

Benedictines, founded A.D. 528, where the monks of the olden time—famous for their patronage of literature—lived in grand style. At *Caserta*, we got a passing glimpse of what the natives call 'their white elephant'—the Royal Summer Palace—said to be the finest in Europe—a magnificent pile of buildings now used as a military school. Here we enter upon a wide, fertile plain—the most densely peopled tract of land in Italy, if not in the world, and cultivated almost entirely with the spade. From this point we get our first view of Vesuvius and we keep it in sight until, sweeping round its base, we enter the station of "Napoli." Now the scene changes. All is bustle, confusion and uproar; and what between the hotel bummers and the cabmen, it seemed as if we should be almost torn in pieces. But all's well that ends well; we forgot all our troubles as soon as we crossed the threshold of the Hotel della Riviera, a quiet and comfortable house in the finest quarter of the city. In front of it are the public gardens, adorned with stately palms and other beautiful trees and shrubs, and *the drive*—accounted the finest in Europe—where the aristocracy of this great city of 600,000 come to take their evening airing in fine equipages, along the margin of the deep blue sea, and in fall view of *the Bay* with its magnificent sweep of thirty-five miles. Behind this street, called the *Chiaja*, the city rises in terraces up to the foot of the walls of the grand old castle of St. Elmo, 820 feet above the sea. It has been said that no other spot in the world comprizes within the same compass so much natural beauty with so many objects of interest to the antiquary, the historian, and the geologist, as the Bay of Naples. Certainly it could never be seen to better advantage than now, in the end of February, when the climate is superb—so balmy yet so bracing as to make one insensible to fatigue, even under the high pressure of sight-seeing.

The principal sights of Naples are its 300 churches (some of them very fine), its Royal Palace, its extensive catacombs, the castle and monastery of St. Elmo, the harbour with its shipping, the dock-yard with its huge armour-plated ships of war, the Grotto of Pausilippo, and the National Museum. The Museum is stored with art-treasures from Herculaneum, Pompeii and Stabiae. Its

collection of bronzes is unique. The ground floor is filled with ancient statues, and its walls are covered with thousands of frescoes, mosaics, and inscriptions from these buried cities. If the paintings have no great artistic merit, they are interesting as shewing how like to modern life was that of the people who lived here eighteen hundred years ago. The perfection of the statuary in marble and bronze, on the other hand, fills one with amazement at the high state of civilization that must have prevailed when even small provincial towns like these contained such a profusion of works which in design and finish, have never since been equalled. While others are scrutinizing the cameos, the brooches and bracelets, the rings and armlets, and other personal adornments of the stylish old Pompeiians, let us look at the two splendid equestrian statues in white marble of Balbus—father and son—which were recovered from Herculaneum, slightly discoloured, but with scarcely so much as a scratch upon them. I think I see these two noblemen now, sitting face to face on their bare-back steeds, the younger gracefully extending his right hand, as though he were in the act of thanking his fellow-citizens for some special mark of their favour. The horse is thought to be the finest of antiquity. The bronze equestrian statue of Nero, found on the top of a triumphal arch in Pompeii, is also very fine. And if you sit down before that inimitable representation in bronze of *The Dying Gladiator*, and look at the life-blood oozing from his side, and see the stamp of death on his manly brow, you must weep. The *Papyri*, answering to the books of the period, are very curious. Some three thousand were found, charred, but not destroyed, in Herculaneum. Five hundred of these parchments have been unrolled and some of them translated. They consist chiefly of treatises on philosophy, music and rhetoric. What a strange library! What a strange collection altogether! Large rooms are filled with specimens of household furniture, cooking utensils, vases, dishes, lamps, weights and measures, musical and surgical instruments, bread, fruit, spices, cosmetics, coins, jewellery, precious stones, everything in short that the people used, even to the tickets for the theatre, which they *intended to use* on that fatal night when destruction came upon them unawares.