

GOETHE "ITALIAN
JOURNEY"

ORIGINAL TITLE
ITALIENISCHE REISE

Translation by
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Sulzer's dictionary as a textbook, selecting some passage or other which he likes or believes in.

I could not but approve, but, at the same time, I could not help smiling at myself. What a difference there is between a person who wishes to build his life from within and one who wishes to influence the world and instruct others for domestic uses. I have always hated Sulzer's theory because its basic principles are false, but I realize now that his book contains much which people need to know. The many pieces of information which it offers and the way of thinking which satisfied the worthy Sulzer make it good enough, surely, for society people.

We spent many interesting hours with Andres, the restorer of old paintings, who has been summoned from Rome and is also living in the old castle. The King takes a great interest in his work. I shall not try to describe his unique craftsmanship because I would have to begin by enlarging upon the difficulty of the task and the immense labour required to arrive at a successful solution.

March 16

Your welcome letter of February 19 reached me today and shall be answered at once. I am always happy to be brought to my senses again by thinking of my friends.

Naples is a paradise; everyone lives in a state of intoxicated self-forgetfulness, myself included. I seem to be a completely different person whom I hardly recognize. Yesterday I thought to myself: Either you were mad before, or you are mad now.

From here I went to see the remains of the ancient town of Capua and its environs. Only in these regions can one understand what vegetation really is and what led man to invent the art of cultivation. The flax is already in bloom and the wheat a span and a half high. The country round Caserta is completely flat and the fields are worked on till they are as smooth and tidy as garden beds. All of them are planted with poplars on which vines are trained, yet in spite of the shadow they cast, the soil beneath

them produces the most perfect crops. How will they look later, when spring is come in all its power? Till now, though we have had lovely sunshine, the wind has been very cold and there is snow on the mountains.

During the next two weeks I must make up my mind whether to go to Sicily or not. I have never before been so torn by conflicting feelings as I am now when I contemplate this decision. One day something happens which makes me in favour of the trip, the next some circumstance turns me against it. Two spirits are fighting over me.

And now, for my friends of the gentler sex, in strict confidence — don't breathe a word to the men! I am quite aware that my *Iphigenie* has met with a strange reception. Everyone was used to the original version and, through hearing and reading it so often, knew some passages almost by heart. Now it all seems different, and I realize well enough that, at bottom, nobody appreciates the endless pains I have taken over the play. A work of this kind is never really finished; one only calls it finished because one has done all that is possible in the time and the circumstances.

But this is not going to discourage me from trying to perform a similar operation on *Tasso*. Sometimes I feel like throwing it into the fire, but I shall stick to my resolution, and I intend, if things go as they should, to make it an unusual work. So I am rather glad that the printing of my writings is proceeding so slowly. On the other hand, it is always good for me to feel the distant threat of the compositor. Strangely enough, even the things I undertake purely for love benefit from some kind of external pressure.

In Rome I was glad to study: here I want only to live, forgetting myself and the world, and it is a strange experience for me to be in a society where everyone does nothing but enjoy himself. Sir William Hamilton, who is still living here as English ambassador, has now, after many years of devotion to the arts and the study of nature, found the acme of these delights in the person of an English girl of twenty with a beautiful face and a perfect figure. He has had a Greek costume made for her which becomes her

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extremely. Dressed in this, she lets down her hair and, with a few shawls, gives so much variety to her poses, gestures, expressions, etc., that the spectator can hardly believe his eyes. He sees what thousands of artists would have liked to express realized before him in movements and surprising transformations — standing, kneeling, sitting, reclining, serious, sad, playful, ecstatic, contrite, alluring, threatening, anxious, one pose follows another without a break. She knows how to arrange the folds of her veil to match each mood, and has a hundred ways of turning it into a head-dress. The old knight idolizes her and is enthusiastic about everything she does. In her, he has found all the antiquities, all the profiles of Sicilian coins, even the Apollo Belvedere. This much is certain: as a performance it's like nothing you ever saw before in your life. We have already enjoyed it on two evenings. This morning Tischbein is painting her portrait.

Everything I have been told (or learned for myself by putting two and two together) about the personages and conditions at the Court must now be sorted out and checked. Today the King has gone wolf-hunting; they expect to kill at least five.

Naples, March 17

Every time I wish to write words, visual images come up, images of the fruitful countryside, the open sea, the islands veiled in a haze, the smoking mountain, etc., and I lack the mental organ which could describe them.

Here the soil produces everything, and one can expect from three to five harvests a year. In a really good year, I am told, they can grow maize three times in the same fields.

I have seen much and thought even more. The world is opening itself to me more and more, and all that I have long known intellectually is now becoming part of me. What an early-to-know, late-to-practise creature man is!

