, and at Castelnuovo—all in the Serchio valley.

What opportunities of romantic acquisition had these old professional soldiers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries! They were trained in arms by the French wars, and had the richest country in Europe—Italy—as a happy hunting-ground, which land, inhabited by an industrial population generally skilled in every art but that of war, offered every opportunity to the German, French, and Italian trained mercenary. Our own countrymen, it is encouraging to remember, also took advantage of this favourable opportunity of living on the fat burgher of the rich Italian cities, for Sir John Hawkwood and his band of English did quite their share in relieving the citizens of the responsibility of their wealth, if the Pisan chronicles speak true.

Therefore the walk to the head-quarters of Castruccio at Ghivizzano, a pilgrimage, if you like, to the shrine of one who was a man in

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his time, had a fascination for me. The road from Bagni di Lucca to Ghivizzano passes by the old Ponte di Calavorno, and as I was accompanied by an able painter and etcher, I felt certain that we should not pass this landmark without a sketch being made of it.

For half an hour my friend forced me to be a silent witness of the tricks of his delightful trade, under a sun which, I should imagine, ought to have melted the marble hills around.

On our road from this point we encountered many Italian soldiers flushed with victory on their return from mimic warfare in the north. Like all their gallant kind they refreshed themselves at every inn by the way, and I fancy that the reasonable sobriety of their conduct was due rather to the weakness of the wine than to the intentional wisdom of their actions. They were at any rate happy without being intoxicated, a delightful combination seldom arrived at by northern soldiery.

Just before we left the high road to follow a *salita*, Ghivizzano came into view. It has a fascinating appearance with its two towers and churches, its complete aloofness from all

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modern standards. There are few towns viewed from a distance which can equal this one in its suggestion of antiquity. It belongs to another age and to ideals of another sort. However, while following a most delightful lane towards this paradise of antiquity, we were brought rather rudely to earth. A peasant woman who had saluted us was spoken to. She was carrying a burden on her head, the like of which I would hardly wish to bear on my shoulders for long. In reference to the country she replied that it was a "paese povero." I observed that it was so little poor as to be rich in everything which is worthy of being called wealth—in beauty, in historical interest, and in a remarkably stalwart people, points of view which seemed to be new to her.

The town is approached from this side by a winding lane which towards its end follows the old ditch or moat of the town. The western gate, by which we entered, is certainly the original structure, with the machicolations complete. It is ornamented above by a fresco of a later date of the Virgin. Inside to the right are a series of arcades, now used as submural streets, which undoubtedly were

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constructed by Castruccio Castracani for means of defence.

Through the loopholes in these walls the archers and bowmen fired on the enemy assaulting the town, and getting them by this means, not, as was usual in mediæval warfare, from the top of the walls, but right down on a level with the ditch, in fact defending the place by a level fire just as the enemy had obtained the protection of the walls. Castruccio was indeed a *gran capitano*. These arcaded defences of the old town give an especial character to it, for though now they are used as ordinary byways, they are dark even at noontide.

The church is a tenth-century structure of no particular interest, but there are two monuments of the Castracani family of about 1336. The tower is a good example of early architecture, but by no means to be compared with the many beautiful campanili here about, of which the one at Diecemo is perhaps the finest.

From the main street and from the by-streets there are curious covered shutes running steeply down to the arcades of which I have spoken. These we may presume were made for the purpose of supplying the de-

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fenders at the walls with food and ammunition when the shooting had begun. Here, in passing down the rough street, I saw at a door a little lady of some five years, open-eyed at the appearance of us foreigners. I went to her and offered my hand, which she took with inimitable grace, even with dignity, and kissed it.

After this we went to the *rocca* or castle close to the parish church, which was built like the other defences by the *Gran Capitano*, and which shows that safety was esteemed by him of more importance than comfort. Unfortunately the original tower was destroyed in the fifteenth, sixteenth, or seventeenth century, being replaced by a comparatively modern one.

We had explored most of the holes and corners, quaint and even gruesome as some of these were, and at the invitation of their owners had entered many of the ancient houses.

In one of these we found a hand-loom being worked by a very old woman, who made a coarse sort of cloth. The present inhabitants, when they are not mere children, are usually old; middle age and adult youth hardly exist. The women seemed to average eighty from their appearance, which speaks well for the

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town's salubrity. However, the fact is that in these hill communities a great number of the able-bodied youth go abroad, to America or England, for work, returning with their savings from time to time, and alas! generally investing these by building appallingly ugly new houses. How is it that in a country where of old so much beauty in art was exemplified the present inhabitants, though surrounded by magnificent monuments of the taste of their forbears, build to-day in a way so vile?

Perhaps the charitable explanation of this phenomenon is that people who have lived for so long a time in older houses, in which modern comfort is not easily attainable (and Comfort is the chief of the Gods), by a natural reaction, adopt everything new, including its hideousness, as the only way of ridding themselves of ancient constraint and its incidental beauty.

From the very first moment of our arrival the children of Ghivizzano had manifested a sympathetic interest in all our doings, so we decided to reward them with a bountiful distribution of sweetstuffs. One elusive little lady in black with a *mantella* had followed us, but when we tried to catch her, she had run away

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with the agility and the grace of a ballerina. My little lupino dog, whose demonstrative actions had caused terror to reign among the small people, may have been responsible for this aloofness. However, we proceeded to the only shop which sold sweets, and bought up their whole supply. The shopkeeper quite obviously, and perhaps quite naturally, tried to make a profit of 100 rather than his usual 20 per centum. We were to him no doubt rich foreigners, and money was no object to us, though had he seen our bank balances he might have displayed less ferocity in gain. We obtained the sweets, however, at a fifth reduction on his original price by means of argument, persuasion, and inflexible determination.

Speaking of these little frauds of tradespeople in Italy, one encounters every day the British tourist who with an expansive display of virtue and of waistcoat will declare to you that he does not mind paying, but hates being cheated. Of course we all know that his waistcoat is evidence before God and man that he had no such high principle in his own trade, for undoubtedly in commerce the great proportion of the money made is through the exploitation of the ignorance

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of the buyer. The legal precept "Caveat emptor" proves it. I remember in the buying of some shares a few years ago a stock-broker who did this for me charged me just double the commission which he ought to have charged. When I remonstrated with him he at once reduced his claim by one-half without a word of shame or apology for this attempted fraud. A short time after this I met this wealthy citizen in Italy, and found him quite hysterically angry with the Italians. A hotel-keeper had charged him double for his wine, and a curio seller had made him pay highly for a worthless article. "There is no honesty among these Italians, you cannot trust them." He had forgotten my little matter of shares! In effect he charged double to those who did not know and single to those who did, like my friend the sweetstuff seller. I suppose the fact is everybody dislikes being cheated, some for one reason, some for another. Personally I dislike it, not because it lowers my pride of knowledge, for it is impossible for any one person to know the actual value of everything he buys, but rather because it lowers my moral outlook. For instance we went to Ghivizzano believing that all would be as glad at our ar-

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rival as we were to visit them. I think the people were so. The one man who tried to cheat us might have poisoned our visit by lowering our estimate of the people there. He was committing a sin against my optimistic view of life, he was lowering my estimate of human values, which was happily in this case counteracted by a little girl who kissed my hand—the adorable but elusive girl in the *mantella*—and by many other good people there.

We certainly left the little home of the robber chief and bridge-builder, Castruccio, not with a less sympathy for human suffering nor with a decreased belief in the goodness of men, especially the children of men the beloved of Christ, but an increased one; but we left it with a more profound contempt for those things and methods which tend to set men against men and the race against God, which are exemplified by ugly actions and ugly suspicion, which are not the effect but more often the cause of much of the evil in the world.

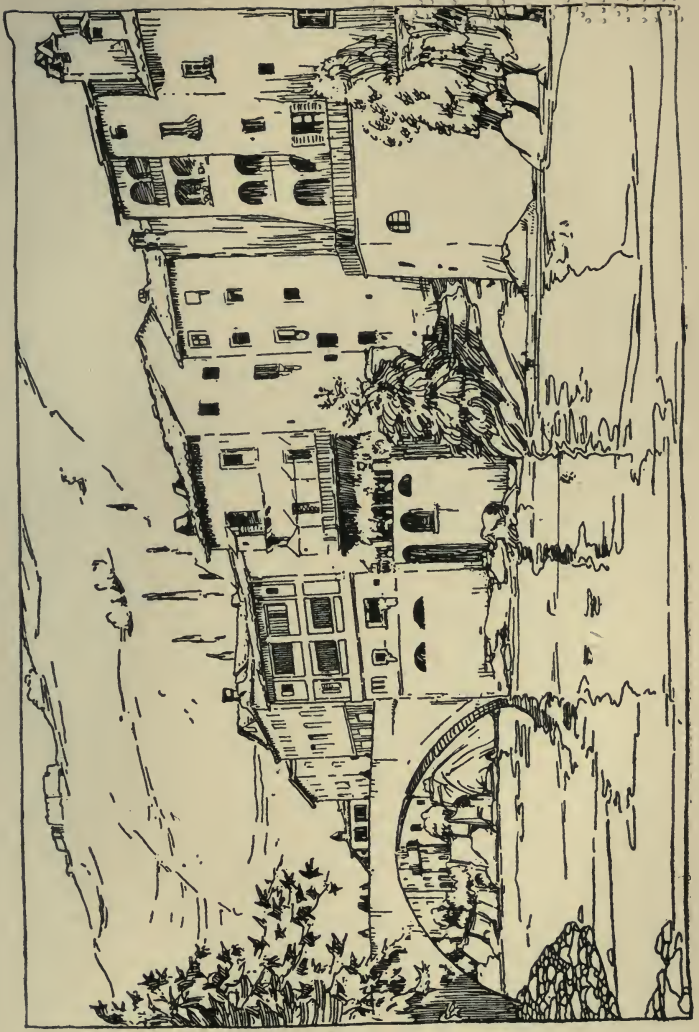
We returned down the beautiful Serchio valley to Bagni di Lucca, through peaceful chestnut woods, under the pergolas of vines

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and through friendly hamlets, the inhabitants of which were of those who, while suffering much and enduring much, yet make the world a better place by accepting their burdens cheerfully.

CHAPTER XIII—*Mountain Villages of
the Lima Valley*

THE beautiful valley of the Lima has been written up and painted until from sheer modesty the rushing waters of the stream try to hide themselves from the public gaze by taking cover under their protecting rocks. But this wide publicity ceased two generations ago when the Grand Duke was politely but firmly put over the frontier with the people's parting words to the Prince, "Good-bye, Papa! don't come back again." At that time Bagni di Lucca, being the winter residence of the little court, was visited by many foreigners, chiefly, I should judge, by the maiden great-aunts of the present generation. These amiable ladies wrote much about this country in the formal copybook style of the early Victorian period, and they sketched much in that formal and very proper copybook manner. Their books and pictures exude an atmosphere of Anglicanism, a patronising appreciation of "foreign"



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landscape and an equally patronising contempt for a people not so well bathed as themselves and who had not the inestimable advantage of having been brought up by a Church reformed under Henry of blessed memory.

Nevertheless, though in times past this valley has been described by many writers, it has been so only from one and the less interesting point of view, namely from the great high-road which leads from Bagni di Lucca to the other summer stations of Abétone and San Marcello. Magnificent as undoubtedly the scenes are one witnesses from the relative ease of the local carriage, glimpses of precipice, of waterfall, of gorge, of mountain peak, and chestnut-clad hill, yet all these can be seen to greater advantage from the heights above, and in addition the traveller has the opportunity of visiting a series of the most interesting and engaging of mountain villages which it has been my lot to explore.

Starting the other day by the path which runs by the river and keeping for the most part on the side of it away from the road, we followed the bank of the stream as far as a village called Pallegio. Up to this point the valley is fairly narrow, dominated on both

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sides by hills thickly clothed in chestnuts, nearly every peak or ridge being crowned by warlike-looking hamlets, tempered, perhaps, by the square towers of the Christian churches.

I say that the villages are warlike in appearance, because in fact most of them are built on the sites of mediæval fortresses and have largely been moulded into their present form by the ancient ramparts.

At the village I have mentioned above the valley contracts, forming a beautiful gorge, on one side of which may be seen white precipices, and on the other a glorious peak of grey rock. Under the protection of this latter eminence nestle two villages, Casoli and Cocciglia, grey with age and further dignified by their position high up on the mountain side.

The appearance, however, of Cocciglia from this point is the more striking, framed as it is by higher mountains, itself high up above the world of men, and liberally displaying to the stranger every bit of itself, every house, wall, tower, arch, and even chimney, seen as it is against a background of green and grey.

This was a bait which my artist friend could not resist, so while I tried to get into human

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intercourse with the observant children, he essayed to make his canvas speak. One pretty little fair-haired dot of three, habited chiefly in what I should describe as cotton knickerbockers, was gazing at us with round and serious eyes, until my companion, neglecting his village picture, attempted to make a pen sketch of her.

It must be supposed she had no fancy for the rôle of a professional model, for seeing she was being sketched, she immediately turned her back on us and with dignity expressed in every movement of her shoulders deliberately made her way home.

Nor did my hysterical offer of sweets alter by one jot or tittle her determination not to be immortalised on canvas.

Cocciglia, which had been sketched from afar, however, now attracted us to it, so mounting the steep path which leads from the road, we, after fifteen perspiring minutes, arrived at its lower houses. It is literally a village of stairs and arches.

The steps which form its main street wander hither and thither, to right and to left as fancy dictates, sometimes plunging through the dark tunnels of Norman arches, until at

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last a miniature piazza is reached. Here we found this place presided over by a remarkably stout and handsome woman seated in the shade and surrounded by her family of small children. She very hospitably offered us refreshments, which offer we accepted to the extent of a glass of wine.

The old church here is worthy of a visit, but more especially the fortress above it, though in ruins. It must have been a strong place in its time, and tradition says that it was a favourite refuge of the gallant Chiarello in his fights with the Pallegians.

But now, having seen and sketched, our object was to find the mountain path to Limano, the outskirts of which could be just seen up the valley. I am constantly surprised at the confidence which peasants show in the intelligence of strangers. The most sketchy instructions as to routes appear to these kindly people enough to secure the right path being taken, and the right path is in consequence by no means always found. One other thing I have noticed, however, about the information obtained from the people of this part of the country. They nearly always underestimate the time necessary to go on

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foot between these villages. This is the more remarkable, for my experience both in war and peace has been to the effect that country people usually overestimate distance. Perhaps it may be accounted for here by the fact that the native politeness of the Tuscan inclines him to put heart into the presumably tired stranger by minimising the difficulties to be overcome!

From this place the path runs along the side of a precipice, rough in many parts, but never dangerous, and the views not only of the deep valley below one's feet, but of the high ranges of the Apennines, are here truly magnificent. After an hour's tramp, sometimes along these walls of rock, sometimes under the shade of chestnut trees, always in proximity of the vines, now in their most perfect beauty, we arrived at the old town of Limano. This place clings to the spur of a mountain, and the houses straggle along it for nearly a mile, being held up on its extreme edge by the ancient church, as if so placed to prevent the errant house from falling into the valley below.

We entered from this side through one of those arch-tunnels of which I have spoken

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before, and made with almost indecent haste for the inn.

A magnificent view may be seen from the front room—opening on to a balcony—of this place, where we found the whole family of mine host, from the grandmother whose delicate and refined face suggested suffering rather than hard manual work, to the blooming granddaughter of three. Our landlord spoke French—a clear and distinct relief to those who had been struggling with a language but imperfectly understood; but had we been more proficient Italian scholars than we can claim to be, it is doubtful whether the people of this village could have understood us.

They came originally from Corsica, it is said, and still speak something of the patois of that island, which they retain together with many local customs.

We sauntered along the rough old street up to the church, under which through arches runs the path to some of the lower villages.

These archways are either the remains of the vaults, or submural chapel, and are of extraordinary interest. They are far and away the most picturesque part of a highly picturesque village.



