

War is declared on the Most Powerful of Italian Criminal Leagues

ROME, July 13.—A double murder was committed near Naples a little more than a year ago. A man named Cuccolo was enticed to Torre del Greco and there stabbed to death. His body was found on the beach the next morning covered with the characteristic stabs or gashes of the Camorra executions.

On the same day Cuccolo's wife was found dead, stabbed in the same way as her husband, in her home at Naples. It was ascertained that the two murders took place simultaneously, and as both husband and wife met their death in the same manner and as their money and jewelry were left untouched as a sign that theft was not the motive of the crime, the conclusion was drawn that the crime was an execution of the Camorra.

Neapolitans, young and old, hurried to the lottery shops where they asked for the numbers corresponding to the words, husband, wife, murder, vendetta and Camorra, and they staked all the money they could afford on these five numbers for the next drawing of the lotto. The Cuccolo murder was, after all, nothing but an ordinary fatto di sangue, an event of blood, quite a common occurrence.

Fatto di sangue is a most comprehensive expression, not only in the Neapolitan dialect but also in the Italian language. It means anything from a trifling knife stab to a murder, provided the injury has been caused by violence.

If a crowd gathers in the streets around a fallen cab horse or a stabbed man, and a curious person on its outskirts asks another what is the matter, the reply is given with equal difference in both cases. You are told that a horse has slipped or that it is only a fatto di sangue, but you cannot guess as much from the largeness or smallness of the crowd.

Fatto di sangue are common in Italy, and especially so at Naples. Whether they are due to the Camorra or not does not make the least difference, save as regards the choice of the numbers for the lotto. Consequently the local papers described the double murder and ended their accounts with the usual formula that the police were investigating the case. Nobody doubted that the case would in a few days be entirely forgotten.

In fact, after a while the police dropped it altogether. Some arrests were made, it is true. A party of young men and some women of bad repute happened to go to Torre del Greco for a picnic on the day of the murder. By a mere coincidence, according to the police theory, they happened to be all more or less connected with the Camorra.

They were therefore arrested, probably owing to a mistake of an overzealous and new police official, but they all proved an alibi and the investigating judge released them, as he was expected to do. The case of the Cuccolo double murder was then entirely dropped.

The organization of the police system in Italy is very complicated. The entire police force is divided into three separate bodies, each independent of the others, and under different chiefs.

The civil police are known as the public security police and are under the direct orders of the home office, or ministry of the interior, which is represented in large cities by a chief of police known as the questore. The duty of the public security police is the prevention and detection of crime.

In this they are helped by the carabinieri, or gendarmes, who are practically a special body and therefore soldiers, not policemen. They are well trained and very courageous. The anomaly about them is that inasmuch as they are soldiers they are under the orders of the military commander in chief, but at the same time they, too, depend on the ministry of the interior and therefore on its representative, the questore.

They are supposed to act with the civil police, but being highly efficient they often act independently and are often successful where the police fail.

Besides the civil police and the carabinieri, each city has its own special policemen, or municipal guards, under the orders of the mayor. The direct consequence of so complicated a police system is jealousy among the three different bodies. The civil policemen are always striving to get ahead of the carabinieri, while the municipal guards manage to get in the way of both policemen and carabinieri, and instead of helping or co-operating, generally succeed in hampering their work.

In practice the carabinieri are the only efficient policemen in Italy, and, as a consequence, to them falls all the heavy work. They are detailed to capture brigands or runaway convicts in Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia. Recently a noncommissioned officer of carabinieri was decorated personally by the king with the gold medal of valor for having captured during his twenty years of service in Sardinia more than thirty brigands, in most cases single-handed.

This man had four horses shot under him. He was wounded seriously on several occasions, he saved the life of two of his officers at the risk of his own and his body was covered with scars from stabs and knife wounds. His pay is less than \$2 a day.

The carabinieri quell revolts, disperse crowds of strikers, arrest anarchists, guard the railway lines when the king travels, follow his carriage on bicycles when he drives and patrol the country roads on horseback and the city streets on foot, night and day. One sees them helping firemen in putting out fires, rescuing a person from drowning and showing the way to lost tourists. The carabinieri are among the best soldiers and policemen, but the worst paid and most modest men in the world.

