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JUNE, 1933



*Clara Fasano — The Italian Sailor*

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# The New Books

*FIRST BOOK IN ITALIAN.* By Leonard Covello & Annita E. Giacobbe. 531 pages. Illustrated. New York: The Macmillan Co. \$2.00.

*FIRST READER IN ITALIAN.* By Leonard Covello & Annita E. Giacobbe. 323 pages. Illustrated. New York: The Macmillan Co. \$1.28.

Although these two Italian textbooks are excellently conceived and executed works in themselves, they represent something far more important than merely two textbooks. To anyone who has been following the Italian press in this country in the last few years, the growth of the study of Italian in the schools and colleges is well known, as is also well known the efforts made by the Italians themselves to have their language recognized in this country's institutions on a par with French, German and Spanish. Nevertheless, it is a generally accepted fact that Italian is still studied only to a limited extent, due to a variety of reasons.

One of these reasons, it has been said, is the lack of suitable textbooks for beginners, the available supply being intended rather for those taking Italian as a second or third language. That a difference in approach is required for this purpose is generally recognized, and these two books, having been edited with that purpose in view, go a long way to fill what is now becoming a pressing need.

Based on actual classroom experience, the "First Book in Italian" has been in use for some time in the form of mimeographed sheets, during which time the authors have been enabled to adapt it to meet the average student's needs. They have laid chief emphasis on simplicity and "teachableness," as well as on modern methods of presentation and drill. The two vocabularies at the back of the book, for example, are rendered doubly effective by having the accented vowel of the Italian word italicized, to indicate the emphasis. The appendix, in addition to the customary conjugation of irregular verbs, contains 12 pages of everyday idioms and a representative inclusion of a number of Italian proverbs, besides which, at intervals throughout the book, there are review lessons and "lettura" selections. Forewords are contributed by Lawrence A. Wilkins, Director of Modern Languages in the High Schools of New York City, and by Mario E. Cosenza, President of the Italian Teachers Association.

The "First Reader in Italian," the more recently published of the two books, is "a series of simple prose passages, usually in story form taken wholly or in part from experiences familiar to the students either as actual classroom situations or outside the school walls." It is meant as a companion volume to the "First Book," and contains passages for both intensive and extensive reading, as well as exercises intended to build up the vocabulary.

The authors' qualifications for their work cannot be questioned. Mr. Covello

is head of the Department of Italian in DeWitt Clinton High School, the largest group of students of Italian in this country, as well as an instructor at New York University. Miss Giacobbe, besides actual teaching experience in the same high school and university, also occupies several chairmanships of educational committees. Both are to be congratulated for their collaboration in producing two books which will certainly meet with, in Dr. Cosenza's words, "steadily growing success."

D. Lamonica.

*THE KING OF ROME.* By R. McNair Wilson. 160 pages. New York: D. Appleton & Co. \$2.00.

We recall a recent book review by Harry Hansen in the N. Y. World-Telegram which serves to unearth the particular plight of this book. He wrote:

"Sometimes we read biography for information, sometimes to get the measure of a man—"

Perhaps we sometimes read just for the sheer adventure of it. In any case, it seems that Mr. Wilson has worked hard at satisfying these three of all possible reasons for reading anyone's biography. In this extremely short picturization of the hapless, handsome son of Napoleon Bonaparte, we get a tragic though slightly disconnected account of a young boy who, the writer insists, had he lived, would have changed the entire history of Europe.

"For," he writes, "this extraordinarily good-looking young man embodied his father's 'system'—and would have bestowed it once more on France."

And Mr. Wilson would warn us that, "in these anxious days," we cannot remain indifferent to the conclusions he has reached.

It is possible, as the author would have us believe, that Napoleon must have rested quite peacefully in the assurance that all the wiles of Francis Joseph and Metternich had failed to woe the boy away from the tradition and principles of his illustrious father. It is no matter. We suspect that "L'Aiglon," (as young Napoleon Francis is popularly known) retained too much of his mother's delicate virtue to ever accomplish anything, much less continue Napoleon's feudalistic policies.