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It is only a pity that, at the moment, I have nobody with whom I can share my thoughts. Tischbein is with me, to be sure, but, both as a man and an artist, his mind is the shuttlecock of a thousand ideas, and hundreds of people have a claim on his time. His is a curious case: a man who cannot take an unforced interest in the existence of anyone else because he feels so frustrated in his own efforts.

Certainly the world is only a simple wheel and every point on its circumference is equidistant from its centre. It only looks so strange to us because we ourselves are revolving with it.

What I have always said has been confirmed: there are certain natural phenomena and certain confused ideas which can be understood and straightened out only in this country.

As for my voyage to Sicily — the gods still hold the scales in their hands. The little needle still oscillates back and forth.

Who can the friend be whose coming has been so mysteriously announced to me? I hope I shan't miss him because of my erratic excursions and my proposed trip to the island.

The frigate has returned from Palermo. In a week from today she will sail back. I still don't know whether I shall sail with her or return to Rome in time for Holy Week. Never in my life have I felt so undecided. A single moment, a trifle, may turn the scales.

I am beginning to get along better with other people. The important thing to remember is always to weigh them by the shopkeeper's scales and never by the goldsmith's, as friends, in hypochondriac or exacting moods, are only too apt to do with each other, alas.

Here, people know nothing whatever about each other. Each runs hither and thither and hardly notices his neighbours. All day long they race back and forth in their paradise, without

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looking about them much, and when the mouth of hell nearby begins to roar, they have recourse to the blood of St. Januarius. Well, in the rest of the world, too, in their fight with death and devil, people resort to blood, or would if they could.

To thread one's way through an immense and ever-moving crowd is a peculiar and salutary experience. All merge into one great stream, yet each manages to find his way to his own goal. In the midst of so many people and all their commotion, I feel peaceful and alone for the first time. The louder the uproar of the streets, the quieter I become.

I sometimes think of Rousseau and his hypochondriac outpourings of misery. I can quite understand how a mind as delicately organized as his could become deranged. If I didn't take such an interest in the things of nature, or see that there are ways of sorting out and comparing hundreds of observations despite their apparent confusion— as a surveyor checks many separate measurements with a single straight line— I should often think I was mad myself.

March 18

We could not put off any longer going to see Herculaneum and the Portici museum of objects excavated there. Herculaneum lay at the foot of Vesuvius and was completely buried under lava, to which subsequent eruptions added fresh layers, so that the ancient city is now sixty feet below ground level. It was discovered when, in the course of digging a well, some workmen came upon floors of paved marble. It is a thousand pities that the site was not excavated methodically by German miners, instead of being casually ransacked as if by brigands, for many noble works of antiquity must have been thereby lost or ruined.

We descended a flight of sixty steps to a vault, where we admired by torchlight the former open-air theatre, while the guard told us about the things which were found there and brought to the light of day.

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We had good letters of recommendation to the museum and were well received, but we were not allowed to make any drawings. Perhaps this made us pay attention all the more closely to what we saw, so that we were all the more vividly transported into the past, when all these objects were part and parcel of their owners' daily life. They quite changed my picture of Pompeii. In my mind's eye its homes now looked both more cramped and more spacious— more cramped because I now saw them crowded with objects, and more spacious because these objects were not made merely for use but were decorated with such art and grace that they enlarged and refreshed the mind in a way that the physical space of even the largest room cannot do.

There was one beautiful jar, for example, with an exquisitely wrought rim which, on closer inspection, turned out to be two hinged semicircular handles, by which the vessel could be lifted and carried with ease. The lamps are decorated with as many masks and scrolls of foliage as they have wicks, so that each flame illuminates a different work of art. There were high, slender bronze pedestals, evidently intended as lamp stands. The lamps which were suspended from the ceiling were hung with all sorts of cunningly wrought figures which surprise and delight the eye as they swing and dangle.

We followed the custodians from room to room, trying to enjoy and learn as much as possible in the little time we had. We hope to come back.

March 19

In the last few days I have entered into a new and intimate relationship. For four weeks Tischbein has been a loyal and useful partner in all my excursions into the realm of nature and art. When we were at Portici yesterday we had a talk and both of us came to the conclusion that his artistic career, his duties at court and in the city, which may lead to a permanent post in Naples, were incompatible with my plans and particular interests. Helpful as ever, he suggested as a possible companion

a young man whom I have seen a lot of ever since we arrived, and not without interest and sympathy.

His name is Kniep. He lived for some time in Rome, then came to Naples, the ideal place for a landscape painter. In Rome I had already often heard that his draughtsmanship was admirable, though the same could not be said for his willingness to work. Now that I have got to know him pretty well, I think that this fault for which he is blamed is really a lack of self-confidence which can certainly be overcome if we spend some time together. In confirmation of this, he has made a good start already, and, if things go as I wish, we are going to be good travelling companions for quite some time.