When the Naples civil police dropped the Cuccolo murder case the ministry of the interior decided that as the chief of the Camorra had practically all been arrested, the criminal organization exists still, as was shown the other day during the tramway strike in Naples, when the whole garrison had to be called out in order to quell a street riot which, owing to the active participation of the leadership

Camorristi, almost developed into a revolution. The origin of the Camorra is said to be Spanish, and the camorristi of today are supposed to be the descendants of a special class of Spanish brigands known as gamurri, from gamurra, a short coat or pea jacket which they wore. These gamurri were ordinary highway robbers, but they were united together under a sort of military rule. They had special laws and customs, and, like their Neapolitan descendants, very often they were in league with the police.

Living in an age of chivalry, the Spanish brigands were occasionally just and generous, two attributes which entirely disappeared when the association developed in Italy under the Spanish domination. In fact, a Spanish historian of the gamurri, writing about the Italian or rather Neapolitan ramification, remarks that the institution degenerated in a revolting manner.

The Camorra in Naples retained only the complicated organization, the disciplined and formal rule and the secrecy of its Spanish prototype, but in all other respects it changed altogether and became nothing else than a gang of thieves, hardened in all sorts of crime, brutal and corrupt. The

executing some slight act of revenge, or vendetta-like, slashing the face of an enemy with a razor. After this he becomes a picciotto, and over the line a dot is tattooed.

The giovinotti and picciotti are the rank and file of the Camorra, and, naturally, are very numerous. They do all the dirty work and most of the stabbing falls to their share.

Very often they are arrested and sentenced to a term of imprisonment of a fine. The latter is paid by the Camorra and in the former case they are kept at the expense of the society, and no sooner do they come out of prison than they are promoted to camorristi.

The Camorra keeps watch on all the crimes that are committed at Naples; of every theft that is committed part of a tariff, goes to the Camorra. A tax is levied on every house of bad repute, every wine shop, every person who lends money at usury, whether he belongs to the society or not.

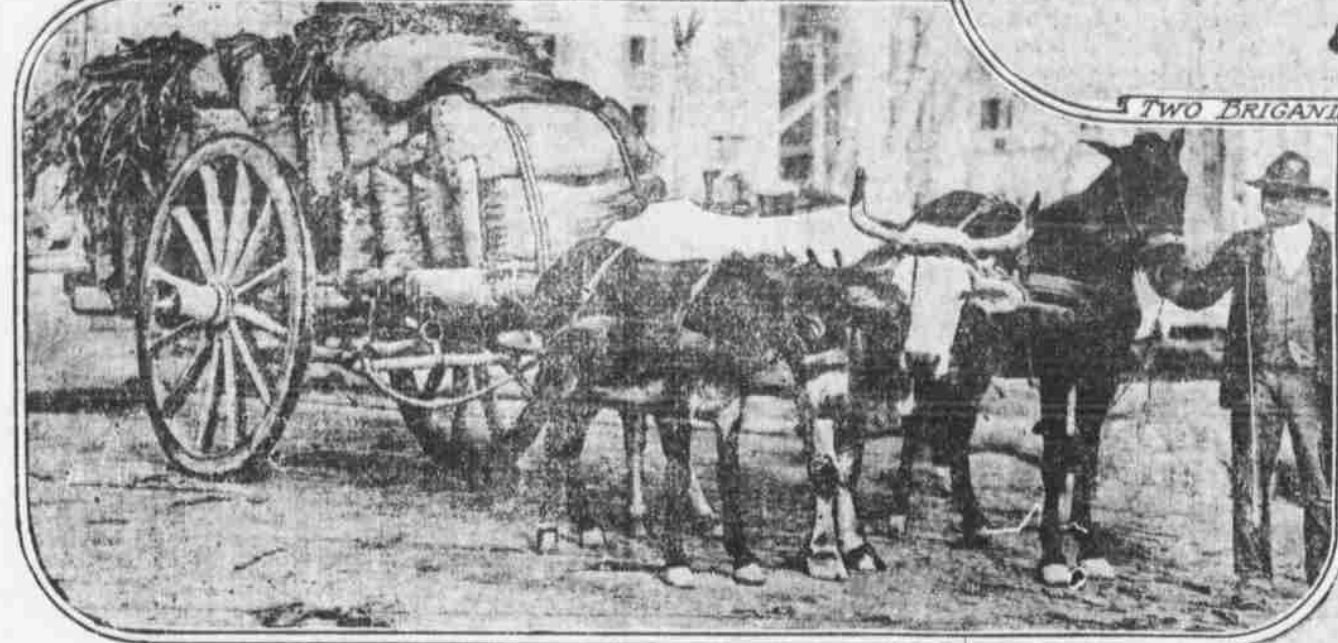
All the cabs that come into Naples from the neighboring villages pay a soldo (a cent) to the Camorra. Every farmer who brings his produce to market has to pay the Camorra. No farmer refuses to pay;



