

Truth's Contributors.

RAMBLES IN ITALY.

Spezia's Great Arsenal—Carrara's Ancient Marble Quarries.

At this season of the year the hotels in Italy are forsaken by tourists. The porter therefore leans on his desk and sleeps, with an occasional yawn and stretching of the arms to assure himself that the power of movement has not departed. The waiter has a listless and depressed mien, as though thinking of last winter's fees. Three or four of them watch you as you eat, giving one the feeling of being a child under severe surveillance as regards table manners. When you have singled out the most deserving as the recipient of a franc piece, you observe that the others turn away quickly to control their suppressed emotions, while the head waiter eyes you from a distance with a mournful expression which declares that life has no longer any attractions for him. On the other hand, one has the best apartments in the house, dines in solemn state in the great hall, and sleeps in quiet. Besides, one sees Italy in the gorgeous dress of summer, and gets nearer to the people than the winter tourist ever can. So I roamed

LAZILY THROUGH THE STREETS

of Spezia, and stopped where a house was building. It was to be of five stories. The walls and partitions were of stone laid in mortar, as we build cellar foundations. No derrick was used, but all the material was carried up by hand. The men receive from sixty cents to a dollar per day. Their dinner was bread and macaroni, with a few figs. They eat meat about twice in the week. The square opposite the Arades was full of flowers, the red and white oleander predominating. I measured the trunk of one palm, which was seventeen inches in diameter, and there were several more of nearly the same size. The aloes flourish and the orange lines the street. The delicate and graceful branches of the Cedar of Lebanon stretch out toward you, as though to attract your admiration. The giant sequoia, or redwood of California, grows here as if in its native land. A young man of about twenty-five years passed me a minute later, singing with as much unconscious enjoyment as a yellow bird. Many men of that age here have voices like a boy, which show in the high notes no sign of adolescence. This is the native land of tenors. As I was turning to catch the last tones of the song, my eye caught the figure of a girl in a fruit-store leaning against the wall. The girl was as pretty and as dirty as the most fastidious artist in search of a model could desire. The women here have none of the witchery of their northern sisters, but there is a dreamy,

APPEALING BEAUTY

in their dark eyes and plaintive expressions. The little girls have it like their mothers. A little further on was a group of dirty little boys playing under the arcade. I watched them for a moment, and I was convinced of what I suspected—right—that they were cherubs of the East, who had come from some picture-gallery. All else was rags and dirt, which matched

which are merely of a military character. It is educating the people, and lifting them more than any of her agency since the Crusades. It takes the young men at the most impossible age from their country homes, and out of the range of their narrow provincialisms. The transfer from one camp or garrison to another broadens their ideas in the same manner as travel. They are taught promptness of execution and obedience to law. They acquire a scrupulous neatness in dress, a fine soldiery bearing, a chivalrous attitude toward women, and a self respect which transforms them from ignorant peasants into intelligent citizens. As an educational system the army is worth all that it costs. To destroy it at once would be like closing all our common schools in country districts. There are regions in Italy where in the last generation all the peasantry were either brigands or sympathizers with them. Now they are peaceable because, more than from any other means, the returned soldiers have

CHANGED PUBLIC SENTIMENT

so that it supports the execution of law, and values the general security and order. The cost was great, for Italy had to provide herself at once with the whole equipment of a first-class power. A hotel manager told me that he paid a license of \$40, then a tax of 23 per cent of the amount of his rent, and then an income tax of 13.58-100 per cent. Yet Italy is advancing rapidly; the towns are growing, and business increases. The people are proud of the Royal family, though the African schemes of the Ministry are not popular. They call it sentimental politics, and say that the great need of the country is internal improvement, and the opening of new markets for their products.