MOUNTAIN VILLAGE. LIMA VALLEY.

Handwritten text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is faint and difficult to decipher but appears to be organized into several lines or columns.

Mountain Villages of the Lima Valley

I was most anxious to visit a neighbouring village with the curious Latin name of Vico Pancellorum, especially on account of a legend which I had read of in an old Italian guide-book. This story refers to the two towns of Vico Pancellorum and Lucchio, both of them possessing a somewhat striking history. They were both border castles of the Republic of Lucca and consequently in constant danger of attack at the hands of the wealthy Republic of Florence. For this reason and others the inhabitants developed an ingrained aversion to paying taxes. Indeed, I presume the tax collector himself found the ascent somewhat trying (about 1900 feet), especially as he might at any time on the way up expect a few rocks rolled down on him by the free and independent citizens of these places. At any rate it is known that either for this reason or from the fact that they were guardian towns they were relieved of the duty of paying their quota to the Lucca exchequer. To this day I am informed that like a good many of us they are opposed in principle to this form of fiscal tyranny.

But the story of the two girls of Vico who saved Lucchio is too good to be omitted.

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Years and years ago, somewhere in the fifteenth century, there was a naughty Captain of Lucchio. He was bad and bold, and like all such people had an especial liking for young and pretty girls. In this respect he was sufficiently human. At any rate it came about that he was suspected of wishing to give up the fortress of Lucchio to the Florentines, and was therefore a traitor to his country and to his oath. The patriotic people of Vico discussed this matter among themselves, and it so happened that it came to the ears of the two fairest maidens of the place that this treachery was to be consummated on a certain night. Now Tasia and Lucia had had some experience of the effect of their beauty on men—all the male inhabitants of the village were their slaves—so they determined to use this power to good purpose on the susceptible heart of the treacherous governor of the important fortress of Lucchio. The old chroniclers do not tell us how these devoted damsels crossed the deep-cut valley of the Lima, nor how they approached the castle of the Governor. We may reasonably assume that they went alone and in disguise traversed the old bridge, and ascended the perpendicular heights towards sunset, secured by their virtue

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and the power of beauty over the hearts of men. At the castle walls they sang plaintive songs, songs which were of sufficient interest, or resonance, to call the garrison to arms, and the ever-ready Captain was among those who heard their notes.

They were brought before him while at table, and they pleased him not a little. They, at any rate, received an invitation to his repast, and accepted it. Now it is not clearly stated what happened immediately after their arrival, but we may reasonably presume feasting and songs and the dance.

What we do know, however, is that the Captain of Lucchio, having forgotten entirely his rather important engagement with the Florentines, was found next morning gagged and securely bound to his proconsular bedpost, the Florentine soldiery had not received the keys of the castle, and Tasia and Lucia were safe back in their homes before dawn.

It is satisfactory to know that the two patriotic maidens received public recognition of their services, and that Lucchio remains in the Lucchese province to this day.

I left my companion busily sketching scenes in Limano, and went down and up through

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the trees to Vico Pancellorum. The road is pleasant, and its beauty was enhanced by a group of three pretty girls—one in orange, one in purple, and the other in red—who were gracefully washing the household linen in a shady dell beside a rushing stream.

The old church with its tower stands well away and below the village surrounded by woods, while the houses of the hamlet scramble up the steep slope of a mountain—a place picturesque, reposeful, superbly situated, but, alas! very poor.

One word as to its name. The Latin genitive plural is very rarely found now—one wonders how it has fallen into disuse—but here we clearly have it. There are two explanations given: either it means Vico—for narrow street—of the Pancelli, or, from the fact that it has for arms a communion cup and bread, it is a contraction of *panis cœlorum*, bread of heaven. Now it is humanly certain that the name is earlier than the general use of armorial insignia, especially of communal insignia; consequently the latter explanation must be rejected. It is more probable that the arms were adopted on account of the name, so commonly the custom of heralds. I think

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it is more than likely, however, that it takes its name from a family of Pancelli, who would themselves, when arms became hereditary in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, most likely have adopted a charge which had a punning reference to their name.

In this village, as in so many others, the people speak a special dialect of their own.

Having returned to my artistic friend at Limano, we left that village by the steep *salita* which leads down to the main road, where we chartered a light farm cart and returned to Bagni.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Inn :

Limano : small Restaurant Morandi.

Roads and Paths :

From Bagni di Lucca take highroad to San Marcello as far as the bridge (a little beyond Pallegio, $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles) ; then take mule track beyond the bridge to left of road to Cocciglia, 15 minutes ; through Cocciglia past castle and to one left bypath along the side of the ridge to Limano, $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours ; Limano to Vico Pancellorum about one hour.

CHAPTER XIV—*Bagni di Lucca to San Marcello and Pistoija*

PART of this road has already been followed, and a further portion seen from the Apennines above, and though I hold it is but a commonplace thing to follow roads when there are wide and breezy hills to be conquered, this particular journey has so many attractions that I may be excused in describing it.

I have said that the valley of the beautiful Lima river is well known, especially to the generation before the last, when Bagni was a centre of the little Grand Ducal Court, but the whole expedition between the Apennines and over the Pistoiese mountains is not so commonly made.

It would be difficult, I think, to find a more charmingly picturesque and romantic road than that which passes through the gorge under and between the mountain villages of Cocciglia and Casoli. Precipices dominate the road on either side, with glimpses above them

Bagni di Lucca to San Marcello

let in of the chestnut woods, and beyond as a background the awe-inspiring mountains of the Libro Operto (open book) and Forno.

At about the distance of twelve kilometres, we come to a few poor houses and a quaint bridge over the Lima, which has the curious name of Tana termini, or frontier cave, because here there is a grotto of portentous length, and the bridge marks the boundary of the provinces of Lucca and of Florence. The first time I was there, inspired by a spirit of adventure and appropriately accompanied by a medical friend, I explored this cave. In going there I had imagined that it was in some way comparable to the great caves of South Africa, which, though they cause you to adopt many unnatural methods of progression when far inside them, generally have pleasantly wide and hospitable front doors. This one, however, causes you from the start to adopt a crawling motion, and when I had done this for about twenty yards I began to realise the charms of the wide heavens and ordinary locomotion—and returned. It is said, however, that some persons of peculiar tastes have spent no less than two days and one night without being able to find the end of this grotto. I

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was quite as successful as these adventurers after a ten minutes' experience !

From this place ascends the mountainous path to the village of Lucchio, which from here looks as if it had been gummed to the side of a precipice, so steep is the hill on which it is built. The first time I ascended to this mountain fortress I was in the company of a particularly merry party who had driven here in a wagonette. We had started to ascend it with joy and high hopes, particularly high hopes, but it was remarkable how gradually the joy was changed to sadness and the hopes to despair, as on that peculiarly hot day we struggled up the mountain, burdened by the much-wished-for lunch. However, we spent a very pleasant day rambling through the almost vertical lanes of this wonderful place, and accompanied by Baron de C—— we paid a visit to Conte de St. G——, who lives in solitary nobility in the only new house in the place. I found in the latter a man who possesses some English blood and who speaks our language extremely well.

But our road to San Marcello leaves Lucchio on the right hand, and from the bridge we ascend a long hill to the village of Popiglio, in

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the church of which may be seen some remarkably fine vestments, for those who take an interest in such things. All along the valley of the Lima in every small hamlet may be noticed paper-mills, worked by water-power. Many of these are co-operative concerns, and very successful. It is always noticeable how popular co-operation has become in Italy, for not only in these places, but almost in every small town, you notice a co-operative bank, Banco Popolare, an institution run in consonance with this system, and which provides for the people an easy method of raising money for improvements.

There is another remarkable institution often found in the small towns, which appeals to me as excellent, namely the Conciliation Committee, a voluntary board appointed to settle disputes, where would-be litigants are invited to have their quarrels arranged gratis. How this would appeal to the lawyers I know not, but it seems useful for the laity.

There is a beautiful run down from Popiglio to the Ponte del Lima, a handsome bridge constructed by one of the Grand Dukes, near which are situated the extensive paper-mills of Commendatore Cini. This gentleman, who,

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like my friend at Lucchio, is blessed or cursed with some British blood, has done a very great deal for the improvement of the conditions of labour; indeed, he is one of the most progressive employers in Italy, and there are many progressive employers in that country. I have never had an opportunity of visiting these works, but I am told that they are model factories.

At Ponte del Lima the highroad to Abetone branches off, and in the summer may be seen motor and other heavy carts taking the provisions to that high mountain resort, which I have elsewhere described. The road now ascends to San Marcello, which is a charming little village, placed high up on a grassy spur of the mountains—a great resort of Italians driven away from their baking cities in June, July, and August. Here we were determined to lunch, and did so very comfortably at a restaurant in the village. But I could not pass through this place without paying a visit to my relative Baroness French, who has a charming rustic villa called *Il Nido* (the Nest), right up above the town, among the chestnut woods.

To get there the nearest and most beautiful

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way is through the grounds of the Villa Cini, the country residence of the gentleman mentioned above, and having an introduction to him, I availed myself of it. These are extremely well worthy a visit, for everything which water and high cultivation, combined with much taste, can do has been done to make them a miniature paradise. Cascades and fountains, grass of greenness worthy of Ireland, and shady bowers are to be seen everywhere, and one cannot imagine a more delightful place in which to rest on a grilling Italian day.

Having paid the visit to my relative, who is among the most politically active of Italian women, the President of the Women's Liberal Association, with which we recently worked cordially in attempting to relieve the sufferers from the earthquake in Sicily, I returned and we mounted our bicycles for the further ascent. We wound our way at first through charming meadows bounded always by the chestnuts, and backed by the higher peaks, to the summit of the watershed between the Lima and the Romagna plain towards Bologna—and then a run down of a mile or so until we join the Pracchia-Pistoija road. But here, instead of going into Pracchia, we turn to the right and

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south through a lovely valley which sometimes narrows to a gorge, and gently up again some miles until the watershed of the Pistoijese mountains is gained at the picturesque village of Piastre.

Now a truly magnificent view is opened up, an amphitheatre of mountains clothed richly with forests, ornamented with innumerable villages and farms, and below thousands of feet down in the Arno plain the quaint city of Pistoija for its radiant centre-piece. And from here, passing through many a quaint village and town, we coasted right down to the very gates of the city without a conscious movement of the pedal, and arrived at the station exactly five minutes before the last train started to take us back.

It was a truly pleasant expedition, and one which, as it is in no wise a lengthy one, I commend to all those who enjoy grandiose scenery and quaint village life.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

San Marcello : Albergo della Posta.

Pistoija : Albergo del Globo.

CHAPTER XV—*Bagni di Lucca to Pescia and Monte Catini.*

IN our hotel on the hill above Bagni di Lucca we were this year a pleasant party, but it happened we were not an energetic one. In truth, I fear I had frightened some possible victims, for the report was spread that I was a terrible man for walking, and had completely disabled one or two amiable persons. It was hardly a veracious account, because the only person to whom I could trace this florid picture of my alleged misdemeanours was an elderly bachelor who had himself proposed to bicycle with me. He had told me that he could easily manage fifty miles, and the first day I rode with him he suddenly collapsed at twenty and asserted that he was so tired that he believed he was going blind. I dare say he was. I make no comment, but clearly he had misled me in respect to fifty-mile power.

Therefore this season I was, so far as walking was concerned, somewhat left to

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my own resources—but it happened that “Amerigo” turned up to save the situation. His first introduction to me was in an incident which was at least as unpleasing to me as it could have been to him. Amerigo had been employed as a young waiter in the hotel : he was a peasant youth from a farm down by the river at Bagni di Villa. Naturally he was not, perhaps, an expert waiter, and I forget what happened, he gave me mint sauce with my fish, or bread sauce with my mutton—or something of a venial kind like these—and the head-waiter punished him with dismissal. When I heard of this I was so conscience-stricken—for after all I am sure mint sauce would go very well with fish, and as far as I know bread sauce with mutton—that I found out where he lived and went to see him. He, I found, lived in a little farm among the vines, which place I think must appear in one of the pictures in this book. At any rate I went to see him and his family and made my apologies to him. The mother, and indeed all the numerous tribe of brothers and sisters, received me with the usual cordiality of the Italian peasant farmer. I was offered the home-made wine, and the excellent *polenta*.



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No aspersion is here cast on the wine ; it is, I am sure, good, but it does not agree with me.

As Amerigo had nothing to do since his failure as a waiter, and seeing that he was a strong young man of twenty or so, I proposed to him that he should join me in some walks as my guide, feeling sure that he would not go blind at twenty miles.

So it was settled that next day we should go over the high hills, through the chestnut forests to Monte Catini—a place which people with disordered livers frequent.

At an early hour the next morning Amerigo was waiting for me, and we started along the beautiful road which the last Duke of Tuscany—he who was the father, I suppose, of the Princess Luisa by marriage, Crown Princess (and Queen) of Saxony, and by a second alliance Signora Tosseli, the wife of a musician in Florence. I may perhaps be allowed to mention that this lady's escapades have caused us some little inconvenience. I do not pretend to know the ins and outs of her story, but I do know that when she first came to Florence, having then run away from her husband, the King of Saxony, and herself a daughter of the late

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Grand Duke of Tuscany, I felt no little sympathy for her. For this reason: I was informed that she was encompassed by spies, and that her daughter Monica, who was clearly not the daughter of her husband the King, was the object of persons who wished to kidnap her and take the child back to Saxony against the mother's wish. Of course, I was told that she was the injured person.

Moreover, I had heard some things which I did not believe—such, for instance, as men boasting of their *liaisons* with her—entirely nasty things, and unchivalrous.

Up to this point, therefore, thinking she was persecuted, I was quite prepared, and indeed did offer, to organise a guard for her which would at least have made it difficult for her persecutors to effect much.

But then some kindly English ladies proposed that she should be received, and that my wife should be among those to receive her. And then I told these kindly people that, though I had no prejudices at all, my wife must first receive erring dressmakers before she received erring princesses, or queens; and neither she nor these estimable ladies had done this yet.

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To resume our walk, which, I fear, is constantly being interrupted by thoughts of matters which occurred about this time. The Grand Duke's pathway from the hot baths to Villa is quite one of the most beautiful I know. There are glorious views of the Apennines, peak after peak, of the Lima and Serchio rivers, cutting their way through those mountains and making profound gorges of the valleys on all sides. And, above all, the refreshing chestnut woods, which here cover the hills almost to their summits. These, when you know peasant life in Italy, are not only beautiful but extraordinarily beneficial. What some of my peasant friends would do without the aid which these kindly trees afford in the winter for food I cannot imagine. For cakes and bread are made from these, and the products of the forests are free to the people, and give subsistence to thousands who in bad seasons would otherwise have to depend on charity. Nature's charity, or, rather, justice, is better than man's, because it is given without condescension and without the suspicion of reproach.

We walked down to Bagni di Villa, crossing

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the Lima, and up the steep hill, which has on its side the village of Benabbio. We passed on the way a lonely house, called the ghost-house, where a suicidal spirit is supposed to be seen. I have stalked that ghost very often, and he has with obstinate persistence evaded me. So has my own pet Family Ghost, a lady in white, with a splotch of blood over her breast, who runs, it is said, from the hall into the park and dies there repeatedly, as she died, in fact, three hundred years ago. I am most interested in her, but she never appears to me, which is unkind, though I have waited for her for hours, and she does, it seems, condescend to strangers. Perhaps the Society for Psychical Research will afford me some explanation why those persons most interested in spooks are alone those of whom these phenomena appear to be most shy. At any rate, we saw no sign of the hanged man at this house, and climbed up thence to Benabbio, unaffrighted. This little village is privileged by having—the only hill village about here which has it—a quite excellently engineered road leading to it. So it is much better known to the tourist than most.

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The little church at Benabbio is one not lacking in interest, seeing that it was built as early as the twelfth century. It has a high campanile, I think the original one, from which the whole Lima family can be seen; and behind the altar is to be found—and if you are fortunate in meeting the priest, who is an enthusiast, can be understood—a picture in the school of Giotto, of the Ascension, which in beauty is hardly excelled in any contemporaneous work.