March 19

One has only to walk the streets and keep one's eyes open to see the most inimitable pictures.

Yesterday, at the Molo, which is the noisiest corner of the city, I came across a wooden stage on which a Pulcinella was having a quarrel with a monkey. On a balcony overhead a pretty girl exposed her charms to all. Beside the stage with the monkey stood a quack offering his nostrums against all ailments to a credulous crowd. Painted by Gerard Dow, such a scene would delight our contemporaries and posterity.

Today is the Feast of St. Joseph, the patron saint of all *frittaruoli*, or pastry cooks, using the word "pastry" in its crudest sense. Since, under the black, boiling oil they use for frying, there is a constant flare of flame, all fiery torments are assigned to their mystery. Last night they decorated their house fronts with appropriate paintings: Souls in Purgatory and Last Judgments were blazing on all sides. In front of their doors, large frying pans stood on hastily erected stoves. One apprentice kneaded the dough, while a second shaped it into crullers and threw them into the boiling oil. A third stood beside the pan with a small skewer, picked out the crullers when they were cooked and put them on another skewer, held by a fourth apprentice, who then offered

them to the bystanders. The third and fourth apprentices were young boys wearing blond, elaborately curled wigs, which are regarded as the attribute of angels. To complete the group, there were some persons who handed wine to the cooks, drank themselves and cried their wares. Angels, cooks, everybody shouted at the top of their voices. They drew a great crowd because, on this night, all pastry goods are sold at greatly reduced prices and even a portion of the profits is given to the poor.

One could go on for ever describing similar scenes, each crazier than the last, not to mention the infinite variety of costumes or the hordes of people you can see on the Toledo alone.

You can find many other original entertainments if you live among these people, who are so natural that one might even become natural oneself. As an example, take Pulcinella, the mask native to this country, as Harlequin is to Bergamo or Hanswurst to the Tirol. Pulcinella is the imperturbable servant, somewhat careless, almost lazy, but humorous. You can find waiters or house servants of this type everywhere. I got enormous fun today out of ours, though it was over nothing more than sending him to buy me paper and pens. Partial misunderstanding, procrastination, good will and a touch of roguery combined created a charming scene which would be successful on any stage.

March 20

The news that another emission of lava had just occurred, invisible to Naples since it was flowing towards Ottaiano, tempted me to make a third visit to Vesuvius. On reaching the foot of the mountain, I had hardly jumped down from my two-wheeled, one-horse vehicle before the two guides who had accompanied us the last time appeared on the scene and I hired them both.

When we reached the cone, the elder one stayed with our coats and provisions while the younger followed me. We bravely made our way towards the enormous cloud of steam which was issuing from a point halfway below the mouth of the cone. Having

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reached it, we descended carefully along its edge. The sky was clear and at last, through the turbulent clouds of steam, we saw the lava stream.

It was only about ten feet wide, but the manner in which it flowed down the very gentle slope was most surprising. The lava on both sides of the stream cools as it moves, forming a channel. The lava on its bottom also cools, so that this channel is constantly being raised. The stream keeps steadily throwing off to right and left the scoria floating on its surface. Gradually, two levels of considerable height are formed, between which the fiery stream continues to flow quietly like a mill brook. We walked along the foot of this embankment while the scoria kept steadily rolling down its sides. Occasionally there were gaps through which we could see the glowing mass from below. Further down, we were also able to observe it from above.

Because of the bright sunshine, the glow of the lava was dulled. Only a little smoke rose into the pure air. I felt a great desire to get near the place where the lava was issuing from the mountain. My guide assured me that this was safe, because the moment it comes forth, a flow forms a vaulted roof of cooled lava over itself, which he had often stood on. To have this experience, we again climbed up the mountain in order to approach the spot from the rear. Luckily, a gust of wind had cleared the air, though not entirely, for all around us puffs of hot vapour were emerging from thousands of fissures. By now we were actually standing on the lava crust, which lay twisted in coils like a soft mush, but it projected so far out that we could not see the lava gushing forth.

We tried to go half a dozen steps further, but the ground under our feet became hotter and hotter and a whirl of dense fumes darkened the sun and almost suffocated us. The guide who was walking in front turned back, grabbed me, and we stole away from the hellish cauldron.

After refreshing our eyes with the view and our throats with wine, we wandered about observing other features of this peak of hell which towers up in the middle of paradise. I inspected some more volcanic flues and saw that they were lined up to the

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rim with pendent, tapering formations of some stalactitic matter. Thanks to the irregular shape of the flues, some of these deposits were in easy reach, and with the help of our sticks and some hooked appliances we managed to break off some pieces. At the lava dealer's, I had already seen similar ones, listed as true lavas, so I felt happy at having made a discovery. They were a volcanic soot, precipitated from the hot vapours; the condensed minerals they contained were clearly visible.

