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Taormina--A Sicilian Village.

SHALL I ever forget my first view, of Sicily! We had left the land of the Sphinx, and for three days the steamer had tossed, till one sighed for land and almost resolved never to leave terra firma again when we finally arrived there. What a contrast when we got into the water like glass under the lee of the Island, and what a welcome sight when away to the left, towering above us, and shining through the morning mist, stood Etna! Wonderful view! No land visible below, but just this huge gem, dazzlingly beautiful, lifting up her majestic head to pay homage to the new-born day. We landed at Messina, but at once proceeded to Taormina some fifty or sixty miles to the south..

Taormina has a perfect situation, standing six hundred feet above the sea level, with a magnificent view of the straits of Messina. The view is considered one of the finest in Europe, and for my part, Taormina is one of the most lovely spots imaginable. This little hamlet nestling half way up the hill-side with its winding road, its old gates, its long narrow main street and quaint side streets with stone stairways, is altogether a perfect paradise for an artist. The whole hill-side is laid out in terraces and there, as in the rest of Sicily, orange and lemon trees grow in great profusion, also olive and almond trees. We were fortunate in seeing the latter in full bloom. They were very lovely. Try to picture a glorious day in March, sitting on a sunny piazza and looking down on almond trees pink with blossoms, orange groves heavy with fruit ready to be gathered and here and there a garden laid out in the Italian style with pillars and stonework about, gay with many flowers. One was particularly struck with the flowers that grew in such profusion, quite irrespective of season. There were roses, geraniums, lavender, violets, hyacinth and irises all in bloom at the same time. Then, on the grassy slopes below grew prickly pear, large bushes of milky euphorbia and many wild flowers, including the renowned poker-like asphodels. Here and there huge weather-beaten pines stood like sentinels, adding greatly to the beauty of the landscape; and to this, little hamlets here and there, and away, Etna capped in snow, with smoke curling out against the clear blue of the sky. One almost shuddered to think of what might one day be the awful fate of all the villages studded on her slope, and as a final touch in this *bella vista*, was the blue, blue sea with the coast of Calabria shining in the distance

It is hardly to be wondered at that Taormina is fast becoming a favored resort in Spring. There are several good hotels, one of which is of peculiar in-