We passed through the little village square, being greeted on all sides by the villagers, for my guide Amerigo appeared to be a popular person, and up again into the chestnut woods. On the left and above is the ruined castle, which I am told once belonged to my historic friend Castruccio Castracani, of whom I have often spoken, and to which place he brought back from exile the noble poet Lupari, who had been expelled by the Guelphs about 1305. My hero Castruccio did a lot of good things in his time, besides looting and building fine bridges.

Now we passed up a *salita*, and gradually at about five miles from the village approached the highest point of the ridge which divides

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the Lima valley from that of the Arno, which point is not lacking in dignity, as it is about as high as the highest mountain in England. From here you can see Pistoija, Florence, and the rich valley of the Arno, as well as on the other side the rugged scenery of the Apennines. Just below the summit and on the other side of it, appeared the Bell Tower of the little village of Boveglio. Here I met, at the first inn I entered, the only rude host I have ever encountered in Italy. It is true I believe he was drunk or recovering from the effects of a carouse, but he certainly did not welcome me with the smile which one becomes so accustomed to expect in Italian houses of resort. I was thinking of this question of smiling, when only a few days ago it was my privilege to preach in the parish church of my family a sermon on "Christianity and Courtesy." One notices among the southern races of Europe that a smile seems to come natural to them in greeting—and it is a happy greeting. With us in the North, though often they are glad to see us, an ominously solemn expression is the rule. I wonder whether it is climatic or constitutional; at any rate it is unpleasing to me, and in some way which I cannot

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explain or justify, shuts off the good which is in me.

Could we not train our youths to smile in our Board Schools? However, this man was quite English in his greeting, so much so that I left his house and went to one where I was received by an amply developed lady, who expressed in every crease in her large figure her pleasure at seeing us. And we lunched well under her kindly administration, and I noticed that which I had observed often before in similar houses, that there was a coat-of-arms on the wall of the family, that of the hostess, by name Lazzari. It had a baron's crown and certainly a knightly helmet, and was quite a good coat-of-arms from an heraldic point of view. One wonders whether some of the old great families are not now in these humble positions; and, as I have said before, there is every evidence of this in the extraordinary distinction of the faces of some of the elder peasants. English dukes and baronets are not in it with some of them!

The way down from this old town on the hills is by a stone pathway especially constructed for mules, but half a mile or so in the valley, a carriage road commences, which

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leads eventually to a junction on the Pistoija-Lucca line.

We followed this road until we came to a village which was especially distinguished by a magnificent seventeenth-century villa (or country house built in urban style), with a garden—a real Italian garden—such as we have been copying through the centuries, and which now can almost only be found in English country houses. The Italian garden, with its cropped box-hedges, its statues, its fountains, its general and to me rather objectionable sense of formality, came to England in the sixteenth century and almost ceased to exist in Italy in the seventeenth. We adopted it, and in a very particular way “fathered” it, while its natural parent renounced his offspring.

Here, however, at Collodi is the most complete example of the Italian garden I have ever seen, and it is on the road. You cannot pass it without seeing it, and no member of the family enjoying this pleasure can brush his hat or remove a fly from his coat without being seen from the road.

There are two things which are suggested by this house. In England a villa means a little house, suburban or what not. No man

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if he can help it will willingly live in a villa ; indeed, I have seen some villas in the suburbs of London dubbed Normanhurst, Alnwick, Roseneath, or Raby House, to avoid the name of villa. Silly as this may seem—for it is always silly to pretend to be what you are not—it is perhaps the more ridiculous when we consider the origin of the word villa—country house.

The Romans clearly brought it to us in this sense, and if Windsor or Warwick Castles were in Italy they would assuredly be called Villa Windsor or Villa Warwick. But while the Roman's villa became a court, a hall, or a castle in England, and the name villa has been relegated to the houses of suburban genteel folk, the appurtenances of the villa remain in the *village*, which is no more than the houses near the Roman villa, and the villain who is no more than the occupant of such houses.

From this village we left the road, passing to the left through olive woods up and down for two miles or so to Pescia, the small but picturesque episcopal city, the Bishopric of which, I believe, is still held as an hereditary right by a certain Florentine family, much in the same way as the patronage of our livings is

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still retained by our own families. A Bishopric may seem a more formidable privilege than ours of livings, but when it is remembered that such a see would be worth not perhaps as much as £250 a year, and many of my cousins and neighbours in England own many livings of more value than £500 each, it need not scandalise us. Pescia is a joyful little town built on the banks of a rushing stream, where on market day may be seen gathered the whole country-side in flaring colours and in genial mood.

The geniality of the people of the South pleases and astonishes me. An Italian friend of mine described it as God's grace, and if it be, or even if it be the effect of a better digestion, we may reasonably pray that it may be granted to us.

A walk of a few miles brought us to Montecatini, where, after reasonable refreshment, Amerigo and I took train for home.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION.

Montecatini. Hotel della Place, pension 11 francs.

CHAPTER XVI—*Bagni di Lucca by the Pizzorne to Lucca and the Volto Santo*

MY first attempt to arrive at Lucca over the high plateau of the Pizzorne was somewhat disastrous. This was possibly due to the fact that I started too late and alone. Of course I cannot say what my readers feel on the subject of lonely walks. Some poets, many historians, more scientists, have asserted that they prefer walking alone, and generally of those who have said it I like neither their poetry, their history, nor their science. I can imagine a sentient human bicycling alone or riding on horseback alone—in either case a certain interest is created by the energy necessary to keep in the saddle ; but to walk alone, where at any rate you cannot fall off unless off the globe itself, is to me a penance, an act of self-immolation. For walking is of the sort of exercise which stimulates the mental machinery in man, and this energy has to be let off somewhere. It is true I have

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met men walking alone and apparently addressing the trees, the rivers, and the creatures which dwell in them, in eloquent and no doubt convincing terms. I noticed, however, that there was no response, and the essence of human intercourse surely is that there must be response. I have addressed village meetings in what I thought at the time were eloquent and convincing words, and yet received no reply, either way, until at times I would have given half a crown to any man who would have stood up and called me a liar. This is the effect which walking alone has on me. It stimulates my brain, but there is no responsive being on whom to act and react. It is as a speech to a meeting of village bumpkins.

The journey up to Lugliano, the picturesque village which dominates the valley of the Lima at Bagni di Lucca, is well known.

Everyone who has been to Bagni di Lucca knows well the road up to this mountain fortress, for it is truly this, having been built, so far as the old village is concerned, on the exact lines of the citadel. I am very fond of Lugliano and of the people there, for I know it and them very well. I presume other

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people have liked them also, for the fountain was given to them in 1825 by Lady Bute and Lord Sandon to commemorate their stay for a season in the village. There is a large ash tree in the garden of the villa of Signor Politi, which is certainly the largest ash I have ever seen, and under the branches of which, I should say, twenty people might comfortably dine, and from it one of the finest views can be enjoyed.

Passing through the village I went on upward through the trees. I had been provided with a scheme purporting to be directions as to my route to the Pizzorne. To err is human, to forgive divine. Divinely I forgive the author of this scheme, but I do not forget; for the scheme led me into every hole and corner which is possible of conception, and in a wilderness of trees and along forest ridges of inconceivable fertility. It is true I enjoyed it all, even made friends with the two peasant boys I met in this desert, and always appreciated the magnificent views which my lonely journey allowed me to enjoy. I went on and on, through copses, through woods, always at or near the ridges of high mountains; but never did it seem I came to San Bartolommeo

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(which I had imagined was a village, but what it is really I will tell you later). At last I arrived at a valley of rocks, where, at any rate sometimes, people worked for stone, but they did not do so that day. There were tram lines for trucks—quite human things I thought them in my lonely mood, but neither trucks nor men were to be seen. I felt as the imaginative writers have made us feel—a man in a moribund moon, a desert which had been inhabited by man, but now deserted. Still, however, I struggled onward through copse and jungle, for I had in me a certain pride; for had I not been on the veld in South Africa without compass, without guide, and without instruction? There I had worried through; but here the deadly silence—there was no silence, at any rate, in South Africa; Tommy Atkins arranged that—appalled me. Really it appalled me, and now it was growing dark. So I gave up the attempt, and made for the nearest valley, where at any rate men lived and spoke. Down a kloof by a winding stream, without path, and with but little light to guide me until I arrived at a village called Corsagna. Blessed village! Even here my troubles were not ended, for

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still two miles of a path remained before the road was reached, and this path I found trying enough, because the enterprising inhabitants of these villages have here established an electrical system, a quite good system, but extremely inconvenient to the wayfarer after night sets in, and dark night of a kind which can only be realised under the trees of a mountain valley. So completely puzzled was I in the labyrinths of small paths bordering on deep canals—horribly deep canals, and extraordinarily narrow paths—that, arriving at an electric station, I decided to either stay under its shade for the night or, as seemed improbable, awaken the dead in it; for the whole place looked dead—not a light anywhere, and in the heavens not the sign of a star, and canals everywhere!

I knocked for some minutes, and at last was greeted by a young man who had evidently just retired. He very kindly took me in hand, and, having obtained some straw, lit it, and by the light it gave me proceeded along the impossible path to Ponte a Seraglio.

But I am sure that in war I have never been nearer death than I was on that dark

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night in the valley of Pizzorne, close to Bagni di Lucca.

Thus my first attempt failed. Fortunately there arrived at the hotel a Russian gentleman, who was keen for expeditions, and he and I agreed to make the trek to Pizzorne together. This time, however, we started early, and went by Benabbio, a journey which I have described in another place. I again took Amerigo for our guide and porter, rather to give him something to do than of necessity. From Benabbio, passing under a curious arch, the road to Pizzorne keeps for a few miles fairly level. Every now and again there are wonderful glimpses of endless chestnut-clad ridges, and one exquisite picture, where Brandelia is seen a veritable crown to the high mountain on which it reposes. My Russian friend, who speaks English perfectly, and who knows our country well, is married to a charming compatriot who was educated at Newnham. We found many subjects in common, the more especially, as the lady is an ardent suffragette or suffragist (I do not know the difference), and I had but recently joined the party in favour of votes for women. We

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discussed a point in this question not too often referred to, and appropriate, seeing that we too were of different nationality, namely, the effect which the concession of voting power to the female sex might have on international relations. I have always maintained that women, though, as we found them in South Africa, the most patriotic defenders of their own country, would, nevertheless, be generally opposed to aggressive warfare, because it would require their husbands' and sons' service abroad. I suppose it would depend greatly on whether they wished to get rid of them or not, for I remember one lady who it was said went to the War Office and volunteered her husband's services, and I know one Boer woman who, when her goodman surrendered, refused to live in the same house with one she called a coward.

In discussing these questions we passed up through the forests until we arrived at the little pilgrimage chapel of San Bartolommeo, which is just under the crest of Monte Barbona, 3250 feet. From this point you get a most magnificent view of the Arno valley right up to Florence and beyond it to the Vallombrosan mountains, and the panorama includes the ancient

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cities of Lucca, Pistoija; and on the other side glimpses are seen of the steep Serchio valley, backed by the sharp peaks of the Apuans.

To this chapel (where until comparatively recently a hermit dwelt), one day in August, a pilgrimage is made, which like most of them combines the attraction of religious excitement with that of an innocent frolic. Hundreds of peasants and their families make their way up to this high spot, take part in the religious ceremony, and then, booths having been fixed up, they dance on the green until a late hour. The Roman Catholic Church has a happy knack of combining duty and pleasure, which might wisely be copied by other denominations.

The descent on the Lucca side is magnificently steep—almost precipitous; and here, unlike the other side, unforested. On our way down we passed a curious farm, where I noticed an enormous number of nets, and on enquiry found that it was exclusively a bird-netting farm, the birds being sold for food, or for cages. To us this was not agreeable, for my Italian friends, with many excellent qualities, yet have the altogether atrocious custom of blinding the birds to make them, as they

Bagni di Lucca by the Pizzorne to Lucca

believe, sing better. I have argued with them until I was tired, but without ever making them understand the barbarity of this habit.

After passing around a magnificent amphitheatre of precipices, you double over a spur of the hills and descend on the little village of Matraja, almost as from a balloon. The plateau of Pizzorne, over which we had now passed, must be some miles broad, and over 3000 feet above the sea. Here there are delightfully green pasture lands, interspersed with trees, resembling an English park. I should imagine it an ideal place for a summer hotel.

At Matraja we had a second lunch in an inn, the only one, where we found both host and hostess most interested in everything about us. To them a Russian was somewhat of a novelty, and it took us some time to persuade them that my friend really was a subject of the Czar. I think they expected a Russian to be dressed *en Cosacq*—and not as this one was, by a London tailor. The host told us he was a tenant of a certain marchese (whom he called by his Christian name), and that they looked forward for the pilgrimage day as the most profitable one of the year, for they had the

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contract to supply the pilgrims with dinner upon the top.

The way down to Ponte a Moriano is steep enough, and on approaching this latter place you pass some magnificent though generally unoccupied villas, this having been in old days the favourite summer residence of the Lucchese aristocracy.

I was due to pay a visit at one of these, our kind friends the Marchese and Marchesa B—— and their charming family. The daughters and sons of this house are immensely fond of walking, and many a pleasant expedition in the mountains have I made in their company.

The immense house in which we were all welcomed is one of those built, I suppose, in the seventeenth or early eighteenth century, which is so large one wonders how any family could occupy it. Of course this was effected by the kindly habit of the Italians of welcoming all branches of their relations under the same roof, married sons and daughters with their wives and husbands.

Now, alas! though it is occupied in the summer months it is only partially furnished and looks bare enough.

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This family, one of the oldest in Lucca, reside now in Pisa, where the father is a professor at the university, and what he once told me illustrates one phase of Italian life. When he first came to live at Pisa he was looked at as quite a stranger by the nobles there. At heart, in spite of United Italy, these little states remain separate, even though, as in this case, they are only a few miles apart.

It was with this gentleman that a year ago we tried some experiments with nitrobacterine, the inoculation of the seeds of vegetables with a germ which has the unique characteristic of extracting the nitrogen from the air and fixing it in the soil, and it was through this that I became acquainted (only slightly it is true) with three pretenders to thrones or their relations—the Duchess of Parma, a daughter of Don Carlos of Spain, and Don Miguel of Portugal.

With much regret I left my friends as we had to proceed to Lucca, where the next day we were to see the famous Volto Santo, the life-sized wooden crucifix whose history is roughly this: A long time ago, somewhere in the eighth or ninth century—but dates in these

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matters are of but the slightest importance—a holy Bishop of Lucca had a vision, a dream, or what not, which informed him that a great crucifix which had been carved out of wood by one of the apostles was about to arrive on the coast near there. So the Bishop, being convinced that he was especially enjoined to receive it, with due ceremony, accompanied by his priests and retainers, journeyed to the nearest point on the coast, which then, be it remembered, was much nearer than now, as the mud of the rivers has since pushed the Mediterranean far back. Sure enough, on the horizon was seen a solitary boat drifting towards the coast, and when near enough it was found to contain a great wooden crucifix, but no living occupant. There was much prayer and holy rejoicing at this miracle, so much so that the adjoining Bishop of Pisa heard of it, and sallied forth also in all the pomp and dignity of episcopal glory. It happened that where the sacred relic landed was Pisan soil, and a dispute arose between the Bishops as to whom the great figure belonged. Mind you, it is a nice point, and if as a magistrate this case had been before me I feel very uncertain as to which claimant I should have

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adjudged the relic, and am quite certain the learned judges of the appeal would have divided as equally as possible on it and have mulcted the litigants in enormous fees for so doing. Lucca's claim was visionary in that Lucca had the vision, which clearly indicated that her Bishop had an especial interest in the wooden figure which came by sea, and at that period, as far as I know, Lucchese territory did not touch the sea. On the other hand, though clearly Pisa had not been vouchsafed a vision, the sacred image had obviously chosen Pisan territory to land on. I should say that in law clearly it was Pisan, but in equity, overriding law, it belonged to Lucca. So it turned out, for after the bishops had wrangled for a day or two, some genius suggested that to save time the wooden effigy should be put into an ox-wagon and have done with the contentions. This was done, and as soon as it was so placed off trotted the oxen—(as a matter of fact oxen do not trot, but it would be a pity to spoil the story for this fact)—straight to Lucca. This was conclusive, and the Pisan Bishop returned to his see disconsolate. But the oxen not only “trotted” to Lucca, but, being obstinate animals—I know oxen, and can vouch for

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this—went not to the chief church [then the cathedral] San Michele, but to a waste space of land under and inside the walls, where they stopped, and all the active and virulent attention of their drivers could not move them.