However, in spite of the meticulous care taken by the brilliant Metternich to remove all traces of the Bonapartist strain, the boy was destined to die young and let go unsatisfied the devout hopes of Napoleon. Even more tragically vain did seem the tireless efforts of the redoubtable Mme. Montesquieu to keep alive in the boy's mind the figure of his father as a victim of deceit and treachery.

Mr. Wilson, who has studied the fortunes of the Bonapartes for years, notwithstanding his convictions that young Napoleon Francis was the most pathetic figure in the history of Modern Europe, seems to have written precious little of the sad story.

The book moves with a sad, wistful tempo in spots, endeavoring to convince us of the tragic futility that marked the abbreviated life of the young "King of Rome." It is clearly and humanly written, and, at times immensely interesting. Nevertheless, at its best it gives but a superficial view of a figure who the author prefers to believe was a vastly important one.

We might go so far as to say that it is more a human interest story than a true biography and as such can be truthfully recommended as good short reading.

—John A. Donato.

*WHAT IS AMERICAN?* By Frank Ernest Hill. 207 pages. New York: The John Day Company. \$2.00.

Mr. Hill's approach to the answer of the question he asks is a superficial recounting of the American background which contributes little that has not already been said in much the same way. He traces what he believes is the influence on the American character of the land, climate, the diverse blood-strains, the Frontier, religion, democracy, and the Machine, focusing attention upon the obvious and ignoring any observation that would require more searching analysis. What is valuable in the book is the enthusiastic description of the power and beauty of the American land itself and the hope that Americans may come to feel more deeply aware of it.

The chapter in which Mr. Hill draws his conclusions concerning what is American is merely a series of feeble generalities. The American's emphasis upon physical comfort, his greater regard for "getting results" than for quality or thoroughness, his ideal of Progress, his sense of individuality mingled with a respect for social opinion, his open-hearted cordiality, are characteristics that have always labelled him. The problem of anyone attempting to reveal the American character is to uncover these surface labels and discover what lies beneath, and it is just this that Mr. Hill has failed to do.

—Edith Witt.

*HIZZONER THE MAYOR.* By Joel Sayre. 288 pages. New York: The John Day Company. \$2.00.

The effectiveness of the satire in this robust caricature of American municipal life, salty in its expression, and stingingly true to life for the most part, lies in the matter-of-fact way in which the author tells his startling, incredible, yet realistic story.

Though the book's target is obviously New York and Chicago, its scene is discreetly set in Greater Malta, just on the eve of a municipal election. John Norris (Jolly John) Holtsapple, Mayor, wakes up out of a jitter one bleary morning to learn that the town's biggest racket chief has been murdered, and it behooves all the political bigwigs to cover up hastily on their many connections with him. Harrie Satchells is the Mayor's opponent

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# ATLANTICA

Founded in 1923

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### TO OUR READERS

In inaugurating a number of innovations and improvements in this June number, making necessary the omission of the May issue, we hereby assure our readers that their subscriptions will accordingly be extended by one month.

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\* Asterisk denotes that article appears also in Italian in the section "Atlantica in Italiano".

F. Cassola, M.D., Editor and Publisher; Dominick Lamonica, Managing Editor; S. Viola, R. Ingargiola, M. J. Valency and A. H. Leviero, Contributing Editors.

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## The Cover This Month

The strong, rugged figure of "The Italian Sailor," as depicted on our cover this month, is the work of Miss Clara Fasano, a gifted young Italian sculptress who has attracted some attention on both sides of the Atlantic for the uniform excellence of her work. Originally exhibited for two months at the Mostra Marinara in Rome in 1927, it is a symbolic representation of the sturdy, clean-cut characteristics of that unsung hero, the Italian man of the sea, who constitutes the backbone of Italy's maritime prowess and prestige.