A magnificent sunset and evening lent their delight to the return journey. However, I could feel how confusing such a tremendous contrast must be. The Terrible beside the Beautiful, the Beautiful beside the Terrible, cancel one another out and produce a feeling of indifference. The Neapolitan would certainly be a different creature if he did not feel himself wedged between God and the Devil.

March 22

If my German temperament and my determination to study and practise rather than amuse myself did not drive me on, perhaps I might tarry a little longer in this school for easy, happy living and try to profit more from it. It is possible to live very comfortably in this city on only a small income. The situation and the climate are beyond praise; but they are all the resources the foreigner has. Of course, someone with leisure, money and talent could settle down here and live most handsomely. This is what Sir William Hamilton has done in the evening of his days. The rooms in his villa, which he has furnished in the English taste, are charming and the view from the corner room may well be unique. The sea below, Capri opposite, Mount Posillipo to the right, nearby the promenade of the Villa Reale, to the left an old building of the Jesuits, in the distance the coast line from Sorrento to Cape Minerva—probably nothing comparable could be found in the whole of Europe and certainly not in the middle of a great city.

But now the Sirens from beyond the sea are luring me away

from this delight and a hundred others, and, if the wind is favourable, I shall be leaving at the same time as this letter — it will go north as I go south.

Man is headstrong in spirit, and at this moment I am in particular need of unconfined spaces. It is not perseverance I have to learn so much as quickness of perception. Once I can get hold of a matter by its fingertip, listening and thinking will enable me to grasp the whole hand.

Strangely enough, a friend recently spoke of *Wilhelm Meister* and begged me to go on with it. Under these skies, I doubt if it would be possible, but perhaps in the last books I shall manage to capture something of this heavenly air. I pray that my existence may develop further, the stem grow taller, the flowers blossom forth in greater abundance and beauty. If I cannot come back reborn, it would be much better not to come back at all.

Today I saw a painting by Correggio which is up for sale. Though not in perfect condition, it still retains an indelible charm. It depicts a Madonna and Child at the moment when the latter is hesitating between her breast and some pears offered Him by a cherub — in other words, *The Weaning of Christ*. It immediately reminded me of the *Betrothal of St. Catherine*, and is also, I am convinced, from the hand of Correggio.

March 23

My relationship with Kniep has been put to a practical test and promises to give great satisfaction to us both. We made an excursion to Paestum together, and he proved himself a most hard-working draughtsman. The fruits of our journey are some superb sketches, and he is very happy because he finds that this exacting busy life stimulates his talent, which he had come to doubt. Drawing calls for resolution and it is just in this that his precise and tidy proficiency becomes evident. He never forgets to draw a square round the paper on which he is going to make a drawing, and sharpening and resharpening his excellent

English pencils gives him almost as much pleasure as drawing. In consequence, his outlines leave nothing to be desired.

We have made the following bargain: from now on we shall live and travel together and all he will be expected to do is draw. All his drawings will become my property, but, in order that they may serve as a basis for further activity on our return, he is going to execute a number of subjects, selected by me, which I shall buy till I have spent a certain sum, after which, thanks to his skill and the importance of the views he has drawn, he will be able to sell the rest. I am very happy about this arrangement.

Now let me give a brief account of our excursion. Our carriage was a light two-wheeled affair, and our groom a rustic but good-natured boy. He stood behind us as, taking the reins in turn, we rolled through an enchanting countryside which Kniep greeted with a painter's eye. Soon we came to a mountain defile through which we sped on the smoothest of roads past picturesque groups of trees and rocks. Near La Cava we halted because Kniep could not resist making a drawing of a splendid mountain which stood out sharply against the sky. His neat and characteristic sketch took in the whole mountain from its summit to its base. The pleasure it gave us both seemed a good beginning to our friendship.

That same evening he made another drawing from the window of our inn in Salerno, which will make any description of this lovely region superfluous. Who would not have felt inclined to study in this place when the university was in its heyday?

Very early next morning, we drove by rough and often muddy roads towards some beautifully shaped mountains. We crossed brooks and flooded places where we looked into the blood-red savage eyes of buffaloes. They looked like hippopotamuses.