So the great crucifix was taken from the wagon and brought on the shoulders of men to the church of S. Michele and there left.

The next morning, to the surprise of many and the exasperation of all, it was found that the relic had removed itself, or been removed, from the church to the waste land near the walls. It was taken back, and the same thing happened—a third time, and it happened. Then at last it dawned on the spiritually-minded that the figure wished to be left on the waste land, and on the practically-minded that they could not be every day expending large sums re-transporting a very heavy crucifix from one side of the town to the other.

It was then decided by both parties of the state—these may be likened to the Progressives and Moderates in modern municipalities—that it would be, in the Progressive view, right to follow what was clearly the design of a Superior Power, and from the Moderates what was obviously a saving of expenditure in the long

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run—and build for this self-opinionated statue a church of its own. This they did on the waste land near the walls, and this now is the great cathedral of Lucca. It may seem frivolous here to quote a remark of General Baden-Powell respecting a certain general who had not moved his head-quarters for some months, but perhaps it is apposite. On being asked why General —— had not moved, B.P. replied, “I understand he has pitched his tents for some months up yonder, and now, having become accustomed to the neighbourhood, is building a wall round his tents against the winter.”

So at Lucca they built around their relic a very fine cathedral, one of the most interesting in this part of Italy.

I went early from my hotel to see the ceremony. Crowds of peasants of all ages, in their picturesque dresses, were sauntering in by the trains, and every street was filled with them enjoying their outing as much as Eton and Harrow boys enjoy their “festa” at Lord’s. There were all kinds of quite pleasing flirtations, which expressed themselves in the liberality of man to woman in treats of fairings in the Piazza San Michele where the booths were.

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In the solemn cathedral, however, everything was decorous. The Volto Santo is kept in a special iron-protected and ornate chapel, almost in the centre of the cathedral—a sort of decorated prison. On ordinary days all that can be seen of the figure is, I believe, its feet, for though there are representations of it everywhere, only the feet of the real statue are exposed.

But on this day the whole figure, which must be eight feet high, including the cross, was to be shown. I have said that I was present when the first preparations were made. Gradually and one by one the candles round the altar of the image were lighted. There was an expectant crowd behind held back by the cathedral police. It happened that I had a special pass which allowed me to be within the barrier, so I could observe. The officiating priests were two elderly men who were clearly devout, and a third younger one of whose spiritual outlook I am not quite so sure. This latter performed the dramatic part of it by pulling back the curtain—but I doubt, I doubt his faith. As soon as the sacred image was exposed to view one realised how extraordinarily interesting it was—not from a religious but more

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especially from an antiquarian point of view. Here, undoubtedly, was shown a Syrian wood sculpture of our Lord crucified, clearly Syrian, obviously Oriental. Moreover, quite certainly early in modelling, if not contemporaneous with our Lord, at any rate, not far from this period. Moreover, the figure is decorated by the devout of the centuries with gold and jewels priceless in worth, which alone are significant of its power and the power of the Church, immensely interesting to the student of humanity, and of God.

Sometimes I laugh unduly, sometimes I wish to cry—and could do so were I not English, I suppose—at these things. An image decked with priceless jewels and my friends the adoring peasants, living on pasta and vinegar, content to worship and to suffer. Almost every day of my life I am an optimist and a pessimist in turn. I see, as I saw to-day, a kitten persecuted by boys, and for a moment, in restraining them, became an anarchist, a red-hot one too, to aid radically in changing a system under which these wretched boys, themselves of the persecuted of the world, yet take an unholy delight in persecution. And last night I heard a demagogue of the

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gutter preaching the most grievous nonsense as to the owners of land, and so far as he was concerned I became, and in respect to him, a Divine Right Tory. So here in Lucca one saw deserving poverty content in the worship of an object on which great sums had been expended, and satisfied that this money should still remain idle while the worshippers themselves live in poverty. It is altogether quite pleasing, but is it not wonderful?

When the curtain was drawn the crowd were admitted, and there was a rush, such as happens on the opening of the pit doors of one of our theatres. Women with babies, men, girls and boys, all struggled to get in. For my own part I followed only one woman, who had in her arms a tender child, and, as far as I could, protected her and her infant. The baby had in his hands a balloon of the ordinary kind, in which he was immensely interested. The mother, devoutly wrapped up in the ceremonial, followed *en queue* to the sanctuary, I playing my humble part by interesting myself with the baby and his balloon. I did it quite well, for when the crucial moment arrived, and the mother knelt down to kiss the feet of the wooden figure of our Lord, the baby was still

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playing, with some energy, with his balloon on his mother's shoulder, and I tried to calm him. But the baby showed throughout no reverence, which seems to demonstrate that reverence is not natural, but acquired.

I remember we took part in the ceremonial march round the cathedral: I in the second row after the Bishop, who is a charming and a genial man. But as we solemnly paraded the church, aisle after aisle, modernism interposed its inconvenient hand. The electric-light wires crossed and recrossed the aisles, and these were not regulated always in conformity with the height of the episcopal mitre. For at a certain point this mitre came off, and we were all on the ground struggling to recover it for his lordship. Yet the procession of the faithful went on, in spite of modern electric wires, and I expect it will always go on, if its authorities have wisdom. And I sincerely hope it will for ever and for ever, because there is much in it, not all, but much!

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Hotels:

Lucca: Hôtel de l'Univers.

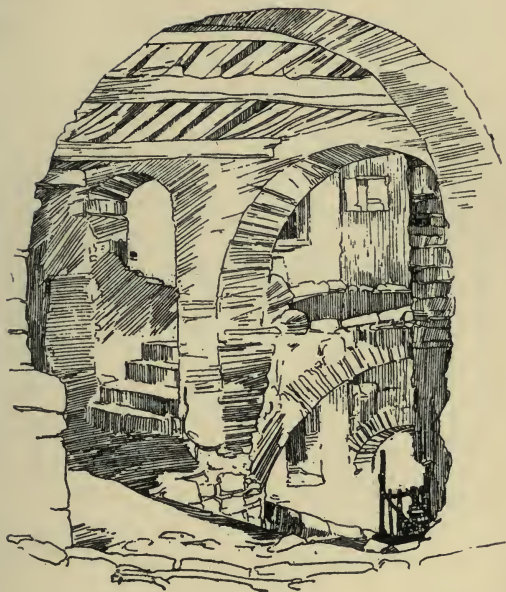
Hotel Corona.

CHAPTER XVII—*Bagni to Monte Forato and Matanna*

TRAVELLERS passing by train from Spezzia to Viareggio may have observed a white splash on one of the high Carrara mountains, which some take to be snow and others to be an outcrop of marble. It is neither of these, but is, on the contrary, a large and natural archway which pierces the mountain high up, near to its summit.

To this point it had long been my wish to ascend, but to do so from the inland side, from the country called Garfagnana. This district is little known to tourists, for it can only be approached by road either from Bagni di Lucca on the south-east or from Aulla on the north-west. It has a peculiar charm of its own, not only from its remoteness, but no less from the fact that it is closed in by two high ranges of mountains, the Apennines and the Apuan Alps.

Our starting-place was the picturesque vil-



ARCHES IN THE PUBLIC ROAD OF AN APUAN
MOUNTAIN VILLAGE.

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lage of Gallicano, built on and almost overhanging the rocky sides of a ravine, through which runs a rapid stream with an enviable reputation for trout. Gallicano itself is approached from Bagni di Lucca by a road which follows the windings of the Serchio river, which road presents to the traveller a view of the Apennines and the mountain villages of Ghivizzano, Coreglia, Barga, and innumerable others, all set in a framework and background of peaks, such as Rondinaio, Tre Potenze, and Monte Giovo. The scene is one which vividly recalls in the middle and farther distance many a mediæval painting, to such an extent that one is induced to expect the appearance on the road of a knight in glistening armour, or of a saintly figure passing on his way to perform a sacrifice of which the world has heard for these many centuries past.

The village of Gallicano itself, however, has not only as attractions its native and palatable trout and its romantic position. The ancient church contains what appears to my amateurish eyes as one of the best examples of the work of Luca della Robbia in a large *Coronation of the Virgin* with a saint on either side and two exquisite angels above.

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From this place we—namely, a Russian friend and our porter, a mountain-bred youth—started on foot up the mule track towards the remote little village of Forno Velasco, a walk of three hours. It would be difficult to exaggerate the beauties of this route, for while it is generally shaded by the chestnuts, and winds along the bank of a roaring stream, it at times allows of views of the awe-inspiring “massif” of the Pannia, which dominates the whole of this valley. And the Pannia, or rather the two Pannias, form a magnificent background in shape, rugged, threatening, and bare, looking from the stream almost perpendicular, and gleaming in the sun with a whiteness as of snow. A spring of water, which issues with great force from the rocky side of the valley, has an interest for those interested in municipal expenditure, even though it be a melancholy one, for it was bought some years ago by the corporation of Florence, with a view to supplying the city with water. Alas! however, after the purchase-money had been paid, it was found that while the spring could be sold, no water from it could be taken, for the rights belonging to the riparian owners below forbade it.

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On the way up to Forno we passed a large number of boys and girls carrying on their backs enormous loads of wood ; so we stopped one of these and enquired about their employment. It seems that they walk the three hours, backward and forward, always twice and sometimes thrice in the day, carrying supplies to the upland village, and returning with their loads of wood to Gallicano, for the magnificent sum of eighty or ninety centimes. Poor little people, no wonder they looked thin and pale !

Forno Velasco is one of those curiously picturesque little hamlets, with quaint arches and perilously steep streets, in which fortunately there is generally an inn where one may eat well. There we lunched, and there we made friends with the heroine of this chapter, the cat o' the mountain. She introduced herself after our hearty lunch, a very small and thin kitten with enormous and penetrating eyes that regarded us with a seriousness which suggested that their owner was looking into our very souls and knew more of our past than any of us care to have enquired into. She condescended to eat, and with remarkable zest, but beyond fondling

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her a little, we thought no more of her at the time.

From Forno up to the great arch in the mountain, which was our objective, the track is very steep and very difficult to follow. Indeed, towards the latter part no track is visible, and it means a rough scramble up a grass slope almost on hands and knees. Just before reaching the top, burning with the noonday heat, what time we were looking forward to the cool breeze we expected when the sea would lie at our feet, I heard the smallest and most plaintive cry behind me, and turning back saw a crumpled and way-worn kitten, four inches long, with difficulty climbing up the steep ascent. She was our friend of the inn, tired—for she had followed us for an hour—dishevelled, and unhappy, but still possessing those penetrating and far-seeing eyes which I have mentioned as characteristic of her. Of course I adopted her, and for that day and the next carried her in my arms.

The view through the enormous aperture, a hundred feet in diameter at least, was stupendous. Appearing straight down beneath our very feet lay the villages of Cardoso,

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Volegno, Relignano, and Ponte Stazzimese. Thousands of feet below, further on, could be seen Serravezza and Pietrasanta, and then the blue Mediterranean sprinkled over with the white sails of fishing boats from Spezzia to Leghorn. No finer view can be imagined, especially as it is a Gargantuan picture framed by the rugged walls surrounding this glorious arch of nature.

Having fed the kitten and drunk our fill of that sense of power natural to those who look down on a world from high places, we proceeded along the razor edge of this hill until we came to the mule pass of Petroschiana, a pass which leads from Garfagnana to the sea, and then proceeded along a foot track on the sea side of these mountains, commanding always most magnificent views, to the hill of the Porchetti ("Little Pigs"), called by this name for a reason which I have not yet been able to discover. Thence we ascended again by a path which leads in an hour to the Matanna mountain and to the new Mountain Hotel kept by mine excellent host, Alemanno Barsi. This is an inn for the elect of the mountains, those who wish to study nature at her best and are not afraid of a two hours'

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walk or mule ride to attain this object. Here among the thirty guests we found many friends and spent the night, being well entertained by the proprietor. My cat o' the mountain, my kitten of Monte Forato, was received with distinguished consideration as a mountaineer and adventurer.

The next day we descended from Alto Matanna to Camaiore by the beautiful Foce Crocione and Casoli, thence to Viareggio. Here we spent some hours, the kitten enjoying novel experiences, especially when she met the first cart in her life—for carts are unknown in her part of the country. So surprising was it to her that she sat up on my shoulder with arched back, and received it with execration, the while spitting vehemently.

She is now of my family, a favoured member, and shows no especial desire to return to her native heights, except perhaps a certain love of climbing trees, a somewhat inconvenient habit to her master, who is not arboreally inclined.

Bagni to Monte Forato and Matanna

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Hotels, Inns, etc. :

Gallicano : Albergo Giglio (a small inn, but good ; ask for trout). Café Carlo del Prete (owner speaks English).

Forno Velasco : Albergo Americano (good for meals).

Matanna : Albergo Matanna. 1100 feet above sea. Open from 1st June to 1st October. Pension 7 frcs. To get there you must go either by rail to Diecemo (Bagni di Lucca line), thence drive to Pescaglia, 1½ hours, and thence by mules, about 2 hours, to hotel, or via Viareggio to Camaiore, 35 minutes by tramway, thence by mules, 3½ to 4 hours, to hotel.

Camaiore : Albergo il Giardinetto.

Roads and Paths :

From Bagni di Lucca to Gallicano 10 miles, good road. Pass to right of station (1 mile) up valley of the Serchio, cross old bridge of Calovorno (3 miles) to right bank. Pass Turrite di Cava (inn for meals ; 5½ miles).

From Gallicano to Forno, 3 hours on foot (good path). Pass through town and up right bank of stream to Chieva (2 hours), where cross to right bank ; thence to Forno.

From Forno Velasco to Monte Forato and Matanna Hotel, guide desirable, man or boy for 4 to 5 lire. Steep climb to Monte Forato (1 hour). Thence along ridge to Matanna (2½ to 3½ hours) ; magnificent views.

CHAPTER XVIII—*Bagni to Castelnuovo
and Careggine*

NO railway has yet disturbed the ancient repose of this district, which dates from that period when the Romans made a “De Wet” drive for the purpose of cornering the Etruscan “Boers” in this valley between the Apuan Alps and the Apennines, and to this day few tourists corrupt the simplicity of its people. From Bagni di Lucca to the capital town of Garfagnana, namely Castelnuovo—a distance of eighteen miles—the road runs along the valley of the Serchio, which narrows considerably after passing Gallicano. Everywhere it is beautiful—could it be otherwise with its chestnut-clad hills backed by the grand mountains of Carrara and Apennine?—but now its character somewhat alters. From the wide valley with its panorama of mediæval villages framed by the Apennines, of which I have spoken elsewhere, the scene becomes crabbed and confined. The hills close in on

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the river until they threaten to suffocate it, yet on the precipitous sides of these heights are seen everywhere the square campanili of churches which indicate the presence of unseen villages. One wonders how the ancient builders reconciled themselves to the adoption of such sites, while understanding full well their dominant reason, namely, that of safety. Has it ever struck the traveller in Italy to what extent this fact of the villages being generally on the tops of hills and not on the banks of streams must in the course of the ages have affected the physique of the people and even their character? The inhabitants of hot countries are of necessity lethargic, but there is little room for lethargy when after a day's work it is incumbent to descend two thousand feet to buy necessary food from the town which is lazily situate on the river below. This is literally what these excellent peasants have to do, and, perhaps, consequently they are among the hardest-working people in the world. They go everywhere to almost every country, as labourers on railways, as street repairers, as builders; and employers admit they are the strongest, the most capable, and the most enduring among our brothers

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who do the heavy work of the world. The rapid decadence of the inhabitants of the towns in Italy need not be dwelt on—we have a like question in our own country—but, at any rate, the mountaineers may thank Providence (I fear they do not) for the fact that this mysterious Power has decided that they shall dwell on the heights.