TWO BRIGANDS UNDER ARREST



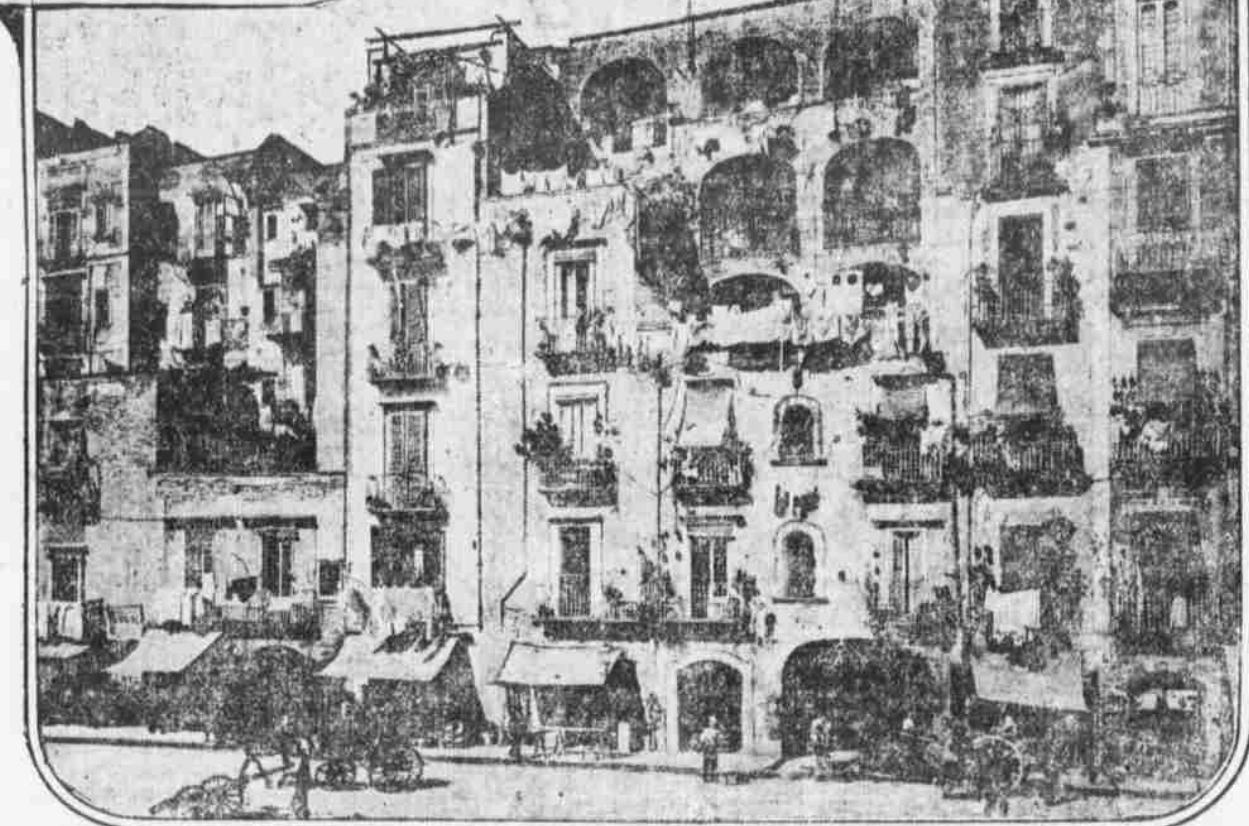
HONORED LADS (YOUNG MEMBERS OF CAMORRA)



FARMER WHO HAS TO PAY TAXES TO THE CAMORRA



NEAPOLITAN TYPES



WHERE THE CAMORRISTI LIVE IN NAPLES

Camorra or Honorable Society—such is its official name—was tolerated by the Bourbons and helped the police in times of revolution. Hence it attained such an ascendancy and developed to such an extent that today it is considered one of the national institutions of Naples and southern Italy.