The country grew more and more flat and desolate, the houses rarer, the cultivation sparser. In the distance appeared some huge quadrilateral masses, and when we finally reached them, we were at first uncertain whether we were driving through rocks or ruins. Then we recognized what they were, the remains of temples, monuments to a once glorious city. Kniep quickly chose a favour-

able spot from which to draw this very unpicturesque landscape, while I found a countryman to conduct me round the temples. At first sight they excited nothing but stupefaction. I found myself in a world which was completely strange to me. In their evolution from austerity to charm, the centuries have simultaneously shaped and even created a different man. Our eyes and, through them, our whole sensibility have become so conditioned to a more slender style of architecture that these crowded masses of stumpy conical columns appear offensive and even terrifying. But I pulled myself together, remembered the history of art, thought of the age with which this architecture was in harmony, called up images in my mind of the austere style of sculpture — and in less than an hour I found myself reconciled to them and even thanking my guardian angel for having allowed me to see these well-preserved remains with my own eyes. Reproductions give a false impression; architectural designs make them look more elegant and drawings in perspective more ponderous than they really are. It is only by walking through them and round them that one can attune one's life to theirs and experience the emotional effect which the architect intended. I spent the whole day doing this, while Kniep was busy making sketches. I felt happy to know that I had nothing to worry about on that score, but could be certain of obtaining faithful records to assist my memory. Unfortunately, there was no place nearby where we could stay the night, so we returned to Salerno and drove back to Naples early the next morning. This time we saw Vesuvius from its other side. The country was fertile and the main road was lined with poplars, as colossal as pyramids. We made a brief halt to make this pleasing picture our own. Then we came to the top of a ridge and a grand panorama unfolded before us: Naples in all its glory, rows of houses for miles along the flat coast line of the Gulf, promontories, headlands, cliffs, then the islands and, beyond them, the sea. A breathtaking sight!

A horrible noise, more a screaming and howling for joy than a song, startled me out of my wits. It came from the boy who was standing behind me. I turned on him furiously. He was a

good-natured lad, and this was the first time he had heard a harsh word from either of us.

For a while he neither moved nor spoke; then he tapped me on the shoulder, thrust his right arm between Kniep and myself, pointed with his forefinger and said: "*Signor, perdonate! Questa è la mia patria!*" which means: "Sir, forgive me. This is my native land!" And so I was startled for the second time. Poor northerner that I am — something like tears came into my eyes.

March 25. Lady Day

Although I felt Kniep was very glad to be accompanying me to Sicily, I could not help noticing that there was something he hated to leave. Thanks to his sincerity, it did not take me long to discover that this something was a sweetheart to whom he is deeply attached. His story of how they became acquainted was touching. The girl's conduct so far spoke highly in her favour: now he wanted me to see how pretty she was. A meeting place was arranged where I could, incidentally, enjoy one of the most beautiful views over Naples. He led me on to the flat roof of a house, directly overlooking the lower part of the city and facing towards the harbour mole, the Gulf and the coast of Sorrento. Everything that lies to the right takes on a peculiar perspective which cannot easily be seen from any other point.

While we were admiring this view, all of a sudden the pretty little head we had been expecting popped up out of the floor, for the only access to this kind of terrace is through a square opening which can be closed by a trap door. When the little angel had emerged completely, it suddenly occurred to me that some old masters depict the Angel of the Annunciation as coming up a staircase. Our angel had a lovely figure, a charming little face and natural good manners. I was glad to see my new friend so happy under this wonderful sky and in view of the loveliest landscape in the world.

After the girl left us, he confessed to me that the reason why he had so far endured voluntary poverty was because it had

so well treated ought really not to make, I must confess that our fair entertainer seems to me, frankly, a dull creature. Perhaps her figure makes up for it, but her voice is inexpressive and her speech without charm. Even her singing is neither full-throated nor agreeable. Perhaps, after all, this is the case with all soulless beauties. People with beautiful figures can be found everywhere, but sensitive ones with agreeable vocal organs are much rarer, and a combination of both is very rare indeed.

I am eagerly looking forward to reading the third part of Herder's book. Please keep it for me until I can tell you where to send it. I'm sure he will have set forth very well the beautiful dream-wish of mankind that things will be better some day. Speaking for myself, I too believe that humanity will win in the long run; I am only afraid that at the same time the world will have turned into one huge hospital where everyone is everybody else's humane nurse.

May 28

Once in a while the good and ever-useful Volkmann forces me to dissent from his opinion. He asserts, for instance, that there are thirty to forty thousand lazy ne'er-do-wells in Naples, and who does not repeat his words? Now that I am better acquainted with the conditions in the south, I suspect that this was the biased view of a person from the north, where anyone who is not feverishly at work all day is regarded as a loafer. When I first arrived, I watched the common people both in motion and at rest, and though I saw a great many who were poorly dressed, I never saw one who was unoccupied. I asked friends where I could meet all these innumerable idlers, but they couldn't show me any either.

So, seeing that such an investigation would coincide with my sightseeing, I set off to hunt for them myself. I always began my observations very early in the morning, and though, now and then, I came upon people who were resting or standing around, they were always those whose occupation permitted it at that moment.

In order to get a just picture of this vast throng, I began by classifying by appearance, clothes, behaviour and occupation. This is much easier to do in Naples than anywhere else, because here the individual is left alone much more, so that his external appearance is a much better indication of his social status. Let me give some illustrations to back up my statements.