In this connection it would be interesting to discuss how far the recent industrial renaissance in Italy, so unexpected as to have astonished all serious thinkers, is due to the fact that Italy has a large population of healthy hill-dwellers ready and willing to augment their scanty incomes by work in factories. In war it is the reserve which really counts—the nation which has the greatest reserve force is the one which eventually wins. It is probably so in peace!

I was immensely impressed when visiting some of the recently established cotton factories by the strength of the workers, both female and male. They were healthy people, looking like peasants with good out-of-door complexions. How different from my good Manchester friends of the same class, as they have been seen by me!

Bagni to Castelnuovo and Careggine

To return to our immediate *moutons*. After passing the village of Gallicano we cycled for some three miles until we arrived at an inn by the great stone bridge, which with its chestnuts in front seemed to invite us to rest. It apparently had invited many others also, for outside it there was a crowd of peasants and wagoners who had made this open-air retreat into a veritable club. It is a convenient place of rest for the men who drive the ox-wagons from the Carrara mountains, and it is evidently a centre for the peasants of the surrounding villages of the heights there to meet their wagoner friends. At any rate, many tables were placed under the trees, and four or five parties were engaged in a local game which seemed as engrossing as that of our all-prevailing bridge. Cards of an interesting sort were dealt, halfpennies passed, and, as far as I saw, law and order were preserved.

Besides the mere card games, which, knowing little of them, I despise, as we always despise that which we do not know (unless we are afraid of it), there was a game of bowls which I tried to learn from a sympathetic peasant. This game can be played anywhere,

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up hill and down dale, and, like original golf, does not require the service of man. It demands the intelligence of man, not auxiliary service. This point is of importance. I doubt whether any game or sport which claims, and necessarily pays for, the work of people uninterested in the special game, is good or respectable, because we are thereby creating a class of parasitic sportsmen.

In this game you throw a smaller ball in turn anywhere you like, in highways or byways in the happy Italian fashion. The two antagonists by successive throws of a heavy ball have to cause their ball to arrive as near the smaller one as possible. It is extremely difficult in a mountainous country (this from personal experience I can assure the reader) to get that larger ball near the smaller one.

From here we proceeded up the valley, always ascending, but in a most Christian and gentle manner. At one turn of the road of many, suddenly, Castelnuovo comes into view, built on and overhanging the river. It has at first an appearance of being much larger than it really is, for there are several remarkably striking buildings of the ancient time. In truth it is but a small town, but it has all

TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE

Bagni to Castelnuovo and Careggine

the sedate pride of a capital. We arrived, hot enough, in the little square, and were served with drinks by fair maidens of the country, one of whom at least was of remarkable beauty. It was now about nine; so as our objective was the mountain village of Careggine (2866 feet), we had to leave at once if we desired to lunch at that place.

This place is said to be no more than six and a half miles from Castelnuovo, but we had reason to doubt the accuracy of this local information. Moreover, we missed the way passing along the road on the left bank of the Serchio towards Fivizzano. At a beautiful little hamlet called Villetta, by enquiry we discovered our error; we were then some six miles on the wrong road, and we must cross the river. An amiable peasant volunteered to be our guide; so following him we descended the steep hill which slopes down to the stream. Here we had to perform a little South African work by wading the river and a little mountain battery work in pushing our bicycles up the almost precipitous hill on the other side. After much hard work we arrived on the other road, a little short of the small village of Poggio, and extremely out of breath.

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We offered the friendly guide a franc for his services of an hour. He said, "*Ma troppo*" ("but too much"). We, however, did not agree with him.

From this place to Careggine there is a road which is somewhat sarcastically described as "passabile" in the guide-book—which I presume is Italian for passable—but only with the assistance of a balloon could it honestly be so described for bicyclists.

After pushing and carrying our machines for an hour and a half we eventually arrived at the village, where we found a good little inn. Whatever may have been the trouble in arriving at this village in the skies, we certainly had our reward in the view we obtained. From here close round us were the splendid peaks, the Sumbra, Tambura, Pizzanino, and Umbriana. Nearly every peak of the Carraras seems within a stone's throw, and in addition practically the whole circle of the horizon is filled by these and the Apennines. I have never, even in Switzerland, seen a finer panorama of mountain heights. Moreover, the position of the village renders it a suitable summer resort, for, placed as it is on a long ridge, you get from there a mile or

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so of level walking, quite exceptional in a place so high above the sea. That dreadful road, that politely indescribable road, the more awful in that it has been very well engineered, seems the only bar to this happy result. I hope the County Council of Garfagnana—if such exist—will see to it, or let a *Sindaco* or two hang for it.

After a rest we left this charming and beautiful spot, returning by the nearer road to Castelnuovo and thence to our head-quarters at Bagni di Lucca.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Hotel, Inns, etc. :

Castelnuovo : Albergo il Globo.

Careggine : Only one inn.

Roads :

From Bagni di Lucca pass to right of the station and along highroad on left bank of the Serchio river to the old bridge at Calavorno (3 miles), which cross to right bank and follow good undulating road to Galcano (10); thence continue to Castelnuovo (18 miles). From here pass out of town by street to the left of the square in which the Albergo il Globo is situated, and to Poggio and Careggine (about 25 miles from Bagni).

CHAPTER XIX—*Bagni and Palagnana*
(*a Mountain Retreat*)

WE found ourselves, a party of old friends, in an inn between the mountains. Our special circle included the most sympathetic lady in the world, her husband the antiquarian, the glorious baby, her grandchild, the present writer, his wife and (as the hotels have it) suite.

We had come, a veritable convoy of mules, from Pescaglia, where the highroad ends, and the procession had been as impressive as awe-inspiring. First one lady on a mule, armed with a white umbrella and protected by a blue veil, then her maid riding shakily behind, the antiquarian very much *en militaire* carefully balancing the glorious baby on the pommel of his saddle, the nurse having refused to accept this responsibility ; afterwards another lady of the party armed and protected as before, and with a dog on her saddle ; finally another maid rather more shaky than the former one ; and on

Bagni and Palagnana

foot mule drivers, curious sightseers, and the present writer, as a sort of informal infantry.

We had come for rest, and on the whole we achieved our object. The inn is situated in a most beautiful valley, and is surrounded on all sides by glorious chestnut woods, while an impetuous stream pursues its adventurous career close under the walls of the inn.

However, we were not the only residents at this place, for there was an intelligent manufacturer from Leghorn, who had studied his business in Manchester, and who is the only man I have ever met who prefers the murky atmosphere of this latter city to the blue skies of Italy. I think that his trade of cotton manufacture has something to do with this odd liking. He is only equalled in eccentricity by an Italian café owner at Gallicano, who, having resided in Chicago, informed me that he much preferred the Anglo-Saxon Sunday to the more human, if more arduous one, of Italy.

There were also at our inn a learned and very agreeable doctor from the Pisa University, the family of a wealthy merchant of Lucca, and some others.

This was the first time I had come into intimate social contact with Italians of the upper

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bourgeoisie, and I am bound to say the experience was a pleasant one. Intelligent, energetic, enterprising, they contrast certainly very favourably, from the social standpoint, with a large proportion of the Italians of the *noblesse* whom I know. The reason is clear enough, for the former have an object in life, while to-day, speaking generally, the latter have none.

It was not long before we formed ourselves into a pleasant circle, and even in this far-away corner of Italy had evening dances, and those which were of the greatest interest were when the peasants around were asked to join. The complicated steps which they indulgently taught us were something of a revelation, and one dance which I shall never forget, a crab-like side movement, in which the man chases his partner in the deliberate manner of these crustacea, had never been seen by me before, though I have danced in many places, from native huts in Africa to Buckingham Palace.

When, however, our Italian fellow residents learnt of my passion for mountain climbing, it was agreeably arranged by them that an ascent of the Pannia della Croce should be made. This is the highest and most rugged of the

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hills hereabout, being some 5600 feet above the sea, and looking sheer on to it.

My friend the Leghorn manufacturer, another Livornese, and I, with two guides, therefore started at dawn one morning ; while it was arranged that the antiquarian, the sympathetic lady, and my wife were to meet us at lunch at the foot on our descent.

From Palagnana to the slope of the great Pannia is a rough walk of some three hours, up and down rocks ; but the real climb commences from a place up above Forno Velasco. This is a remarkably steep slope of rock and slippery grass which certainly would be trying to inexperienced climbers. From here it takes an hour or so to the shoulder, round which the actual peak has to be attacked. We noticed, while struggling up, a good many men and boys coming down laden with blocks of frozen snow, and by enquiry found that this was a profitable industry in the summer, for a cave near the summit has snow in it all year round. This snow is taken to the valleys, where it is used in the hotels and restaurants. But it is extraordinary the immense size of the blocks which these by no means strong-looking men carry, the more especially as the latter part of

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the climb is one requiring considerable care. For as soon as you cross the shoulder, there is but a very narrow and slippery ledge of marble. Yet these men make the journey twice a day, and, as far as we could ascertain, without serious accidents occurring.

After passing the ledge referred to, the journey to the top is a rough scramble over what looks like a badly kept cemetery for giants, for huge masses of white rock project everywhere. But when we arrived at the summit, which we did about nine o'clock, it indeed repaid us for our labours. The Mediterranean is in front, and really a considerable section of it is visible, for clear as it was with us that day, the coastline can be made out from the hills above the French frontier at Menton, through Genoa, Spezia, and Leghorn to the Maremma, not far from the mouth of the historic Tiber. Corsica can be seen, Elba can be seen, Giglio, Caprera, and the other islands of the Italian coast, and a haze to the left of Corsica we were informed was as much of Sardinia as the powers willed us to see. My guide informed me that he had once seen the Sicilian coast from this point of vantage. Inland again every mountain of the

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Apuan and Apennine chains down to the very borders of the Roman campagna, while of towns Florence, Lucca, Pisa, Genoa, among others, are visible. Even from a historic point of view this expedition should be made, for what rolls of history are suggested by these same names! Once, and once only, I have witnessed a landscape chronicle of as wide an interest. This was from a peak of the Monte Rosa range, when by exceptional good fortune the whole of Lombardy was visible, bounded by the Adriatic, the Apennines, and the Mediterranean—the most wonderful landscape in the world.

We returned the way we had come, and found our party waiting for us for lunch at the great hole in the mountains, Monte Forato, which I have before described.

Our sojourn at Palignana naturally brought us into touch with many of the peasants, these mountain folk whose lives are a continual struggle with adverse conditions. Moreover my mountain excursions caused me to see more of them than otherwise would have been likely, for I often employed the children as guides. One day, when we were strolling past one of these cottages, we heard unusual sounds,

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and were somewhat surprised to be accosted by the father of some of our young friends, who in the most courteous manner invited us to enter. In the house we found displayed a banquet composed of home-made cakes of all kinds, red wine, and the rest, which they informed us was to do us honour. They told us they were grateful for our notice of the children, and begged us to accept their hospitality. Naturally we did this with pleasure, and many healths were drunk of course.

This little event was certainly agreeable evidence that these good folk appreciated the small kindnesses we had been able to show to the youngsters—kindnesses is hardly the *mot juste*, for the *soldi* were given for services rendered to us.

But in this charming valley among the chestnut woods we were not entirely occupied in grand excursions up mountains or in the more feminine work of reading under the trees. The stream, which is the dominant factor at Palignana, runs its wild and obstreperous way over rocks and down minor waterfalls. Now one of these latter had attracted me as a refreshing douche, and to this I went every morning. But above the cascade on a rock the village

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blacksmith lived, literally under not one but many spreading chestnut trees. A fine figure of a man was he, six feet, and quite as independent as our old friend of Longfellow's verse. I am sure he owed no man anything, yet once I owed him for a pair of his boots. Coming one day from the mountains with mine torn to ribbons, I exchanged with him, to the benefit, I believe, of both parties in the contract, for whereas I had ten miles to go and my soles were worn out, though the uppers were sound, he gave me a pair with soles quite good, while the remainder of the shoes was not worth much more than the day's walk.

In our many conversations this man gave me a piece of information which seems of interest, namely, that all the villages around had their respective shapes in spades. We all remember the Devonshire blacksmith who recognised Prince Charles Edward after Worcester from the fact that his horse had been shod in different counties, by his knowledge of the methods in each. So this man could have told whence a labourer came from the shape of his spade. And many of these implements are curious, suggesting to my

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heraldic mind that the designs had been taken from the eleventh or twelfth century shields. Many say that the shield came from the spade. Probably it did so in origin, but I am convinced that the latter has been modified by the former, according to the fashion of the period, many a time. For in the examples of spades which this blacksmith showed me, I could recognise the forms not only of twelfth and fourteenth century shields, but the varieties of German, French, and Italian prevalent in the earlier portion of the Middle Ages.

Someone should make a study of the Italian spades, especially at this period when we are beating our swords into "ploughshares," which latter, from a purely agricultural point of view, seems to me a rather futile occupation. At least I cannot recommend my sword for this purpose to my Cumberland friends.

The Leghorn manufacturer, his companion of the same town and I, started one day to cross the mountains from Palignana to Gallicano and the Serchio valley. The path from our hotel led first down the winding stream on which the inn is built, and arrives after half an hour's meandering at the picturesque

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village of Campo Lemisi (assuredly from its name a Roman outpost), always under luxuriant trees and always cheered by the sound of the boisterous waters below.

From this village the mule track leads up and along the ridge which is between Monte Bicocca and Monte Paladina, a wonderfully beautiful road which gives views of both the valleys of the *cave* and Gallicano, having as dominant factors on the left the two grand mountains of the Pannia. A two hours' tramp, however, brings us in sight of the village of Trasilico below us on a ridge, yet at no mean height, for it stands 2400 feet above the sea. Here in a small inn we rested, looking out on the narrow lane which is the High Street of the village. Presently by the shouts and laughter outside we were made aware that something unusual was astir, and on looking out saw in the middle of a ring of people of all ages two women alternately fighting and orating. The amused interest of the crowd and the encouragement given to the belligerents caused me to enquire what was the cause of it all. It seems that the husband of one of them, after a lengthy sojourn in America, had returned, and, alas!

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had been attracted by the other. No doubt some encouragement was given, and now the case was being settled, not in a divorce court as with us, but on the cobble stones of the street. The philandering husband had in the meantime pusillanimously retired to his chamber, disapproving of all this publicity. I did not learn who won, nor if the winner had the right to the errant affections of the beau, but at any rate it was a curious if a somewhat painful sight.

From these heights above Trasilico runs an aerial ropeway for carrying wood to the valley, which is the longest I have seen, it being not less than four or five miles from end to end. They say there that it is the only punctual railroad in Italy, but as to this I give no opinion. Certainly the wood trucks run down the rope at a great speed.

The descent from Trasilico to Gallicano takes an hour, and thence I returned by the Serchio valley.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Hotels and Inns :

Palignana (2270 ft.) : pension 6 to 7 frcs.

Gallicano : Albergo Giglio ; Caffè del Prete.

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Roads:

To get to Palagnana the nearest way is by train to Diecemo (Bagni di Lucca railway), thence by carriage or diligence to Pescaglia (1½ hours), and from Pescaglia by mules, which are sent on demand by the proprietor of the hotel at Palagnana. The hotelkeeper's name is Alemanno Barsi, and he owns also the Alto Matanna Hotel mentioned in Chapter XI.

The cost of mules from Pescaglia is 3 frcs. each.