The Camorra has been defined as the parasite of the social organization of Naples, which owing to the great excess of population as compared with the available means of subsistence is in a permanent state of demoralization. The Camorra is divided into two classes, known as the alta, or high, and bassa, or low, Camorra. The former belong to the high chief of the Honorable Society, known as capintesta, or head chief, the twelve chiefs who preside over the twelve districts of Naples, known as capinitti, and the camorristi, or full members of the association.

To the latter belong the giovinotti oruati, or honored lads, the recruits, and the picciotti, as the giovinotti are called after being initiated. The giovinotti are generally boys, beggars, and pickpockets, who aspire to belong to the society.

The first step in this direction is a sort of examination held by one of the district chiefs. If the candidate is found to promise well he is admitted on trial and an almost imperceptible line is tattooed on a visible part of his body. This denotes his rank.

The giovinotti is then expected to give a proof of his courage by performing what is known among the society as a bravura, or act of honor. This generally consists in stabbing a policeman or carabinieri, or

if one does, either one of his horses is killed or he himself suffers some damage.

If complaint is made to the police by victims of the Camorra, for the first offense they suffer a sfregio (a disfigurement, generally on the face by means of a slash with a razor), and a second denunciation may lead to their death.

When a picciotto has served a certain term as such and worked well he is admitted to the high class of the Camorra. But first he has to pass an examination which is held by the district chief and several camorristi, one of whom acts in the capacity of sponsor, or compare, of the picciotto.

Several questions are put to the candidate, which have to be answered to the full satisfaction of the examining board. When this interrogatory is over the chief asks:

"What do you seek now?" to which the candidate has to reply:

"My companions."

"Who are your companions?"

"The camorristi."

"What does camorrista mean?"

"A man of courage who commands the low society and stands with one foot on the ground and the other in the grave."

The picciotto then takes the oath of secrecy and in fifteen days time, during which he has to show his courage—bravura—either in a duel or in performing more stabbings, he is definitely admitted in the ranks of the camorristi. He is kissed and embraced by all his comrades and a great dinner is given in his honor, another dot is added to the line tattooed on his body and he is allowed to marry if he chooses. Giovinotti and picciotti have not this privilege.

The district chief are elected for life from among the camorristi and the head chief from among the twelve district chiefs. The Camorra has its own special tribunals and its special laws. The first axiom of

the Camorra courts is the following: "Sentences are just because the Camorra does not judge with the pen, but with the heart and mind."

Among the punishments decreed by these tribunals are the following: Suspension,

permanent or temporary, from enjoying the profits of Camorra operations or work; expulsion, permanent or temporary, from the honorable society; sfregio, or permanent visible disfigurement by means of a broken glass or a razor.

Capital of Barbary and Its Queer Population

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Tripoli, July 12.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I write these notes in the city of Tripoli. It is the capital of Barbary, that vast country of oases and desert, lying between Tunisia and Egypt, on the Mediterranean sea. I came here from Sfax, passing around the Gulf of Gabes and skirting the Desert of Libya the greater part of the way. Our boat was a little Italian steamer which sailed from Genoa, Tunis and then goes on around to Tripoli and back to Naples via Sicily and Malta.

We came to anchor in the harbor this morning and were brought to the shore by boatmen as fierce looking as the pirates who fought here against our American sailors 100 years ago.

It was in the harbor of Tripoli that Uncle Sam had his first great naval engagement, after the conclusion of the war which made him independent of Great Britain. This town was then a great practical stronghold. It levied its tribute on all the ships of the Mediterranean, and its soldiers not infrequently captured Christians and either held them for ransom or kept them in slavery. They had committed outrages upon our shipping during the last days of John Adams' presidency, and it was in 1801 that we formally declared war and sent Commodore Decatur across the Atlantic and over the Mediterranean to punish the pirates. Decatur recaptured and burnt the American frigate Philadelphia in the harbor here in February, 1804, and we then taught these semi-savages that, although they might take their toll from the nations of Europe, our own little republic across the Atlantic must be left alone.

