

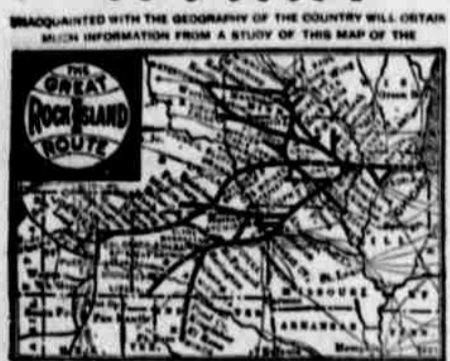


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MEDIAEVAL FERRARA.

SEEING THE OLD ESTEAN CAPITAL WITH THE MIND'S EYE.

The Emilian City of the Past and Present—A Line of Princess Outwardly Refined and Inwardly Savage—A Story of Love, Intrigue and Vengeance.

(Special Correspondence.) NEW YORK, Nov. 25.—Ferrara has always had a strange, and sort of fascinating for me, beyond that of almost any of the mediæval capitals of Italy.

When I was a small boy the name appalled me, touched my heart, stirred my imagination. Shall I ever, I thought, set foot in Ferrara? My vagrant mind was continually journeying thither, continually seeing, not the town of the present, but the flourishing city of the sixteenth century.

The weary years of waiting had finally borne fruit. As I stepped out of the car at the station, I am not sure, in my exalted mood, that I did not expect to be greeted by Bolardo, Tasso and Ariosto, and to see Lucrezia Borgia, beautiful and bewitching, anxiously looking for the arrival of one of her many lovers.

Ferrara was not unlike my anticipations. I had studied guide books sufficiently not to be disappointed at the shrunken, decayed town, containing less than 35,000 souls. Its outgoing was that of faded grandeur, conspicuous in its broad, regular, deserted streets, in which the grass was growing.

My wish was to reconstruct it through my imagination; to revivify the dead; to restore the bygone. And with this purpose I wandered at my own sweet will, mentally intent on the ages fled and the events to which they had given birth.

It is natural that the place should be unhealthy, from the frequent inundations of the river, higher than the surrounding region, and its consequent marshy character. The citizens tell strangers that it is not malarious now, though they themselves often have chills and fever, as their appearance indicates.

While I observed on all sides decline and desertion—defaced statues, perishing monuments, vacant streets, forsaken edifices—I looked at the city through my mind's eye, and through the dead ages. I was there not in the last half of the nineteenth century, but in the mediæval time, during the dominance of the Este, when the town boasted of 100,000 people, and the court was one of the most polished and sumptuous in Europe.

It seemed to see Giotto painting frescoes in the Church of St. Agostino, Dosso Dossi decorating canvases for Alfonso d'Este, Bastianino sketching his bold figures in the Cathedral. The stern face of Calvin fleeing from persecution appeared in the ducal palace and relaxed its sternness somewhat at the kind words of the Duchess Renée, daughter of Louis XII and wife of Ercole II. Clement Marot, the French poet, also a fugitive, was born again and acted as private secretary of the duchess. In the house of Ariosto, in the Via di Mirasole, the poet was disclosed, as in a vision, writing the "Orlando Furioso" and finally dying at fifty-eight over his studies—a true type of the devoted scholar. Tasso showed in the hospital of St. Anna as a prisoner, having been confined there by Alfonso d'Este from some unknown motive. The motive became clear to me there—it was his love for the duke's sister, Eleonora, which the duke pretended to treat as a mental disorder. The university, founded in the fourteenth century, recovered its ancient renown as I entered its walls, resumed its early importance, gathered students from every part of Europe.

HIS IDEA OF OVERCOATS.

But the Other Man Didn't Understand His Drift. He was smoking a cigar and reading a newspaper in the gentlemen's cabin of a Hoboken ferryboat, when a man who had been watching him for three or four minutes from the other side crossed over and queried: "Much news in the paper to-day?"

"Nothing in there about overcoats—any half price sales, or anything?" "Haven't seen anything." "Wish you'd kinder look. I've come down to buy one. What price had a feller order pay for a purty good overcoat down here this time o' year?"

"I'm not posted on overcoats, sir," was the curt reply. "Hain't, eh? Run more to trowsers, perhaps? I orter git a purty fair one fur nine dollars, hain't I? I don't care so much fur scollops as I do fur warmth and fast color. Might I ask the cost of the one you've got on?"

"Look here, sir," replied the man with the paper, "didn't I tell you I was not in the overcoat business? If you don't know enough to buy an overcoat you'd better go without one."

"I declare if he hain't got real mad about it! Wall, it don't make no difference to me. If a feller wants to be civil he'll find me ready to do my full share, but if he wants to be mean I kin be meaner than pizen. I didn't much like his looks to start with, but I didn't know but he might be half way civil. He's jist the same as told me to shut up, and if I should meet him a million times after this I'd never speak to him—never!"