CHAPTER XX—*Bagni and over the Carraras*

THE lovely road up the Serchio valley to Castelnuovo in Garfagnana has already been described, but an incident on my way to the latter place is not unworthy of notice. I observed near to a hamlet called Turrite di Cava an awning spread round an enclosure in a wood. So I went to an opening and asked the price. Two soldi, and I passed through. Here I found a pastoral play in full swing, a real genuine mediæval mystery play with all its addenda. In the centre of the grass plot which served for a stage was erected a leafy bower, in which sat a venerable man with a long white beard—quite clearly Merlin or some other wise man in his post of judgment, a twelfth-century umpire. On the left of this tribunal there were four men in pasteboard armour and red crosses, clearly Crusaders, armed with short, wooden, cross-handled swords. These knights wore also yellow tabards coming below their paste-

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board breastplates. On the opposite side were ranged three men intended for Saracens, with crescents in their turbans. Very fierce they looked. The only other actor was a young man, who was taking the part of a girl, and who was without doubt an object of contention between the two sides.

In the first instance one of the knights came forward and challenged the Saracens, pointing to and talking at the girl. Then one of the Saracens came out, and the two fought, swords crossed up and then down, down and then up, and so on. All the time the fight continued one or other of the combatants was declaiming in a monotonous drawl blank verse of a kind. The knight got the worst of it, and others came to his rescue and the rest!

But the whole thing was of immense interest here, out under the trees on the mountain side, these mediæval mummers playing to an eager crowd of peasants, none of whom probably was aware that he was taking part in a performance which is in fact the histrionic ancestor of the modern stage. I learnt afterwards that the performers came from a village called, I think, Sant' Anna, in which it is a tradition to do this thing, and that they went round

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in the summer playing throughout the district.

Castelnuovo is a place of too great interest to be dismissed with only a few words, even if it had no other claim to attention than as the residence of Ariosto, who lived in the fortress when Governor of Garfagnana in 1522. Here he wrote some of his verses, and it is said a part of *Orlando Furioso*. But the town deserves notice for other reasons, the chief being that it is the capital of a most interesting province. Moreover, the people of this country are a people apart, and their traditions are jealously kept. I visited the library, where I found fourteenth and fifteenth century documents very carefully arranged and indexed. There I could have spent many days of useful research. In the church of St. Peter and St. Paul is a fine altar by one of the Della Robbias, representing St. Joseph, who, it is agreeable to note, possesses a brown face worthy of his native land, and therefore more exact than most of his portraits. The face of the saint is very fine, as also are those of two of the angels. I explored the little town thoroughly, and before resuming my walk smoked a cigar on the old bridge. Looking down

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from it on that hot June day, I saw on one side of the bridge the work and on the other the play of the world. A worn, tired-looking woman and a poorly fed child were washing the household linen, such a rubbing and a scrubbing and a thumping, until one wondered how the thin, much-used clothes could stand the strain. On the other side in the stream there was a band of sturdy youngsters with bare, brown legs pretending to be Indians and incidentally whipping the stream for fish. Wild-haired, laughing little figures they were: and all the time the patient careworn woman went on beating her clothes in her sad manner, taking no sort of notice of her neighbours, these miniature savages. I could not help thinking how differently this glorious scene of mountain and river must appear to the overworked mother, to the lively and irresponsible children, and to myself, who had seen much more than they of this beautiful but exceedingly hard world.

From here up into the bosom of the Carraras you follow a good but undulating road along the left bank of the Serchio, passing under San Romano. This village is interesting enough, and but a short time ago was the

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scene of an accident, when part of the old church fell, killing, I believe, many of its good people.

I walked for some two or three hours until the shadows began to lengthen. Then at a handsome new bridge over the river, which I learnt was at a place called Piazza al Serchio, I looked out for a night's lodging. After going to several houses, I was directed to the one at which the post-cart starts to Castelnuovo, and there was received with great hospitality by the host. An excellent room was provided, and while waiting for dinner to be cooked I chatted with the landlord. As I expressed an interest in heraldry and genealogy, he told me of his own people. They were originally the feudal chiefs of the valley, and he presented me with his card, on which was printed "Nobile Agostino," I think. A charming man he was, quite free from affectation, with a genuine and quite natural pride in his traditions. I remembered that not long before this in England a gentleman, reduced to the humble occupation of an innkeeper, had succeeded to an ancient baronetcy, and how this event had been commented upon in our papers. Here it seemed that it was looked upon as an everyday event

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for the descendant of the ancient chiefs to drive the post-cart through the valley over which his ancestors had ruled.

However, my genuine interest in the matter caused him to ask me to dine with him, at which repast he produced an excellent bottle of Italian champagne, with which we drank each other's health.

My friend of the inn promised to drive me the next morning a part of the way towards the foot of the mountains, to Gramolazzo, where I hoped to find a guide.

At Gramolazzo, where I left mine host with many professions of goodwill on both sides, a strong middle-aged man volunteered to take me over a track to Massa, passing by the Orto delle Donne, and between the impressive peaks of Pizzanino and Uccello. Now for some unexplained reason I had got it into my obstinate head that the Orto delle Donne (the Garden of the Women) was a hotel, and I had pleasant visions of lunch, partaken of in a garden and served by fair country maidens. Therefore I refused to take food with me. We proceeded up the valley, passing to the left of Minucciano, a fascinating small town at the height of nearly 2000 feet, and up along a

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steep mountain path on the slopes of the Pizzo d' Uccello, which, so far as its top is concerned, is formed of white marble. As the day wore on I expressed my anxiety to arrive at the Orto and lunch, and so we did somewhere about one o'clock. My readers may imagine my feelings when on arriving there this supposed bower of fair women appeared to my disillusioned eyes as a particularly rocky plateau on which grew hardly a blade of grass, no trees, and not the slightest intimation of human existence. People certainly ought to be prosecuted for giving misleading names to places, and this region is remarkable for this peculiarity. For instance the mountain before referred to as Pizzanino (I presume it means little peak) is the highest in the whole range, namely about 6000 feet, and Monte Altissimo, which to my humble intelligence seems to suggest that it is the loftiest, is really a mere stripling of some 4800 feet.

The Pizzo Uccello, or the Peak of the Bird, is not quite so misleading, for there certainly may be one bird on it, though he was out when I passed; but it is unlikely there are many, owing to its height and formation.

However, my guide cheered me up by saying

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that in an hour we could get to a hut in which many of the marble workers had their meals; so we proceeded. We arrived there and found a straggling wooden structure and some 25 labourers eating their *pasta* and drinking the local vinegar. They looked like stage brigands, but were extremely cordial to us, more especially so when they learnt I was a Liberal candidate for Parliament. They told me of their work. These men earn from 2 to 3 francs a day, equivalent to an average of about 17 shillings a week, in payment for a very arduous and a very dangerous labour, and they work about ten hours each day. How dangerous it is may be gauged by the fact that as we passed up to the hut we were obliged to cross a marble shute, and were arrested by shouts from above. Suddenly rushed down a block of marble about two yards high, broad and long, whose weight I dare not guess at, which went at a hundred miles an hour to some depth below. There is a large casualty list each year from this cause alone. Moreover, marble dust mixed with air is not recommended by the medical authorities as good for lung diseases, and many lose their lives by the dynamite explosions.

However, these workers were a cheery lot,

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reminding me somewhat of my friends in the plaster works near Tutbury, of whom I have seen something.

On leaving this place—and all the men came to see us off—we clambered up a precipitous slope to the shoulder, just under the Pizzo d' Uccello, and thence for an hour along the north-western slope overlooking the great valley of the Magra, with Aulla and Pontremoli in the distance. Then over the Foce di Vinca, and down a most horrible precipice towards Forno di Massa. There was no apparent track; I knew nothing of my guide, who, though he was an excellent fellow as it turned out, had lost himself once; my shoes were heavily nailed, all the rocks were of slippery marble, and I was carrying clothes for two days. There were some places on that slope at which I felt more real fear than on any of the more difficult peaks around Zermatt or even on Tover Kop in South Africa.

After a struggle of two hours we arrived on the road below, and half an hour's walk brought us to Forno. This village is almost entirely composed of huge workmen's dwellings, which are built in modern style, overhanging the steep rocks of a mountain torrent.

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It possesses a tramway line connecting it with Massa, and I had hoped to have finished comfortably in that little city. Alas for human hopes! The trams only run here on *festas*, and so we dined and slept, fairly comfortably, at a small inn in this workmen's village under the great hills. My guide left me the next morning, happy and contented, with, however, ten francs less than he had asked me, but with probably twenty francs more than his due. But he is a good fellow, and I can recommend him.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Hotels and Inns :

Castelnuovo : Albergo il Globo.

Piazza al Serchio : Albergo della Posta.

Massa : Hotel Massa ; pension 6.50 frcs. Restaurant Giappone in square.

Roads, etc. :

Leave Castelnuovo by bridge crossing the Serchio river and to the left on other side by the road to Aulla (ask for road to San Romano) ; San Romano (6 miles), thence to Piazza al Serchio (9 miles from Castelnuovo, 3 miles from San Romano). From Piazza rough road, on part of which there is a tramway belonging to marble works, to Gramolazzo ($5\frac{1}{2}$ miles). Here ask for guide if you wish to cross the mountains. To Minucciano from Gramolazzo ($1\frac{1}{2}$ miles).

CHAPTER XXI—*Bagni to Abetone by
the Mountains*

THE path leads by Monte Fegatesi, which has been described in Chapter VI, and we started at six so that we might breakfast at this place in the little Albergo Alpino, trusting to find a guide there who would conduct us over the pass between the mountains of Rondinajo and Tre Potenze. Having satisfied the inner man we awaited the guide, whom our landlord had promised to provide for us, with some impatience. Suddenly to us appeared an old woman whom we took to be the mother of our conductor, and so we bargained with her accordingly.

What was our surprise to learn that this elderly dame herself was our destined leader, and indeed she was got up for the fray in long boots and short skirts with a workmanlike-looking stick! It is true I am a little afraid of ladies in the mountains from an experience I had once at Zermatt. An Anglican curate

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at our hotel had confided to me that his young and pretty wife desired to adventure up one of the least difficult peaks about, just to see how she liked it; would I escort her? With the greatest pleasure; and so we went up until we arrived on a steepish slope which led down to a precipice, and there of all places my pretty companion broke down, crying hysterically. Knowing that the sole danger lay in her slipping, and as she had quite lost control over herself, my position as guide was not an enviable one, and I was thankful indeed when we arrived at the hotel, and she to the protection of her husband.

But our companion to-day was of another mould, and if either of us was to succumb, certainly she would not have been the victim.

On we tramped, she always ahead, walking with a fine military swing which a Life Guardsman might have envied. The path leads down and around the base of Prato Fiorito and Tre Potenze, crossing finally the road to Modena which Marie Louise, Duchess of Lucca, had munificently built, which road, however, the authorities have not thought fit to keep in repair. This work was constructed in 1819 at the cost of £40,000, and since that time nothing

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has been done to it, consequently it cannot be used for vehicles. It is well planned, however, and deserves a better fate.

Here our guide conducted us to a steep path which follows a small and rushing stream issuing out of the side of Rondinaio, and up it we ascended for an hour or more until the pass was reached. We here had the merciful intention of sending the old woman back, an intention, however, she very strongly opposed. It was only by allowing her to come some few miles further that we could induce her to leave us at all.

Really the prospect of arriving in the ultra-fashionable summer resort of Abetone escorted by an ancient beldame was somewhat frightening, and I cannot help ascribing her persistency to the blandishments of my friend the Tariff Reformer. However, I was able to get a very good snapshot of the two walking together, which I presented to this political economist's wife.

Naturally in the company of so enthusiastic a believer in this means of righting the wrongs of our commercial system, the more especially as he is a personal friend of the great inspirer of this heresy, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the

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subject was not neglected. In one thing, however, as a free trader, I was firm. Economic discussions were barred when ascending slopes. The idea was intolerable of being forced to answer complicated arithmetical conundrums when out of breath and thirsty.

However, we discussed it on the level road round Monte Tre Potenze, I am afraid without the conversion of either party. How curious it is that no two Englishmen ever remain together for long without the subject of politics being entered upon, or perhaps I should say that we almost alone among the peoples of the earth place in the forefront this special subject! The Latin races, French, Italian, Spaniards, in ordinary conversation, rather avoid offering an opinion on the political questions of the day.

I suppose the reason of the difference is this, that in our more fortunate isles party disagreements have been discussed for so long unaccompanied by revolutions or actual conflict, while on the Continent within a comparatively short time factions have caused bloodshed. We cannot, therefore, justly reproach them for avoiding subjects of such danger.

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We at any rate amicably opposed and defended Free Trade on our journey to Abetone. The first approach to this place from the Modena road suggests a German Spa, for two large hotels are seen high up on the hills, and but few other houses of any kind. When, however, you pass the old boundary between Modena and Lucca, signified by two small pyramids at the top of the pass, you enter a pine wood which leads to the little village of Boscolungo, which is almost entirely given up to the entertainment of the summer visitors. But Abetone deserves some description, the more so as it is characteristic of much of the higher social life of Italy. Some enterprising person in the society of Florence or Rome discovered this little village, and like Beau Brummell at Bath, made it fashionable. Now it is inhabited during the two hot months by members of the families of the Roman and Florentine aristocracy living in comparatively humble little hotels (with the exception of one or two larger ones) made into the semblance of hotels of the first order. The life these people spend there is especially characteristic both of the innate domesticity of the Italian and also of their

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inveterate provincialism. I remember speaking to a great Italian lady some years ago, a very great woman indeed, who had been an Ambassadress at many European courts, who said that when she returned to Rome she felt that she was in the same atmosphere as that of a small English county. At the time her views scandalised me, not only on account of Rome being the ancient capital of the world, but from the fact that after all it is a city to-day possessing a cosmopolitan society. Moreover I could not see the connection between the feudal exclusiveness of an English county and the partly feudal, partly commercial, and partly religious, social life in the Italian capital.

But her words came back to me when studying manners at this mountain village of Abetone. You saw there the resentment, not offensively expressed, at the presence of strangers, simply as strangers (*forestieri*), which one observes in our own dear land. "'E's a furriner," "'Eave 'arf a brick at him." The brick was not there, but the energy behind the brick was quite apparent.

On the other hand a man of Lucca or of Pisa, of quite good and even of historic family, will

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often be ignored by the "set" because not a Roman or Florentine. There was rather a good example of this extraordinary form of exclusiveness exhibited at Abetone when I was there.

A marchese from one of these towns, whose palace is known to all persons who pass through it for its wonderful collection of old masters, whose ancestors had for four centuries been prominent citizens of the city and in a way made history, came to me one day and said: "What do you think of Abetone?" I replied I thought it very nice, but they dressed too well for a country place and did not do enough. He replied: "That is not what I mean, but are they friendly? for we have been in our inn for two weeks, and no single person has spoken to us! We feel out of it." He was quite surprised when I told him that we, as foreigners, had made the acquaintance of all the people in ours.

He said then: "It is wonderful to us how you English always seem to be friends or to make friends, while we are not even friendly with our own people."

What this excellent man meant was just this: the British of the upper class always

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recognise each other ; there is a masonry between them, and they at once become acquaintances.

Beyond this there is among the Anglo-Saxons generally the human sentiment of fraternity, due to the fact that owing to class distinctions there is little chance of annoyance by open intercourse.

Consequently, if in any inn or hotel we meet a man of our own rank we are at once on good terms with him, and through him perhaps on good terms with Italians of various classes. On the other hand the Italian gentry, principi, marchesi, conti, baroni, being about ten per cent of the population, are too numerous for any such masonry to exist, and clearly it does not exist.