It Belongs to the Sultan.
This land of Barbary now belongs to the sultan of Turkey. It has a governor general appointed by him, and there is an army of 16,000 soldiers in the barracks on the edge of the city which he has sent to keep order. The country is so large that the army can police little more than Tripoli itself, and the result is that every man who goes into the desert carries a gun with him, and that all the caravans must have their armed escorts. Nearly everyone who comes in from the interior has a gun strapped to his back. During a journey which I have made to one of the oases, I met many men so armed, and I am told that the country is everywhere unsafe.

Tripoli is for the most part nothing but sand. It is as long as from New York to Detroit, as wide as from Philadelphia to Buffalo, and it contains altogether an area ten times that of the state of Ohio. The only cultivated portions are a narrow strip of land along the Mediterranean sea,

and the oases, which are found scattered here and there through the desert of Libya. The population is scanty. It numbers altogether not more than 100,000, or about half as many as there are in Chicago, and these are made up of wild Arab tribes, many of which are at war with each other.

Tripoli and the Soudan.
The foreign trade of the country is with the Soudan and Europe. Tripoli lies directly north of Lake Chad, and it is the chief starting place for the caravans which cross the Sahara. There are half a dozen routes over the desert from here to the rich lands of central Africa, and a great deal of ivory, ostrich feathers and skins are brought to Tripoli on camels from those countries. The trip takes several months and the caravans often include in their freight female slaves for the Barbary harems. Millions of slaves have been thus carried over the desert and vast numbers have been sent from here to Tunis and Turkey. The caravan routes are lined with the bones of slaves who have died on the way, and the trade would

exist now were it not that the people fear the Christian powers might object.

City of Tripoli.
Tripoli, the city, lies in the Libyan desert, on the edge of the Mediterranean sea. It is not an oasis of mud houses surrounded by mud walls, such as I have described in my letters from the Sahara, but it is a desert city of 60,000 inhabitants with great white buildings and walls of stone.

Approaching it from the sea the town looks like a mighty fortification. It is built upon a sloping peninsula, the houses running around a beautiful bay, guarded by rocky islands, which rise like sentinels out of the blue Mediterranean. At one end of the bay is a huge fortification, commanded by Turkish soldiers, and at the other is the Kalbaj, a fortified castle, containing the government offices. Between these two, running around inside the horns of the crescent, are white buildings, mixed here and there with structures of green, blue and rose pink, which, rising almost straight up from the water, form a great bow, with these forts at the end. Behind are other buildings of three and four stories,

and, over them all, may be seen the tall lean white minarets of the mosques with green caps on their tops. The houses are of Arabic architecture and oriental in shape, and when one climbs to the roofs of the highest buildings, as I did today, he sees that each house is built about a little court, the walls facing, which are painted bright blue.

As I stood on the house top, all Tripoli lay below me. It looked much like a jumble of great goods boxes cast by the hands of the gods down into the midst of the desert. There are but few trees in the town. At the right, facing the sea, some distance away, is an oasis of date palms, but on the other side, as far as the eye can reach, there are nothing but the bare yellow sands of the desert of Libya. The city lies just south of Malta and Sicily, and it is, I should say, just about midway between Alexandria and Tunis, the two greatest of the African cities on the southern side of the Mediterranean sea.