On leaving Spezia, I started to visit the marble quarries at Carrara. The road winds beautifully up the hills, so that one obtains continually new views of the Bay, till at last the whole sheet of water is before you, almost locked in by the surrounding mountains. I counted thirteen war-vessels lying at anchor. Some of them, like the Italia and the Lepanto, look very formidable. Spezia is the great naval station of Italy, and its construction yards cover 150 acres. There are no fields of grass here. All the land is under cultivation with olives, grapes, figs, peaches, plums, pears and Indian corn. The last is planted in rows little more than two feet apart, and seems too thick. The season of growth must be very long, for while some of the corn has been topped off, and the ears are getting yellow, in other fields the blade is not more than a foot high. The olives are one-third grown, and will not ripen till November. The

OIL FROM THIS REGION

is celebrated, and is said to be very easily made. The ripe fruit is ground as we grind apples for cider, and then water is run through the mash, which carries the oil with it. This is allowed to settle in tanks, when the oil rises and is skimmed off. I passed a house where heliotrope was growing on the whole front to the height of the second story. The stems were over an inch thick and were nearly ten years old. The whole courtyard was full of its luxurious perfume. Passing on, I stopped to talk with a man who was working in a vineyard. He told me that he was thirty-five years old and received wages to the amount of 30 cents per day. He seldom eats meat or butter. His diet is macaroni and oil with some vegetables, principally beans. His cottage, which I visited, was comfortable, but dirty. His wife was spinning flax and making the cloth for the use of the family.

Just below the town of Arcola, the people would ever have such a life? It stands on a narrow and high bluff shaped like a wedge. I counted nine tiers of steps so steep that the black dog looked over his back. Our farmers

ought to see the economy with which land here is used. Hills are terraced for olives and grapes. In the wet spots osier willows are grown for basket making. On the gravelly knolls figs are planted. Every place gets its suitable crop, and thus a great diversity of culture is given. The fields are very differently shaped, and are generally marked off by lines of fruit-trees.

At last we arrived at Carrara, and began the ascent of the ravine of Parachino. I was told that 15,000,000 persons were engaged in the marble working, 6,000 of whom are miners. Wages are good, an ordinary workman getting from sixty cents to a dollar per day, and the more skilled earning up to four dollars. The working time is from 5 in the morning till 12, with an hour's intermission for breakfast. Many of the more enterprising work for themselves during the afternoon. They are allowed to trim the smaller blocks, and to sell them on their own account, thereby more than doubling their earnings.

I WAS OBLIGED TO WALK

up the whole distance of three miles, as a carriage could not go, and horses were not to be obtained. The road consists of marble, ground to the consistency of flour to a depth of from two to six inches. This would make delightful walking were it not that half way down the foot strikes an unknelted lump. We were, at a given moment, obliged to turn out of the road for a team loaded with a block of marble. There were ten yoke of oxen harnessed to it. The block which they were dragging measured thirteen feet long, eight feet broad and five feet high. I saw several larger blocks ready for loading. One wagon was held back by dragging a block one-third as large as the load, which did not improve the road. We met young girls carrying cans of water on their heads for the teamsters and cattle. They are paid thirty cents per day by the community. They have the usual beauty and dirt, and the same appealing eyes. Above us the great naked crags of marble stand up on either side of the gorge. We hear a cry of warning from a shelf 50 feet above us, and we run for the shelter of some protecting crag. While there the guide tells me that last week a man who took shelter from the explosion near him received a stone a foot in diameter on the top of his head, which killed him instantly. Therefore I hug closer to the rock. Now I hear the mighty explosion, its pulsations reverberating through the mountain gorges. Then comes the moment of danger. We hear a rushing sound, as though waters were let loose above, and then comes the stones a thousand feet away. One of them was estimated to weigh twenty tons. It is not strange that accidents occur here weekly. The sun strikes directly down into this rocky ravine, and there is not breath of air stirring. I consequently experience the feeling of the missionaries who were roasted at the cannibal feasts, without the consolation which they had of being basted every few minutes with the gravy. Here is a quarry which was worked 1,500 years ago by the Romans. They had no explosives, and were obliged to drill off the surface rocks with great labor. Now they are hurled down with powder, and squared below. I saw a man opening a new quarry. He was hung down by robes, and was drilling into the perpendicular face of the cliff, with 1,000 feet of sheer precipice below him. Sometimes huge stones are disengaged by their blows and fall down on them. The marble from this ravine is all white. Most of it is slightly smoky, and is called Sicilian, and is used for buildings. Some is cut for statuary, and has a white ness and lucidity which is unequalled. I tried to break a chip of it with a stone, but it resisted and rung like metal, and I was obliged to use a steel hammer to break it. The quarries in this ravine have been worked for nearly two thousand years, and it looks

