

a more laughable scene than the Strada di Toledo exhibited to-day; the whole city seemed to wear "one universal grin;" and such an incessant fire of sugar-plums (or what seemed such) was carried on, and with such eagerness and mimic fury, that when our carriage came out of the conflict, we all looked as if a sack of flour had been shaken over us. The implements used in this ridiculous warfare are, for common purposes, little balls of plaster of Paris and flour, made to resemble small comfits: friends and acquaintances pelted each other with real confetti, and those of the most delicious and expensive kinds. A double file of carriages moved in a contrary direction along the Corso; a space in the middle and on each side being left for horsemen and pedestrians, and the most exact order was maintained by the guards and police; so that if by chance a carriage lost its place in the line, it was impossible to recover it, and it was immediately obliged to leave the street, and re-enter by one of the extremities. Besides the warfare carried on below, the balconies on each side were crowded with people in gay or grotesque dresses, who had sacks of bon-bons before them, from which they showered volleys upon those beneath, or aimed across the street at each other: some of them filled their handkerchiefs, and then dexterously loosening the corners, and taking a certain aim, flung a volley at once. This was like a cannon loaded with grapeshot, and never failed to do the most terrific execution.

Among the splendid and fanciful equipage of the masqueraders, was one, containing the Duke of Monteleone's family, in the form of a ship, richly ornamented, and drawn by six horses mounted by masks for postillions. The forepart of the vessel contained the duke's party, dressed in various gay costumes, as Tartar warriors and Indian queens. In the stern were the servants and attendants, *travestied* in the most grotesque and ludicrous style. This magnificent and unwieldy car had by some chance lost its place in the procession, and vainly endeavoured to whip in; as it is a point of honour among the charioteers not to yield the *pas*. Our coachman, however, was ordered (though most unwilling) to draw up and make way for it; and this little civility was acknowledged; not only by a profusion of bows, but by such a shower of delicious sugar-plums, that the seats of our carriage were literally covered with them, and some of the gentlemen flung into our laps elegant little baskets, fastened with ribands, and filled with exquisite sweetmeats. I could not enter into all this with much spirit; "*non son io quel ch'un tempo fui*:" but I was an amused, though a quiet spectator; and sometimes saw much more than those who were actually engaged in the battle. I observed that to-day our carriage became an object of attention, and a favourite point of attack to several parties on foot and in carriages: and I was at no loss to discover the reason. I had with me a lovely girl, whose truly English style of beauty, her brilliant bloom heightened by her eager animation, her

lips dimpled with a thousand smiles, and her whole countenance radiant with glee and mischievous archness, made her an object of admiration, which the English expressed by a fixed stare, and the Italians by sympathetic smiles, nods, and all the usual superlatives of delight. Among our most potent and malignant adversaries, was a troop of elegant masks in a long open carriage, the form of which was totally concealed by the boughs of laurel, and wreaths of artificial flowers with which it was covered. It was drawn by six fine horses, fancifully caparisoned, ornamented with plumes of feathers, and led by grotesque masks. In the carriage stood twelve persons in black silk dominoes, black hats, and black masks; with plumes of crimson feathers, and rich crimson sashes. They were armed with small painted targets and tin tubes, from which they shot volleys of confetti, in such quantities and with such dexterous aim, that we were almost overwhelmed whenever we passed them. It was in vain we returned the compliment; our small shot rattled on their masks, or bounced from their shields, producing only shouts of laughter at our expense.

A favourite style of mask here is the dress of an English sailor, straw hats, blue jackets, white trousers, and very white masks with pink cheeks: we saw hundreds in this whimsical costume.

13th.—On driving home rather late this evening, and leaving the noise, the crowds, the confusion and festive folly of the Strada di Toledo, we came suddenly upon a scene which, from its beauty, no less than by the force of contrast, strongly impressed my imagination. The shore was silent and almost solitary: the bay as smooth as a mirror, and as still as a frozen lake: the sky, the sea, the mountains round were all of the same hue, a soft gray, tinged with violet, except where the sunset had left a narrow crimson streak along the edge of the sea. There was not a breeze, not the slightest breath of air, and a single vessel, a frigate with all its white sails crowded, lay motionless as a monument on the bosom of the waters, in which it was reflected as in a mirror. I have seen the bay more splendidly beautiful: but I never saw so peculiar, so lovely a picture. It lasted but a short time: the transparent purple veil became a dusky pall, and night and shadow gradually enveloped the whole.

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How I love these resplendent skies and blue seas! Nature here seems to celebrate a continual Festa, and to be for ever decked out in holiday costume! A drive along the "*sempre beata Mergellina*" to the extremity of the Promontory of Pausilippo is positive enchantment: thence we looked over a landscape of such splendid and unequalled interest! the shores of Baia, where Cicero, Horace, Virgil, Pliny, Mænas, lived; the white towers of Puzzuoli and the Islands of Ischia, Procida, and Nisida. There was the Sybil's Cave, Lake Acheron, and the fabled Lethe; there the sepulchre of Misenus, who defied the Triton; and the scene of the whole sixth book of the