So at Abetone. Society represented by a certain number of Florentine, Roman and other families, with their relatives by marriage or of acquaintance, form a set. It is quite a pleasant one, especially on the children's side of the matter, for the Italian fathers and mothers are really devoted to their offspring. The Roman, who in his day has been known as the wildest of the wild, tossing his baby in his arms, trundling the perambulator, or play-

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ing hide-and-seek with his children, is a pleasing sight. And it is quite genuine, no mere pose, for the Italians of whatever class make good fathers. I am not sure that in this respect we might not take lessons from them. And the wives become good mothers, "almost savagely devoted mothers," to their offspring, as an English marchesa said to me. On this side of the question, the domestic side, Abetone may be considered a revelation and perhaps an example.

On the other side, the social one, it is equally instructive. Here are a number of people of easy means living the "country life," and living it in the proper sense not at all. I am informed by one who ought to know, that the ladies change their dresses three times a day. Of the men I can speak with more exact knowledge. They are dressed as a City clerk might be dressed for a wedding—dark clothes, patent-leather boots, and that kind of thing. They play tennis a little, they walk through the woods a little, they even make expeditions to Montè Cimone (two hours) on mules, always on mules. They amiably philander, dawdle, and gossip as they would do the same in the Via Tornabuoni or on the Pincio. But of

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country life they know nothing, care nothing, and if they cared, the patent-leather boots would certainly be a deterrent.

Like their delightful prototypes of the Louis Quinze and Louis Seize periods, inspired by a belief in simplicity, they attempt to attain their object in the costume which is habitual to them, and with the ideals which inspire them.

In fact they are townsmen, bred and born, very charming townsmen, but their attempt at living the country life is foredoomed to failure just because they are not a feudal nobility, but a town aristocracy, and no more able to imitate squires in England or barons in Germany than are mine-owners or stock-brokers when they buy English estates.

Certainly it is far from my meaning to present this aspect of the life at Abetone in an uncomplimentary light. To us it seems funny ; that is all.

Abetone, so far as this goes, is very instructive, because everything is in a small compass. One cannot help being amused at seeing the untravelled Englishman floundering in among the billows of a social sea so unlike his own, that he is stunned by the shocks it

Walks and People in Tuscany

gives him. Everyone he meets, knowable or unknowable, is a conte, a marchese, or a duca. It must indeed be paradise for the British or American bourgeois unaccustomed, perhaps, to meeting on equal terms men of title of his own race, and I am sure he thoroughly enjoys it.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Monte Fegatesi : Osteria Alpino.

Abetone : Hotel Bellini.

Roads, etc. :

From Bagni to Monte Fegatesi see Chapter VI. From Monte Fegatesi the nearest road is difficult to find without a guide, but by descending into the valley the old disused road can easily be struck, and to follow that is not difficult. You strike the great road to Modena about two miles north of Abetone. (From Bagni to Abetone about 26 miles.)

CHAPTER XXII—*Bagni di Lucca to
Massarosa and a visit to "Ouida"*

I HEARD through the *Corriere della Sera* that the popular novelist whose name is Mlle. de la Ramée, and who is known to all of us as "Ouida,"¹ was in my neighbourhood, and, as reported, in some distress. Therefore I determined to pay her a visit, in spite of many warnings that visitors were not usually well received by her, believing that an old acquaintanceship of twenty years and a sincere desire to help her would be my passport. And I was not mistaken.

From Bagni di Lucca to Massarosa, where "Ouida" then was, one passes down the beautiful valley of the Serchio, a river which here need not fear comparison with the most renowned parts of the Rhine. Indeed, it is finer; for though the river itself is not so large, the mountains around are higher and

¹ Since I wrote this "Ouida" died at Viareggio on January 25, 1908, and I paid my last and sad homage to her by attending her funeral.

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in aspect more majestic. Here we are in a narrow pass between the Apennines and the Apuan Alps, with their village fortresses perched up on rocks which to the Londoner would seem inaccessible. Here, too, are found examples of the commercial renaissance of Italy in the nineteenth century, as remarkable in its way as the intellectual revival of four centuries ago. At one of the villages (Piaggione) at which I paused, there is a cotton factory, small it is true, but complete in its way, with one of the best systems of workmen's dwellings which I have yet seen. I made friends with some of the workers, and was asked to enter their houses. Mostly these are flats of five to seven rooms each, all lighted by electricity, all well arranged in respect to sanitation, and let to the occupiers for a sum of money so small that I dare not put it down here for fear that our northern fellow citizens may be incited to emigrate. Every time I have been at Piaggione—and I have been often, at night, in full day, on holidays, in times of distress, in fair weather and in foul—always I have found these humble cotton labourers extraordinarily well behaved, self-respecting, dignified, and hospit-

Bagni di Lucca to Massarosa

able. Thence I passed through another industrial village, Ponte a Moriano by name, thence by wondrous lanes under and between trellised vine groves and fields of maize, to the mountains, on the other side of which, within sight of the Mediterranean, lies the village of Massarosa. Massarosa is placed on the lowest spurs of the Apuan mountains, and is framed in a setting of magnificent peaks, whose outlines can hardly be matched in the Higher Alps. The village straggles along the road, making little incursions here and there into the olive valleys of the hills. There was no difficulty in finding the poor house in which dwelt the once fashionable authoress. In a square of dull-looking grey houses some way off the highroad I was directed to Number 37, and knocked, and was presently admitted to the kitchen, which gives on to the street, and there I waited until my letter was presented and my credentials inspected. It so happened that I had met "Ouida" some twenty years ago in a house in London where "lions" were perpetually on show, and she then was among the most leonine of them all. While waiting, I strolled out into the cottage garden, and there encountered a disconsolate reporter who

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had been waiting an audience for many hours, for our authoress would not receive anyone she did not personally know.

“Ouida,” I think, has been often misjudged. She wrote, it is true, very extravagant accounts of the less worthy side of the social life in great cities. Her gilded and perfumed officers of the Guards were only interesting when, as occasionally occurred, they ceased to be gilded and perfumed and went to war. At other times they were mostly vulgar and always stupid. Generally she gave an exaggerated account of a side of life sufficiently nauseating without exaggeration. But, after all, her “society” characters were not one whit more objectionable, unreal, or contemptible than the curled and befrizzled “lords” of Disraeli. On the other hand, “Ouida’s” human studies were delightful and true. Her pictures of Italian peasant life, of the life of the poor in many countries, of French soldiers and English sportsmen would redeem much graver faults than those which I have mentioned. In fact, in literature “Ouida” travelled, as some of us travel in trains, first or third class, never second. She could portray a serious and earnest noble and a hard-working peasant

Bagni di Lucca to Massarosa

family, but she could not, perhaps because she hated the development so much—she could not put on paper a sympathetic sketch of modern irresponsible wealth. It was curious to find her in these later days living in the house of one of the peasants she immortalised in the *Village Commune*, for Massarosa is the place which I believe she had in mind when writing this work. She had been ill, and undoubtedly she should be cared for better than was possible in the humble house in which she then dwelt. For herself, I do not think there is any place she would have preferred to live in, but, as I told her, those who value her work should have seen that she had every comfort in her old age. After all, England and Italy owe something to her, for she was the first of a series of writers who brought the true Italy and the true Italian home to us, forced us out of our insular prejudice, and made us friends in a more intimate manner than even national *ententes* can ever do, and in that manner gave sight and understanding to the people of both races. “Ouida” did not wish for personal descriptions of herself—a wish which I, as an acquaintance, can but respect. It is sufficient for my purpose to say that I was received by

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an elderly lady, feeble now with years, gracious and kindly, and retaining that trait of hers which will ever be appreciated by myself—an unlimited love for her canine friends in number beyond count.

CHAPTER XXIII—*Bagni to Viareggio
and the Sea*

THE other day, while toiling up one of the steep paths which lead from Bagni di Lucca to one of the many mountain villages, I encountered a little boy of twelve years old, with eyes as blue as those of the Vikings, carrying a sack of wheat so heavy (for I tried it) that I would not have cared to undertake to bear his burden for an hour. It was close on noon, and he had been doing this thing since seven o'clock. We entered into conversation, and I asked him had he ever been to the nearest seaside place—Viareggio. He had never been, nor had he ever seen the sea, which was the more remarkable in that a mountain not far behind his own village of Colle gives a very good distant prospect of the Mediterranean, from Genoa to Leghorn. Only a few weeks before, in England, I had been inspired by a desire to witness a Bank Holiday at Southend. It was Whit Monday of this year, so I travelled down

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first class to that place in a carriage which contained eighteen persons (all, I believe, except my friend and myself third-class passengers) though originally intended for eight. In this carriage it seemed to be the pleasant fashion that each man should bear the burden of his wife or sweetheart, for in every case the woman reclined on the knees of the man as a matter of course. Indeed, not being East-enders, before the journey was over we felt quite lonely, outside of the fashion and custom of the season.

I have mentioned this Southend experience to explain why it was I made an offer to the little peasant boy to come with me one day to Viareggio. Almost all of our poor in the slums of our great cities have, in one way or another, the opportunity of obtaining the benefit of change of scene which even one day at the seaside means, and this little fellow had never had such a chance. I gave it to him.

Beppi (that is his name) and his cousin Dario came with me one day in August by early train from Bagni di Lucca via Lucca to Viareggio. They were dressed in their Sunday best, straw hats, black coats, etc. ; indeed, they

Bagni to Viareggio and the Sea

were almost as neat as Eton or Harrow boys at their great festival at Lord's.

By Divine dispensation, or a dispensation as near the Divine as is conceivable—that of the Italian Government Railroad Council—it was ordained that we should wait for one hour at Lucca. Now neither of these children living within a stone's throw, or at least a big gun's throw, of Lucca had ever seen this town. They were little peasants of the hills, and towns were new to them. In execrable Italian I tried to do the Cook's interpreter and guide to explain to them the antiquity of San Michele and the Duomo, to point out the beauties of these temples of human hopes and despair, in that one hour ; but I am afraid I failed. They said it was *molto grande*, one street was bigger than the whole of Bagni di Lucca ! What they said was true ; what they thought, who knows ?

By rail from Lucca to Viareggio we proceeded leisurely, and we arrived about ten o'clock. My small friends, when they first saw a sailing-ship in the port, wished to go on board it ; but I pointed out to them that we had no rights in this matter, though I promised them a sail later on. The sea did

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not impress them by its wideness or by its placidity or by its sense of power. They had never witnessed a storm! But in every direction they asked to where it led. Over there was it America? over here England? where were France and Corsica?—until they taxed my geographical knowledge somewhat unduly. We lunched on the sea at the excellent Balena Restaurant, built on a pier. The boys had their bath in the waters of the Mediterranean, and they took part in many shows.

One incident, however, which illumines my experience with these youngsters, and consecrates it, must be mentioned, because it illustrates the innate nobility of the good Lucchese people. I was ordering lunch for them, and as it had been a long day, tried to do them well. "Signore," one of them said, "I beg you not to spend much on us." It was rather nice, and a reward for my humble services, a greater reward than I had expected.

Certainly Viareggio in the season is one of the wonders of the world, and any Englishman who has not seen an Italian watering-place such as this has lost much. Here you have a wide open sea-front of miles of sandy

Bagni to Viareggio and the Sea

beach, backed always by some of the finest mountains I have ever seen, the Carraras.

But for a mile or so this sandy coast is given up to amusements to please the tripper, the amiable Mediterranean lending itself to this spoliation. As of course the tides in this inland sea are of no account, so practically the whole frontage, in defiance of Neptune, is invaded by tiers of bathing establishments. Row on row, line after line, the stakes have been driven into the sand, and on these stakes are constructed, to suit all tastes and purses, huts in which the bather may clothe himself for his bath. The little room into which you are shown if you are among the mighty of this earth is furnished with one chair, or table, a broken looking-glass, and a mangy comb and hairbrush. It is comfortable, however, and as the staircase leads straight into the ocean, it is convenient. You simply undress, put on your bathing attire, and descend by your own private stairs into the water.

When you are there the scene reminds you of Fleet Street on a busy morning. Almost every square yard of water is occupied by a man, woman, or child, all as jolly as sand-boys and all playing, laughing, and, I regret to say,

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spitting, in quite a free and easy manner. It is, however, a cheery crowd as we saw it on this day, a friendly crowd without the suspicion of self-consciousness or restraint.

Everyone played in a quiet manner with everyone else, and the only introduction which seemed necessary was that of the god Neptune, at whose court we were all paying homage. Apart from the bathing itself, pleasant enough in many respects as it is at Viareggio, is the convenience which is provided of lunching or dining at the establishments on the sea. This place, as may be imagined, is very warm in midsummer, but the fact that at two or three restaurants you can obtain a decent luncheon on your exit from the water, and at the same time enjoy the sea breezes under cool awnings, makes the experience quite delightful.

After the bath and before the luncheon it is the custom here to have a sort of drying parade. Wrapped round in a cloak which resembles the Soudanese chief's mantle of state, the fashionable Italian dries himself in the sun. He, or even sometimes she, smokes the pacifying cigarette and discusses questions of moment in the drying.

But the beach is more interesting than the

Bagni to Viareggio and the Sea

more comfortable establishments, for here you see human nature very much unadorned. The whole sandy front for a mile or so is given up to a series of encampments resembling Kaffir locations not a little. The huts are built with bamboos, and the leaves of this valuable tree form the sides and roofs of these structures. Old men, old women, young men and children crowd out of and around each, but in dresses, or undresses, which again very vividly brought back to mind my good Zulu and Batalong friends in South Africa, and all of them thoroughly enjoying their play on the sands.

The children gambolled around, gambolling with the Mediterranean very much as a cat plays with a ball, and a particularly stout burgess of Florence was seen by me buried in the sand, practically leaving only the most prominent part of his stomach visible. I confess that having imbibed the spirit of the fun of the place it was only with considerable self-restraint that I prevented myself from jumping on this prominent and aggressive object.

But on the whole this Italian seaside place at the height of its season is pleasant and in-

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structive. The people do what they like without criticism, or anyhow without ill-natured criticism. They play, they frolic, they even do things which we do not like, but they do them all in the spirit of children. They are very free from self-consciousness, these Italians by the sea.

It was near Viareggio, it will be remembered, that the poet Shelley was drowned, and a square and a monument now honour his memory there.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Hotels and Pensions :

Lucca :

Hôtel Royal Univers. Rooms, 3 frcs. Petit déjeuner, 1 frc. Lunch, 2½ frcs. Dinner, 4 frcs. Pension in winter, 7½ frcs. ; in summer, 7 frcs.

Viareggio :

Grand Hôtel. Pension in winter, 6 to 7 frcs. ; in summer, 10 to 12 frcs.

Hôtel de Nice. Pension in winter, 6 to 7 frcs. ; in summer, 7 to 8 frcs.

Hôtel della Pace.

Pension Pini.

Restaurant (on sea), Balena, à la carte.

Physicians :

Dr. Pini, Dr. Munro.

CHAPTER XXIV—*From Viareggio over
the Apuans*

IT is possible that many of my readers have never heard of the little old-world town of Camaiore. Those who have not, however, if in the neighbourhood, may find it worthy of a visit from the fact that it has hardly been altered since the fifteenth century. It is said that someone asked an inhabitant of that town which was the largest town in the world, and he replied that without doubt Rome was the capital, but that Camaiore was the second. It may be seen therefore that the Camaiorsi (if that is what they call themselves) are not lacking in local patriotism. They have another great virtue also, for they are among the most courteous people in this country, where courtesy is studied as an art.

The stranger is nearly always saluted by them, and though in their hearts they may look upon him as an unlucky being in that he does not reside at Camaiore, possibly this

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very reason inspires them with a gentle pity, and induces them to treat him with especial politeness. An Englishman of my acquaintance the other day spent some time in this place, and returned saying that he supposed the people had mistaken him for the deputy, for everyone he met capped him.

After a visit to the church, where I believe there is some very fine old tapestry, which, alas! we could not see, and a general survey of the place, my friend and I started along the Lucca road, meaning to branch off from it and cross the mountains to the Serchio valley, not far from Bagni di Lucca. The first two miles is flat enough, the road running by a stream, though at all points commanding magnificent views of the mountains at the back, Monte Piglione, Monte Matanna, and up to the Pannia della Croce; but on arrival at the small village of Nocchi the ascent commences. Here are two very large villas, belonging, I believe, to a wealthy manufacturer, though we had no time to visit them. At this point we left the road, or, more correctly, it left us, for the carriage way here ceases, and we took a mule path up the mountain side. The first part of the ascent



A VILLAGE LACE SCHOOL AT VIAREGGIO.