Porters

Each has his privileged standing place in some square or other, where he waits till someone needs his services.

Carriage Drivers

These with their ostlers and boys stand beside their one-horse chaises in the larger squares, grooming their horses, and at the beck and call of anyone who wants to take a drive.

Sailors and Fishermen

These are smoking pipes on the Molo or lying in the sun because a contrary wind does not permit them to leave port. In this area I saw several people wandering about, but almost all of them carried something which indicated they were busy.

Beggars

The only ones I saw were very old men, no longer capable of work, and cripples. The longer and closer I looked, the fewer real idlers I could observe, either of the lower classes or the middle, either young or old, men or women, either in the morning or during most of the rest of the day.

Small Children

These are occupied in many different ways. A great number carry fish from Santa Lucia to sell in the city. Little boys, ranging from five- or six-year-olds down to infants who can only crawl on all fours, are frequently to be seen near the Arsenal or any other place where carpenters work, collecting shavings, or on the shore, gathering the sticks and small pieces of wood which have been washed up and putting them into little baskets. When

these are full, they go to the centre of the city and sit down, holding a market, so to speak, of their small stocks of wood. Working men and people of modest means buy them to use as kindling, as wood for their simple kitchen stoves, or as potential charcoal for the braziers with which they warm themselves.

Other children go round selling water from the sulphur springs, which is drunk in large quantities, especially in the springtime. Others again try to make a few pennies by buying fruit, spun honey, sweets and pastries, which they offer for sale to other children—possibly, only so as to get their share for nothing. It is amusing to watch such a youngster, whose entire equipment consists of one wooden board and one knife, carrying round a watermelon or half a pumpkin. The children flock round him; he puts down his board and starts cutting the fruit up into small portions. The buyers are intensely in earnest and on tenterhooks, wondering if they will get enough for their small copper coins, and the little merchant takes the whole transaction just as seriously and cautiously as his greedy customers, who are determined not to be cheated out of the smallest piece. I'm certain that if I could stay here longer, I would be able to collect many other examples of such child industry.

Garbage Collectors

A very large number of people, some middle-aged men, some boys, all very poorly dressed, are occupied in carrying the refuse out of the city on donkeys. The immediate area around Naples is simply one huge kitchen garden, and it is a delight to see, first, what incredible quantities of vegetables are brought into the city every market day, and, second, how human industry immediately returns the useless parts which the cooks reject to the fields so as to speed up the crop cycle. Indeed, the Neapolitans consume so many vegetables that the leaves of cauliflowers, broccoli, artichokes, cabbages, lettuce and garlic make up the greater part of the city's refuse. Two large, flexible panniers are slung over the back of a donkey: these are not only filled to the brim, but above them towers a huge mound of refuse, piled

with peculiar cunning. No garden could exist without a donkey. A boy or a farm hand, sometimes even the farmer himself, hurry as often as possible during the day into the city, which for them is a real gold mine. You can imagine how intent these collectors are on the droppings of mules and horses. They are reluctant to leave the streets at nightfall, and the rich folk who leave the opera after midnight are probably unaware of the existence of the industrious men who, before daybreak, will have been carefully searching for the trail of their horses.

I have been assured that, not infrequently, such people have gone into partnership, leased a small piece of land, and, by working untiringly in this blessed climate, where the vegetation never stops growing, have been so successful that they were able to add considerably to their profits.

Pedlars, etc.

Some go about with little barrels of ice water, lemon and glasses, so that, on request, they can immediately provide a drink of lemonade, a beverage which even the poorest cannot do without. Others carry trays, on which bottles of various liqueurs and tapering glasses are held safely in place by wooden rings. Others again carry baskets containing pastries of various kinds, lemons and other fruit. All of them, it seems, want nothing better than to contribute to the daily festival of joy.

There are other small traders who wander about with merchandise displayed on a plain board, or the lid of a box, or arranged in a square on the bare ground. They do not deal, like a shop, in any single line of goods, but they sell junk, in the proper sense of the word. There is no tiny scrap of iron, leather, cloth, linen, felt, etc., which does not turn up in this market for second-hand goods and cannot be bought from this vendor or that.

Finally, many persons of the lower class are employed by tradesmen and artisans as errand boys or general drudges.

True, one cannot take many steps before coming on some poorly clad, even ragged, individual, but it does not follow that

he is a loafer or a good-for-nothing. On the contrary, I would say, though this may seem like a paradox, that, in Naples, it is the poorest class which works hardest.