It was a sure way to make money. His history is briefly told. After several days of thought he discovered a sure way to make money, and, like other men, he was in a hurry to try it. He made haste to insert an advertisement something like the following in several country weeklies: "Sure way to kill potato bugs: send twenty cent postage stamps to X. Y. Z., for a receipt that cannot fail."

There is said to be a girl ten years old living near Elmhurst who speaks only a language of her own invention, although she reads and writes English. Here is a portion of her vocabulary: Sota, angry; phatota, fun; tooky, a strong rope; behoh, papa. Now, if behoh should get sota and take a tooky and have some phatota warning the reporter who spun the yarn, such fictions as this would be fewer.

Mr. Spinks—Why under heavens did you give Billington that cotton umbrella? He'll never bring it back. Mrs. Spinks—The only other one in the rack was silk. "You should have given him that." "Humph! If he wouldn't return the cotton one, why should he return the silk one?" Tell me that, Mr. Spinks. "The cotton one was his."—New York Weekly.

Wagg—It's too bad about that girl that jumped off the Washington monument, isn't it? Wooden—Why, what did she jump off for? Wagg—Why, you see she was very thin. Wooden—What had that to do with it? Wagg—Why, she thought she'd come down plump.—Boston Courier.

Really it was dingy and diminished, almost unknown; but I invested it with its glorious past, and the investment cheated the reality. The princely line of the Estes passed before me, revealing their meanness, despotism, baseness, cruelty, along with their patronage of learning, and art, their refinement of manner, their parade and pageantry. I perceived how Obizzo obtained, at the close of the Twelfth century, his lordship over Ferrara, carrying off Marchesella, only descendant of the Adelaridis (the Adelaridis had been the popular leaders of the Guelphs there), betrothed to a Ghibelline family, and forcing her to marry his son Azzo.

Nothing inspires more hatred of the Este than the conduct of Nicholas III, one of the most tyrannical of his race. He and his predecessors occupied the Castle, as it is now called, standing in the center of the town, and one of its largest and most conspicuous buildings. Formerly the ducal palace, it bears little trace of the Este family, but is as melancholy as any edifice in Ferrara. The vast square pile looks mediæval, with its moats, still containing water, and its large towers at each corner. The deepest tragedy in its history is that of Hugo and Parisina, whose scenes of suffering are pointed out. These were so very vivid to me on my first visit that they long haunted me and made an indelible impression on my mind.

I went all over the Castle. The saloon of Aurora, which poor Parisina occupied (the frescoes of Dosso Dossi are still visible on the ceiling), and the dungeons at the foot of the Lion's Tower, directly under the saloon, where the lovers were confined, had a painful allurement. Nicholas was, according to all accounts, a most licentious and depraved prince, allowing nothing to stand in the way of his desires or ambition. He, like his predecessors, patronized art and letters, and was zealous in the cause of the church, insisting on its dogmas and breaking all the commandments, as was the custom of the rulers of that outwardly refined and inwardly barbarous age.

Then several hundred of them bought clubs and railroad tickets and started out to interview the advertiser. At his office they were informed that he had left to attend to some business in Europe, and he was not expected back. All he had left was a package of 3,000 or 4,000 slips of paper, on which were printed the following: "Put your bug on a shingle. Then hit it with another shingle."—Chicago Tribune.

The Remainder. Mother—Nellie, if I should give Effie half of that pudding, and give the other half to Eddie, what would be left? Nellie—I'd be left.—Truth.

Beloh Should Get Sota. There is said to be a girl ten years old living near Elmhurst who speaks only a language of her own invention, although she reads and writes English. Here is a portion of her vocabulary: Sota, angry; phatota, fun; tooky, a strong rope; behoh, papa. Now, if behoh should get sota and take a tooky and have some phatota warning the reporter who spun the yarn, such fictions as this would be fewer.

One Umbrella Less. Mr. Spinks—Why under heavens did you give Billington that cotton umbrella? He'll never bring it back. Mrs. Spinks—The only other one in the rack was silk. "You should have given him that." "Humph! If he wouldn't return the cotton one, why should he return the silk one?" Tell me that, Mr. Spinks. "The cotton one was his."—New York Weekly.

A Quick Cure. Wagg—It's too bad about that girl that jumped off the Washington monument, isn't it? Wooden—Why, what did she jump off for? Wagg—Why, you see she was very thin. Wooden—What had that to do with it? Wagg—Why, she thought she'd come down plump.—Boston Courier.

Business Is Business. Highwayman—Your money or your life. Lawyer—Here's all I have. Highwayman—All right—Now get out. Lawyer (taking him by the buttonhole)—Wait a minute, friend. Don't you want to engage counsel to defend you in case you should be arrested for this affair?—Buffalo Express.



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