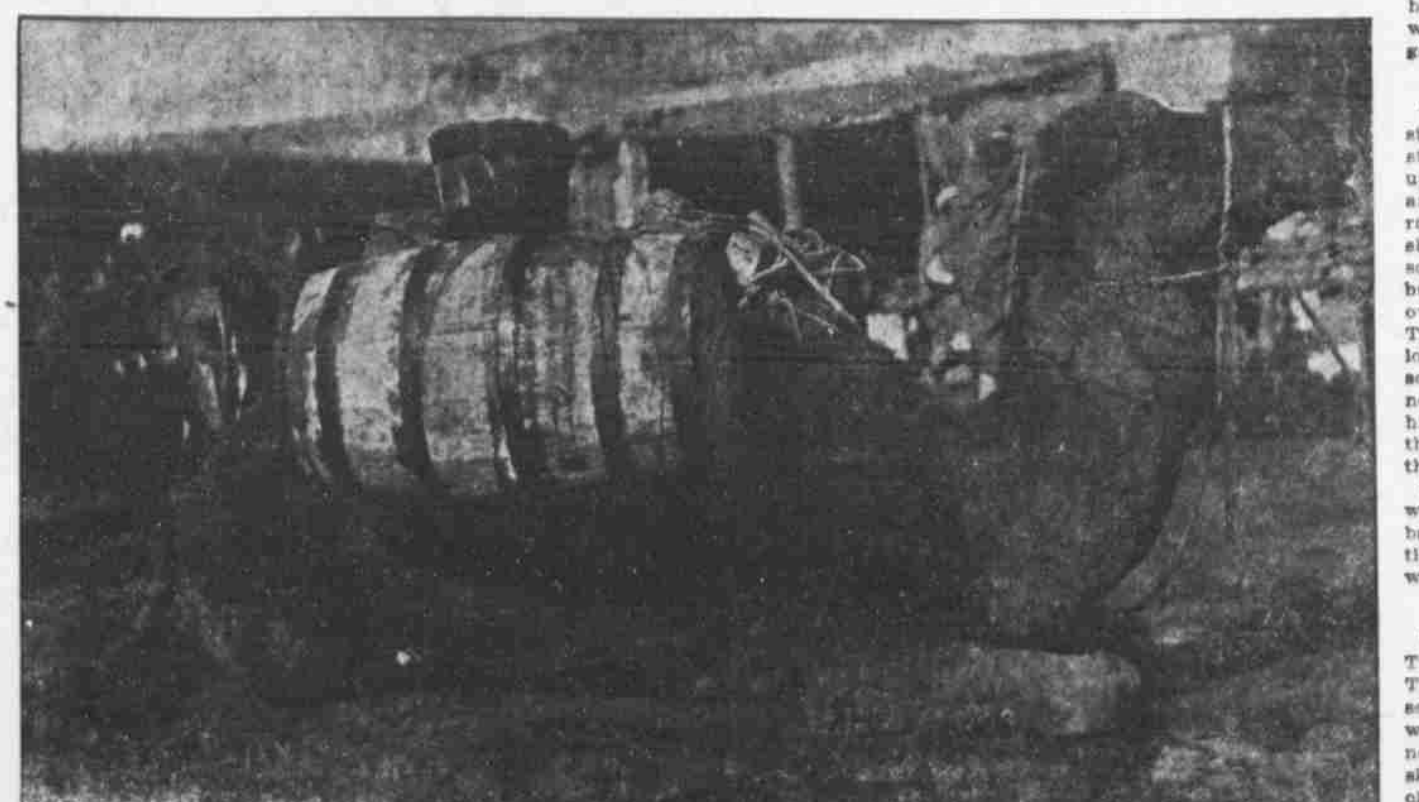
Walk Through the Streets.
But let us suppose that we are down in the city itself, wandering about through the

streets. The time is midday, and the African sun blazes like a furnace in this tropical sky of the desert. It dazzles our eyes and the white buildings about us catch the rays and throw them back, almost blinding. In the chief streets of the city there is no sun at all, and it is only when we strike the open spaces that we realize the brightness outside.

Tripoli is a city of caverns. Most of the streets are either covered with matting or boards, or are actually built over like great vaults and lighted here and there by holes in the roofs. It is like going through half-lighted tunnels, and we might wander about for hours bareheaded without fear of the sun. This is especially so in the busiest sections. The bazaars consist of streets, ten or fifteen feet wide, with white vaulted roofs, the light coming through holes in the latter, each of which is about a foot square. Now and then there will be a break in these roofs, making a short open space where the sun shines, but after that the vaults begin again so that one could go through almost the whole town and keep under cover. The business streets are paved with stone, and along the walls of the houses run ledges about three feet high, upon which the shops face and where the customers sit while they bargain.

Like a Grape Arbor.
The chief shopping section of Tripoli consists of a mighty grape arbor. Here the street is roofed over with a lattice work, upon which grape vines have been trained, and their cool, green leaves temper the rays of the sun. This street is lined with shops, some of which are about fifteen feet square. Such shops are considered great business establishments, and their turbaned owners are among the nobles of the city. The ordinary store is not as wide nor as long as a library table, and there are many so small that the merchant within could not ask a friend to enter without moving his goods. Almost all the streets are such that wheeled vehicles cannot go through them and some will not even admit donkeys. Most of the freight is carried by porters who go about with great loads on their backs or heads. In the wider streets little donkeys are the chief beasts of burden, while the camels carry the heavier loads.