What is meant here by working is not, of course, to be compared with what working means in the north, for there Nature compels people to make provision, not merely for the next day or the next hour, but for the distant future, to prepare in fair weather for foul, in summer for winter. With us, the housewife has to smoke and cure the meat so that the kitchen will have supplies for the whole year; her husband must see to it that there are sufficient stores of wood, grain and cattle feed, etc. As a result, the finest days and best hours cannot be given over to play, because they are dedicated to work. For several months of the year we do not go out of doors unless we must, but take shelter in our houses from rain, snow and cold. The seasons follow each other in an inexorable round, and everyone must practise household management or come to grief. It is senseless to ask, Does he like it? He has to like it. He has no option, for he is compelled by Nature to work hard and show foresight. No doubt their national environment, which has remained unchanged for millennia, has conditioned the character of the northern nations, so admirable in many respects. But we must not judge the nations of the south, which Heaven has treated so benevolently, by our standards. What Cornelius von Pauw had the temerity to say, when speaking of the Cynic philosophers in his book, *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Grecs*, fits in perfectly with my argument. It is false, he says, to think of these people as miserable; their principle of going without was favoured by a climate which gave them all the necessities of life. Here a poor man, whom, in our country, we think of as wretched, can satisfy his essential needs and at the same time enjoy the world to the full, and a so-called Neapolitan beggar might well refuse to become Viceroy of Norway or decline the honour of being nominated Governor of Siberia by the Empress of all the Russias.

A Cynic philosopher would, I am certain, consider life in our country intolerable; on the other hand, Nature invited him, so

to speak, to live in the south. Here the ragged man is not naked, nor poor he who has no provision for the morrow.

He may have neither home nor lodging, spend summer nights under the projecting roof of a house, in the doorway of a palazzo, church or public building, and when the weather is bad, find a shelter where, for a trifling sum, he may sleep, but this does not make him a wretched outcast. When one considers the abundance of fish and sea food which the ocean provides (their prescribed diet on the fast days of every week), the abundance and variety of fruits and vegetables at every season of the year, when one remembers that the region around Naples is deservedly called "Terra di Lavoro" (which does not mean the land of *work* but the land of *cultivation*) and that the whole province has been honoured for centuries with the title "Campagna Felice" — the happy land — then one gets an idea of how easy life is in these parts.

Someone should try to write a really detailed description of Naples, though this would take years of observation and no small talent. Then we might realize two things: first, that the so-called *lazzarone* is not a whit less busy than any other class and, second, that all of them work not merely to *live* but to *enjoy* themselves: they wish even their work to be a recreation. This explains a good many things: it explains, for instance, why, in most kinds of skilled labour, their artisans are technically far behind those of the northern countries, why factories do not succeed, why, with the exception of lawyers and doctors, there is little learning or culture considering the size of the population, why no painter of the Neapolitan school has ever been profound or become great, why the clergy are happiest when they are doing nothing, and why most of the great prefer to spend their money on luxury, dissipation and sensual pleasures. I know, of course, that these generalizations are too glib and that the typical features of each class could only be established precisely after a much closer scrutiny and longer acquaintance, but I believe that, on the whole, they would still hold good.

To return to the common people again. They are like children

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who, when one gives them a job to do, treat it as a job but at the same time as an opportunity for having some fun. They are lively, open and sharply observant. I am told their speech is full of imagery and their wit trenchant. It was in the region around Naples that the ancient *Atellanae fabulae* were performed, and their beloved Pulcinella is a descendant from these farces.

Pliny, in Book III, Chapter V, of his *Historia Naturalis*, considers Campania worth an extensive description.

"In what terms to describe the coast of Campania taken by itself, with its blissful and heavenly loveliness, so as to manifest that there is one region, where Nature has been at work in her joyous mood! And then again all that invigorating healthfulness all the year round, the climate so temperate, the plains so fertile, the hills so sunny, the glades so secure, the groves so shady! Such wealth of various forests, the breezes from so many mountains, the great fertility of its corn and vines and olives, the glorious fleeces of its sheep, the sturdy necks of its bulls, the many lakes, the rich supply of rivers and springs, flowing over all its surface, its many seas and harbours, and the bosom of its lands offering on all sides a welcome to commerce, the country itself eagerly running out into the seas, as it were, to aid mankind. I do not speak of the character and customs of its people, its men, the nations that its language and its might have conquered.

"The Greeks themselves, a people most prone to gushing self-praise, have pronounced sentence on the land by conferring on but a very small part of it the name of *Magna Graecia*."*

May 29

One of the greatest delights of Naples is the universal gaiety. The many-coloured flowers and fruits in which Nature adorns herself seem to invite the people to decorate themselves and their belongings with as vivid colours as possible. All who can in any way afford it wear silk scarves, ribbons and flowers in their hats. In the poorest homes the chairs and chests are painted with bright flowers on a gilt ground; even the one-horse carriages

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are painted a bright red, their carved woodwork gilded; and the horses decorated with artificial flowers, crimson tassels and tinsel. Some horses wear plumes on their heads, others little pennons which revolve as they trot.