as though they would endure working for a hundred thousand more. Other kinds of marble are found within a few miles, reddish mottled, the black and gold, and other sorts. The foreman of one of the quarries apologized to me when he learned that I was an American, for the primitive means employed. He said that if the mines were in America the workmen would be supplied with derricks and tramways for moving the blocks, and all kinds of labor and life saving appliances. He seemed to have a very high estimate of our ingenuity as a people. On the top of the mountain we were overtaken by a heavy shower. And yet below the dust remained as deep as ever, and the only sign of the tempest was that the streams, which turned the wheels of the sawing and polishing mills and then ran below to irrigate the vineyards and olive groves, flowed fuller than before.

OUR EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.

A Valuable Opinion on Their Practical Utility.

Mr. Henry F. Moore, of the *Mark Lane Express*, *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, *Farmers' Magazine* and agricultural writer for the *London Times*, the other day called upon the Minister of Agriculture at Ottawa who subsequently conducted him to the experimental farm.

Speaking of his visit Mr. Moore said he was amazed at the extent and value of the improvements that had been made at the farm since he visited it two years ago. "Then," he said, "it was as rough as a person would wish to see; to-day I found it had been brought to wonderful order and is now in such a good state of tilth that in this respect as well as in general appearance it could be no discredit to the older model farms of England. There is, besides, some magnificent stock on the farm. There is bound to result from the establishment of these experimental farms an immense deal of good to the country. You will be able to test by experiments the most suitable kinds of new vegetables and cereals for this country, thus giving the farmers additional eyes and brains for the business in which they are engaged. The great benefit of experiments comes from the fact that they are made on the spot, for the lesson of experiment is only valuable when learned in the locality in which it is to be put in practice." Mr. Moore gave a number of reasons to support his belief in a higher price for wheat this season, among them the shortage of the American and European harvests and the failure of the potato crop in the British Islands. Speaking of the live cattle trade, he hoped, he said, that the people of Canada would be prepared to support the policy of the Government in maintaining the stringency of the regulations in regard to the admission of U. S. cattle. In no other way could the advantages now enjoyed by Canadian cattle exporters in England be maintained. The British farmers are favorable to the importation of Canadian cattle, which are landed alive and fattened on English pastures with the aid of English capital.

Asked if the substitution of Ladoga, or any earlier ripening variety of wheat, would depreciate the superior price now obtained for Manitoba wheat in England, Mr. Moore said not. Canadian wheat is valued for its hardness. That quality is not found in the same red fife wheat grown in England, and is given to it by the peculiar soil and climatic conditions of the North-west country and of course any other variety would acquire in Manitoba that valuable quality of hardness, just as the red fife has done. The Ladoga, or a new variety—the Anglo-Canadian—the latter recently obtained in England by experiment, would attain under the conditions that obtain in Canada the hardness that makes your wheat invaluable to English millers since the introduction of the roller process.

Unfeeling Man.

"When you ask your husband for money and he refuses, you what do you do?"
"I go without."
"I saw in the papers the other day that when smiles and cajolery failed to move a husband tears would, and I tried that method."
"With what success?"
"He told me to dry up."

Dr. Carter, the shooter and "Wild America" proprietor, beat his own record at Berlin, Germany, by 4 minutes and 20 seconds, by breaking 1,000 glass balls with a rifle in exactly 34 minutes. The shooting took place in the presence of 30,000 people.