Water Camels.
One of the most interesting features of Tripoli is connected with its water supply. This town of 60,000 has no water mains or sewers. There are no hydrants, and the water used comes entirely from wells in or near the city. Some of it is carried in goat skins on the backs of men, some of it in clay jars on the heads of women and a great deal in barrels on the humps of



PART OF THE TRIPOLI WATER WORKS.

Capital punishments or rather murders, are executed by means of taglienti (cutters) or knives, and the mode of killing differs according to the gravity of the crime committed. The worst is by stabbing in the stomach, which prolongs death. Next comes stabbing in the chest or heart, and finally stabbing in the head.

The secret tribunal of the Camorra sits generally in a cell, and if the crime under consideration is a capital one it is composed of the head and the twelve district chiefs. No defense is admitted, but a Camorrista acts as prosecuting counsel.

The members of the court come fully armed, but their first act on entering is to hand over their weapons to the chief, who ties them up in a handkerchief and delivers them to a camorrista who remains at the door.

The presence of the accused is not necessary. When death is decreed four picciotti are called in and charged with the execution of the sentence, generally within twenty-four hours. The punishment for denunciations to the police is always death, as in the case of Cuccolo.

As evidence that the sentence has been carried out the executioners generally take some object belonging to the accused and give it to the chief, who displays it in such a manner so that all the Camorristi can see it. In the case of Cuccolo, Errioso, the head chief, wore the dead man's ring for an entire month after the murder.

The Camorristi have a slang of their own, which is characterized by the fact that it is only used in poetry. Thus, for example, a Camorrista, very often disguised as a lazzarone or tramp, sits in the sun and stings about a huntsman who went out shooting birds and tried to hit them under their wings. People stop and listen; if there happens to be a Camorristi among them these understand that the huntsman is a judge and that he is attempting to get some information out of members of the society.

Camorristi communicate with their companions in prison by means of these songs; they warn each other of the approach of the police and they arrange robberies and murders in broad daylight and in the most frequented places.

The Camorristi are very superstitious. For instance, they firmly believe that the murderer who swallows a drop of blood of his victim is never arrested by the police, in case they have to rob a church or a shrine, before doing so they kneel down and say some prayers, followed by a formula to the effect that the robbery is not an insult to God, but a means of getting a living.

Camorristi often make vows to saints and when the undertaking succeeds they wear a month the special colors of the saint, green for St. Anne, black for the Mother of Sorrows and so on. A favorite vow of the Camorristi is to marry a woman of bad repute in order to prevent her from leading a life of sin.

The general impression throughout Italy is that the Camorra is in league with the police. It is said that all the men who represent Naples in Parliament owe their elections to the Camorra. Even the municipal elections are influenced by the Camorra and hence it follows that the Honorable society has protectors in high places.

The Neapolitan deputies have certainly never made any effort against the Camorra in Parliament nor have they denied the revelations made by local newspapers alleging their complicity with the Honorable society. A deputy from the north of Italy, Signor Giacomo Ferri, during a recent debate in the house, provoked by a question he asked as to whether the police were so much in league with the Camorra as to hamper the work of the carabinieri, furnished the following information about this criminal organization whose existence had been denied by some Neapolitan deputies. It is a well known fact, he said, that the authors of the Cuccolo murder were not arrested owing to the connivance of the police.

Since the Carabinieri have taken the matter in hand many things have come to light. In a recent case, Signor Vitozzi, has been arrested, and it has been ascertained that he was the chaplain of the Camorra. He persuaded the investigating judge to set free the persons first arrested, for the Cuccolo murder, and it has been proved that this man, who is indicted for fifteen crimes, murders, and is a member of trafficking, spoliation of graves, etc., was a friend of judges and high police officials.

Bills of exchange drawn in favor of judges and police commissioners have been found in possession of Don Cleo Vitozzi, Errioso, and other Camorristi. Signor Ferri, therefore, concluded by saying that there is not the least shadow of doubt that the police and Camorra were in league and he expressed his firm conviction that were it not for the personal intervention of the king no effort would have been ever made to combat the Camorra.

(Continued on Page Four.)