We usually think of a passion for gaudy colours as barbaric or in bad taste, and often with reason, but under this blue sky nothing can be too colourful, for nothing can outshine the brightness of the sun and its reflection in the sea. The most brilliant colour is softened by the strong light, and the green of trees and plants, the yellow, brown and red of the soil are dominant enough to absorb the more highly coloured flowers and dresses into the general harmony. The scarlet skirts and bodices, trimmed with gold and silver braids, which the women of Nettuno wear, the painted boats, etc., everything seems to be competing for visual attention against the splendour of sea and sky.

As they live, so they bury their dead; no slow-moving black cortège disturbs the harmony of this merry world. I saw them carrying a child to its grave. The bier was hidden under an ample pall of red velvet embroidered with gold, and the little coffin was ornamented and gilded and covered with rose-coloured ribbons. At each of its four corners stood an angel, about two feet high, holding a large sheaf of flowers over the sleeping child, who lay dressed in white. Since these angels were only fastened in place with wires, they shook with every movement of the bier and wafted the fragrance of the flowers in all directions. One reason why they tottered so was that the procession was hurrying down the street at such a pace that the priest and candle-bearers at its head were running, rather than walking.

There is no season when one is not surrounded on all sides by victuals. The Neapolitan not only enjoys his food, but insists that it be attractively displayed for sale. In Santa Lucia the fish are placed on a layer of green leaves, and each category — rock lobsters, oysters, clams and small mussels — has a clean, pretty basket to itself. But nothing is more carefully planned than the display of meat, which, since their appetite is stimulated

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by the periodic fast day, is particularly coveted by the common people.

In the butchers' stalls, quarters of beef, veal or mutton are never hung up without having the unfatty parts of the flanks and legs heavily gilded.

Several days in the year and especially the Christmas holidays are famous for their orgies of gluttony. At such times a general *cocagna* is celebrated, in which five hundred thousand people vow to outdo each other. The Toledo and other streets and squares are decorated most appetizingly; vegetables, raisins, melons and figs are piled high in their stalls; huge paternosters of gilded sausages, tied with red ribbons, and capons with little red flags stuck in their rumps are suspended in festoons across the streets overhead. I was assured that, not counting those which people had fattened in their own homes, thirty thousand of them had been sold. Crowds of donkeys laden with vegetables, capons and young lambs are driven to market, and never in my life have I seen so many eggs in one pile as I have seen here in several places.

Not only is all this eaten, but every year a policeman, accompanied by a trumpeter, rides through the city and announces in every square and at every crossroad how many thousand oxen, calves, lambs, pigs, etc., the Neapolitans have consumed. The crowd show tremendous joy at the high figures, and each of them recalls with pleasure his share in this consumption.

So far as flour-and-milk dishes are concerned, which our cooks prepare so excellently and in so many different ways, though people here lack our well-equipped kitchens and like to make short work of their cooking, they are catered for in two ways. The macaroni, the dough of which is made from a very fine flour, kneaded into various shapes and then boiled, can be bought everywhere and in all the shops for very little money. As a rule, it is simply cooked in water and seasoned with grated cheese. Then, at almost every corner of the main streets, there are pastry-cooks with their frying pans of sizzling oil, busy, especially on fast days, preparing pastry and fish on the spot for anyone who

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wants it. Their sales are fabulous, for thousands and thousands of people carry their lunch and supper home, wrapped in a little piece of paper.]

May 30

Seen tonight from the Molo. The moon, lighting up the edges of the clouds, its reflection in the gently heaving sea, at its brightest and most lively on the crest of the nearest wave, stars, the lamps of the lighthouse, the fire of Vesuvius, its reflection in the water, many isolated lights dotted among the boats. A scene with such multiple aspects would be difficult to paint. I should like to see van der Neer tackle it.

May 31

I am so firmly set on seeing the Feast of Corpus Christi in Rome, and the tapestries woven after Raphael's designs, that no natural beauty, however magnificent, can lure me away from my preparations for departure.

I ordered my passport. The custom here is the exact opposite of ours; a *vetturino* gave me the earnest money as a guarantee of my safety.

Kniep has been very busy moving into new lodgings which are much better than his old ones. While the moving was going on, he hinted more than once that it is considered strange, even improper, to move into a house without bringing any furniture with you. Even a bedstead would be enough to make the landlord respect him. Today, as I was crossing the Largo del Castello, I noticed, among countless secondhand household goods, a couple of iron bed-frames painted a bronze colour. I bargained for these and gave them to my friend as a future foundation for a quiet and solid resting-place. One of the porters who are always hanging about carried them, together with the requisite boards, to the new lodgings. Kniep was so pleased with them that he decided to leave me immediately and establish himself there, after quickly buying large drawing boards, paper and other