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From Viareggio over the Apuans

is through olive woods, the *salita* itself being good but exceedingly rocky. This fact is mentioned because we suffered a little from these boulders and for the following reason. My friend, like myself, is a bit of a politician, as I have hinted in the previous chapter, and a philosopher. His politics and philosophy have led him to become a confirmed Tariff Reformer, a pronounced High Church Anglican, and I think an enthusiastic believer in grape nuts. These are matters of faith in respect to which I am but a heretic. Therefore some of these subjects were discussed, without much reference to our foothold, and not infrequently with dire results to our feet, illustrating the superiority no doubt of mind over matter. At one time I think I was attempting to make my misguided friend see some of the beauties of municipal socialism, and came so great a cropper in consequence, that it would have taken several of the members of the London Council to have placed me in mental, or indeed physical, equilibrium.

The road after it emerges from the olives presents many fine views over the plain towards the sea at Viareggio, and as we mounted the steep ridges gave us occasional

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glimpses of the higher peaks still covered with their winter snows. One meets few people on these mountain tracks at this time of the year, but we came upon one regular procession of wood carriers bearing enormous burdens on their heads, composed of grandmother, mother, and grandchildren of all ages, from, I imagine, five upwards, and of both sexes. The children were pretty and healthy-looking, and apparently thought nothing of carrying their bundles the four or five miles from this place to Camaiole.

From the top of this pass one has a good view down the narrow valley which leads to the Serchio, showing several mountain villages. At this point we entered the chestnut woods, through which the track goes right down to the river bed, passing the quaintly situated village of Convalle, tightly plastered up against the steep side of a mountain. Nearly every village we passed possessed a handsome campanile, though the body of the churches had often been modernised, on account, I presume, of the sins of the people. After about a three hours' tramp we arrived at Trebbio, where we proposed to lunch at an inn, where a family of children exists, all of whom are very good friends of mine.

From Viareggio over the Apuans

We were both by this time a little anxious about lunch. Fortunately my companion is a man of simple tastes. He had previously explained this to me in these words: "You know I am all for plain living. For lunch, for example, I never require more than say a *hors d'œuvre*, perhaps a dozen native oysters, a small *entrée*, and a little game to follow, washed down by Chablis."

The sausages which decorated the roof of the room certainly did not present a very appetising appearance, for they were of a mouldy white-green colour. However, we overcame our prejudice by the assumption that sausages like old port ought to be crusted if good, and indeed found them very palatable.

From Trebbio we crossed another ridge, on which stands the picturesque village of Fondagna, where the beautiful tower of the church tempted us to enter, only to find the interior decorated in the worst style of modern Italian art. The old masters—we have the authority of Mark Twain for this—are dead; and the new ones yet, alas! unborn.

The Val d'Otava, which is now traversed, is one of the prettiest in these hills. The

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walk itself is for a mile or so covered with a pergola of vines, a stream of clear water makes its boisterous way down towards the greater river, and on its banks even now the spring flowers are budding. The little villages are ideally situated between the hills, and the people are a friendly and kindly lot. Last year I had passed it, and then made the acquaintance of a "Signora inglese," married to an Italian tradesman in London, who had come to live here. As she was brought up on the property of a family in Norfolk with whom I am acquainted, we had become great friends, a friendship which I was glad to renew.

This year another young English woman had arrived. She also had been fascinated by some gay young Italian in London, and now had come to live in this far-away village with her husband. It was particularly interesting to hear what she thought of Italy and the Italians, seeing that she came from near Clapham Junction, and had only been in this country two months. As far as I could make out, the only grievance she had against them was in that the people did not speak English, a matter in which I could entirely sympathise

From Viareggio over the Apuans

with her. Let us hope that Esperanto may soon settle these difficulties!

We were most kindly entertained by the good people, and with many good wishes bade them farewell. Thence we walked on to the village, on the Serchio river, of Piagione, where we intended to catch a train for Viareggio. Again our interest in human affairs, called Politics, impeded us, for while waiting for the train we entered into a friendly discussion of the new Army reforms sponsored by Mr. Haldane. So eager were we in this great Imperial question, that time slipped away as easily as principles, and the last train was lost.

Ill winds and even punctual trains—this train was alarmingly punctual—sometimes have their uses, for in bargaining for a carriage to take us to Lucca, we came into contact with a great number of the people of Piagione. Now this place is interesting, for here has been established for some fifteen years a factory of cotton goods. (My companion, of course, got a word in about the merits of tariff reform.) The owner of these works has established a number of excellent workmen's dwellings on modern lines—there are some 1000 workers

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of both sexes employed—and we were anxious to visit one of these. Several people offered to show us over, and we accepted the hospitality of one of these, visiting an excellently arranged five-room flat, well kept and scrupulously clean, which was let to the tenant for the sum of eleven francs a month, including the use of electric light, with which all these houses are supplied. We have nothing, I think, as cheap as this in England, nor have we anything better managed.

After much friendly talk with the workers, we at last entered our carriage for Lucca to catch a train, which delivered us in due course at Viareggio, where we were both staying.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Hotels and Inns :

Viareggio : see Chapter X.

Camaione : Albergo il Giardinetto.

Roads :

From Viareggio an excellent little steam tramway starts from the railway station, which brings you to Camaione in 35 minutes (about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles). From Camaione, making straight through the main street, you follow the Lucca road until you come to the stone bridge ($1\frac{3}{4}$ miles) over the river, then leaving the bridge on your right (not crossing it) you

From Viareggio over the Apuans

follow the road to Nocchi ($\frac{3}{4}$ mile). From this place a mule path leads by the village of Miseri, over the pass to Trebbio. At Nocchi ask for road to Miseri, after Miseri ask for road to Trebbio. Thence either by carriage road to Diecemo, or from Trebbio over the ridge on which is the village of Fondagno through the Val d' Otava to Piagione. (Railway.)

CHAPTER XXV—*From Sarzana to Spezzia*

I HAD met Alessandrina, a veritable sylph of the woods, bare-legged, bare-headed, a little person of four years, in the Pine Forest near Viareggio. We had naturally got into conversation, and I was so fascinated by her air of self-possession and of friendliness that I postponed my walk to talk to her. She with much dignity asked me to go with her to her house, which I willingly consented to do; so we started through the woods, she skipping beside me, yet skipping with an admirable sense of self-restraint and dignity. After a scramble we arrived at three dome-shaped huts made, as far as I could see, of twigs, surrounded by a cultivated patch of land. In one of these cabins was a cow, in the other certain garden implements, and the third one was Alessandrina's home. I was formally presented by my young hostess to her mother, a good-looking, kindly, middle-aged woman, and to her father,

From Sarzana to Spezzia

who had the appearance and dress of being half a Neapolitan fisherman, half farmer, for he wore one of those red woollen flabby caps. And, of course, I made the acquaintance of brothers and sisters of varying ages. The round hut inside had two rooms, quite nice and clean rooms, a bedroom, and a sitting-room and kitchen combined. How they managed to be so tidy, seeing the size of the family, it is impossible to imagine, but they were neat and clean.

This was the commencement of our acquaintance, and I never failed if I were passing near to pay them a visit. And sometimes they called on me in town, when they were milk or vegetable-selling.

It came about, then, that I knew them well, and one day, as I had proposed to myself a walk to Spezzia, I made the suggestion that Alessandrina should accompany me. The powers that be, however, thought the walk would be too far for her, so it was settled that her brother Emilio, a strong boy of eleven or twelve, should take her place. Now Emilio had never been to any town except Viareggio, which is really no more than a large seafaring village, though I would not like the Viaregini

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what profession I belonged to, and whether I had any children. They are a most delightfully, yet inoffensively, inquisitive people ; for while the questions were of somewhat a delicate nature, they were asked so clearly in the spirit of genuine interest in me that only a stupid man could take offence. When, however, she heard that I had no children the woman said, " Oh, you ought to have married me, and then we should have had a large family." This was very possible and reassuring ! We walked the rest of the way into the town, and through the long and straggling suburbs until we struck the sea-shore, on what I consider is one of the most magnificent parades I have seen. For at Spezzia there are fertile gardens and parks all along the sea, culminating in a handsome square, where the soldiers and sailors " make music " on Sundays and *festas*. I should say that there can be few towns more pleasing to dwell in, and certainly no naval station to compare with it. When one thinks of the hideousness of Portsmouth and Gosport, though it is true these are somewhat relieved by the breeziness of Southsea, I must confess to a preference for life in the Italian to that in our Gargantuan naval service. We

From Sarzana to Spezzia

sauntered about the bay, and Emilio, as quick and inquisitive as a town-bred lad, was especially struck with the size of the two or three Italian men-of-war in the harbour.

I had determined to give my companion a really good lunch, especially with the object not only of giving him something which he did not every day enjoy, but also to see how he would adapt himself to the habits of a first-class restaurant—this cabin-bred boy. If I had expected any awkwardness of behaviour, then I certainly was mistaken, for from the first he behaved as if it had been his habit to lunch at the “Savoy” or “Ritz” all his life. Indeed, he was somewhat profuse in his expressions of gratitude to me, but as to any sort of shyness or awkwardness in a company which must have been novel, he showed no sign of any such thing. After lunch, to give him a vivid remembrance of the beautiful bay, we chartered a boat and were rowed out to the extreme end of the promontory, and landed for a short time at Porto Venere. Here we explored all that was to be seen of this quaint little town, a village perched on a rock in the sea. And such rocks, and what a magnificent sea! It was altogether an ex-

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perience which I have reason to remember with gladness, and half the pleasure of it was in the real enjoyment, restrained, but ever present, of my young friend the brother of my Alessandrina of the woods and of the hut in the woods.

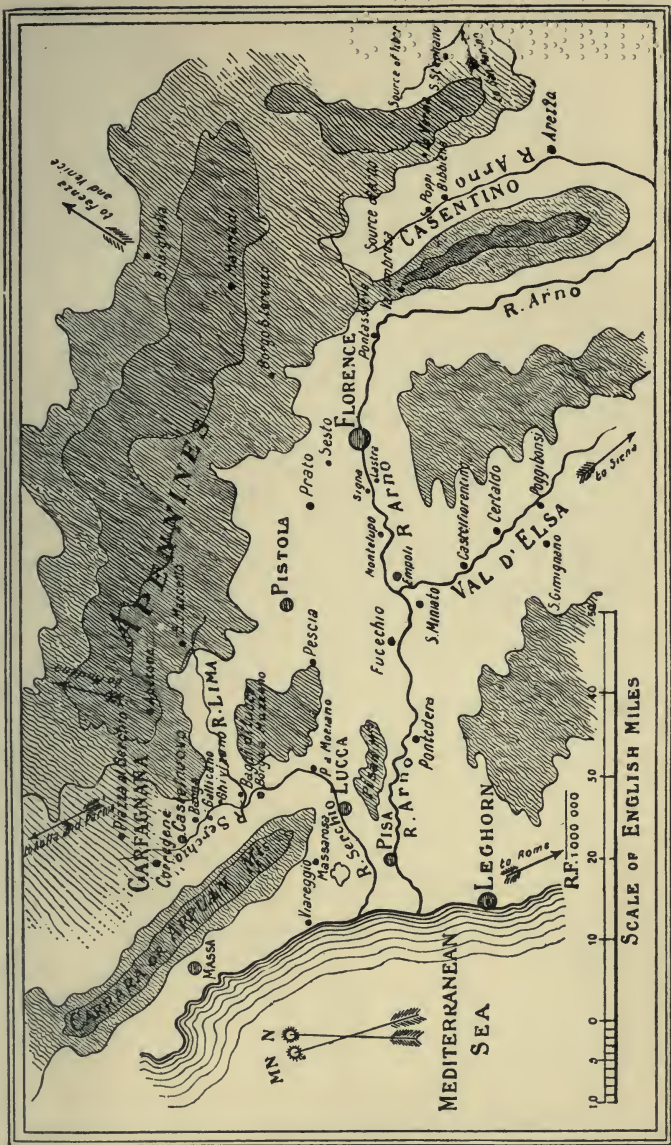
PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Spezzia : Hotel Croce di Malta.

Restaurant Albergo Giappone.

The walk from Sarzana about 10 miles. You follow the main road for about $2\frac{1}{2}$, then turn abruptly to the left, where the village of Arcola is seen perched high up, and there ask for the mule track (*salita*) to Spezzia.

THE END



A. Sanguineti del.

MAP OF COUNTRY TRAVERSED. PART OF TUSCANY.

TO WHOM IT MAY COME

LETTER OF THE

Dates of Persons Mentioned in Text

Boccaccio, born 1313, died 1375.

Charles Bonaparte, born 1746, died 1785, married in 1767, took part in Paoli's rebellion 1768.

Marie Elisabeth Bonaparte, Duchess of Lucca and Piombino 1805, Duchess of Tuscany 1809; married Felice Bacciochi.

Byron, Lord (George G. N. Byron), born 1780, died 1824. He resided at Ravenna from Jan. 1820 to Nov. 1821.

Cagliostro (the famous necromancer), born at Palermo 1743, came to England, having been condemned, 1786. Returned to Rome 1789, when he was arrested and imprisoned at San Leo, where he died 1795.

Castruccio Castracani, born Lucca 1283, of the family of Antiminelli. Went to England 1303, served in army under Edward I. Left England and served under Philip le Bel, King of France. Returned to Lucca 1316 and became tyrant of that place. He beat the Florentines 1325, was created Duke of Lucca and Count Palatine; died owing to his exertions at siege of Pistoia 1328.

Cavour, born 1810, died 1861.

Clement XII (Lorenzo Corsini), raised to Papal Throne 1730, died 1740.

Andrea della Robbia (nephew to Luca), born 1435, died 1525.

Luca della Robbia, born 1399, died 1482.

Dates of Persons Mentioned in Text

Saint Francis d' Assisi, born about 1182. He went to Morocco in 1214 and was in Rome 1215. Canonised 1228

Garibaldi, born 1807, died 1882. Fought in South America, returned to Italy to fight in defence of Roman Republic 1848-9. Settled at Caprera 1854. Fought against Austria 1859-60 and in latter year with his famous 1000 men conquered Sicily and Naples.

The Conti Guidi were finally overthrown by the Florentine Republic in 1440. The family had ruled in the Casentino for two centuries. The natural defences of the territory are very great, surrounded as it is by the Apennines, and in fact they were only defeated in the end by overwhelming numbers supported by the immense wealth of the Florentine merchants.

Sir John Hawkwood, born in Essex. Served in French wars under Black Prince. Came to Italy on disbanding of army with his troop. Served Pisan Republic, then Florentine, and eventually the Visconti of Milan. Was granted independent territory of Bagno Cavalli near Ravenna.

Holy Roman Empire, founded by Charlemagne 800, ended by resignation of last Emperor 1806.

Emperor Justinian, born 483, died 565, codified Roman law.

San Marinus, born in Dalmatia in fourth century. Went to Rimini and worked as a mason. It is believed he helped to build the bridge there. Because a Christian was persecuted, and retired as a hermit to Monte Titano (the present San Marino). This territory was granted to him for a monastery, but he preferred to found a republic, the present Republic of San Marino.

Mazzini, born 1805, died 1872.

Dates of Persons Mentioned in Text

John Milton, travelled in Italy in 1637-9. He was born 1608 and died 1674.

Napoleon I, born 1769, died 1821.

Napoleon III, born 1808, died 1873.

Cecil Rhodes, born 1853, died 1902.

Shelley, born 1792, drowned 1822 at Viareggio.

This list is, of course, not complete. Onofri, Pauline Bonaparte, Robert Dudley, etc., are not included—to say nothing of Oscar Browning!

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