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NAPLES.

Sunday, 3d.—We left Gaeta early. If the scene was so beautiful in the evening—how bright, how lovely it was this morning! The sun had not long risen; and a soft purple mist hung over part of the sea; while to the north and west the land and water sparkled and glowed in the living light. Some little fishing-boats which had just put off, rocked upon the glassy sea, which lent them a gentle motion, though itself appeared all mirror-like and motionless. The orange and lemon trees in full foliage literally bent over the water; and it was so warm at half-past eight that I felt their shade a relief.

After leaving Gaeta, the first place of note is or was Minturnum, where Marius was taken, concealed in the marshes near it. The marshes remain, the city has disappeared. Capua is still a large town; but it certainly does not keep up its ancient fame for luxury and good cheer: for we found it extremely difficult to procure any thing to eat. The next town is Avversa, a name unknown, I believe, in the classical history of Italy: it was founded, if I remember rightly, by the Norman knights. Near this place is or was the convent where Queen Joanna strangled her husband Andrea, with a silken cord of her own weaving. So says the story; *non lo credo io*.

From Avversa to Naples the country is not interesting; but fertile and rich beyond description: an endless succession of vineyards and orange groves. At length we reached Naples: all tired and in a particularly sober and serious mood: we remembered it was the Sabbath, and had forgotten that it was the first day of the Carnival; and great was our amazement at the scene which met us on our arrival—

I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed: and all  
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

The whole city seemed one vast puppet-show; and the noisy gayety of the crowded streets almost stunned me. One of the first objects we encountered was a barouche full of Turks and Sultanas, driven by an old woman in a tawdry court-dress as coachman; while a merry-andrew and a harlequin capered behind as footmen. Owing to the immense size of the city, and the difficulty of making our way through the motley throng of masks, beggars, lazzaroni, eating-stalls, carts and carriages, we

were nearly three hours traversing the streets before we reached our inn on the Chiaja.

I feel tired and over-excited: I have been standing on my balcony looking out upon the moonlit bay, and listening to the mingled shouts, the laughter, the music all around me; and thinking—till I feel in no mood to write.

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7th.—Last night we visited the theatre of San Carlo. It did not strike me as equal to the Scala at Milan. The form is not so fine, the extent of the stage is, or appeared to be, less; but there is infinitely more gilding and ornament: the mirrors and lights, the sky-blue draperies produce a splendid effect, and the *coup-d'œid* is, on the whole, more gay, more theatre-like. It was crowded in every part, and many of the audience were in dominoes and fancy dresses: a few were masked. Rossini's *Barbiere di Seviglia*, which contains, I think, more *melody* than all his other operas put together, (the *Tancredi* perhaps excepted) was most enchantingly sung, and as admirably acted; and the beautiful classical ballad of "Niobe and her Children," would have appeared nothing short of perfection, had I not seen the *Didone Abbandonata* at Milan. But they have no actress here like the graceful, the expressive Pallerini; nor any actor equal to the *Aeneas* of the Scala.

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The Austrians, who are paramount here, allow masks only twice a week, Sundays and Thursdays. The people seem determined to indemnify themselves for this restriction on their pleasures by every allowed excess during the two days of merriment which their despotic conquerors have spared them. I am told by M\*\* and S\*\*, our Italian friends, that the Carnival is now fallen off from its wild spirit of fanciful gayety, that it is stupid, dull, tasteless, in comparison to what it was formerly, owing to the severity of the Austrian police. I know nothing about the propriety of the measures which have been resorted to for curbing the excesses of the Carnival: I think if people *will* run away instead of fighting for their national rights, they must be content to suffer accordingly—but I meddle not with politics, and with all my heart abhor them. Whatever the gayeties of the Carnival may have been formerly, it is scarce possible to conceive a more fantastic, a more picturesque,