Miss Fasano, a native of Bari, came to this country at the age of five, attended the schools here, and then studied abroad for ten years, returning recently. She has done the portraits in sculpture, of H. E. Giacomo Acerbo, H. E. Achille Starace, the daughter of the Marchese Venuti of Rome, Donna Rosetta Parini (See Page 81), Tito Schipa, Angelo Musco and many others.

Her early training was acquired at Cooper Union and the Art Students League in New York, where she won various prizes and medals. Following this she studied in Paris at the Academie Julien and the Academie La Grande Chaumiere, which she topped off with an exhibition at the Autumn Salon in 1925. In Rome she studied under Arturo Dazzi and exhibited every year for eight years at the Annual Exhibition of Rome.

Piero Scarpa, art critic of the "Messaggero" of Rome, wrote a long article apropos of an exhibition of hers not long ago, in which he noted improvement and predicted still more.

A private exhibition in New York in the near future is the next aim of this young Italian sculptress, and to this end she is now working.

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# TOPICS OF THE MONTH

By Rosario Ingargiola

## THE STUDY OF ITALIAN: WHERE THE FAULT LIES

LAST month a reader sent a letter to the Editor of *The New York Times* in which he pointed out that the study and teaching of the Italian language have not been given adequate consideration by our institutions of learning. The writer deplored the fact that Italian is treated at present as a fourth modern language when, in point of importance, it should be considered first. In his opinion, modern languages should be studied in this order of attention: Italian and French; German and Spanish.

The following figures, as given by the writer of that letter, will prove interesting. In the State of New York, with a population of more than one million of Italian-American residents, there were in 1922 nine secondary schools teaching one, two and three years of Italian to about 800 students; this school year, 1932-1933, there are almost 5000 students in twenty-five secondary schools.

When we come to German, French and Spanish, the number of schools that teach these languages and of the students that study them is so out of proportion as to population and importance that one is fairly staggered.

The fault, of course, lies principally with our people. If a vigorous demand is made to the proper authorities the study of Italian will be included in the curriculum of most schools. In many cases, however, no class of Italian can be formed because the requisite number of students can't be reached. Complaints have a relative force. Until the parents arouse a real desire in the minds of their children and make them see the necessity of demanding the study of Italian, very little can be done in this direction.

How many Italian students are there in our schools who prefer to study German, French, and even Spanish when they can obtain, by the mere asking of it, the formation of an Italian class? This neglect some of our communities are now partly remedying by the establishment of the Free Schools of Italian, privately maintained, such as the Italian School of Jamaica and

the Italian School of East New York. But this isn't enough.

A proper and concentrated movement on the part of our students directed toward the school authorities would result in advancing the study of Italian from its present fourth place to first place.

\* \* \*

## A PAGE FROM MUSSOLINI'S BOOK

THE Head of the Italian Government has written a book about his brother Arnaldo, the man who for so many years was his most faithful collaborator. It is a brief biographical history, a sort of spiritual portrait, written in that simple and direct style which is so characteristic of Mussolini; yet it is a fine little book: pathetic and poetic, at times very dramatic.

There is one page in this book which I think ought to be widely known, for it contains the best treatment and definition of "Goodness" that I have ever seen in print. It occurs when the writer speaks of the good human qualities of his late brother. Coming from such a remarkable man, the passage takes on an unusually revealing significance. I am sure it will be read with interest.

"Goodness is not only a question of temperament: it is one of education too. It is the result of a certain understanding of the world, an understanding in which



The Emergency Man  
—From the Chicago Daily News

optimism prevails over pessimism, for goodness must be grounded in belief, not in scepticism. To be good means to do good without shouting from the housetops and without any hope of recompense—not even divine recompense. To be good all during one's life and until death take us: this is the measure of the true greatness of a human soul! To be good, in spite of everything; that is, in spite of the assaults of all fakers upon our good faith, in spite of all ingratitude, in spite of all oblivion, in spite of the cynicism of the professionals: here is a peak of moral perfection which only a few reach and which still fewer people maintain! The good man never asks whether goodness pays. He knows that it pays. To lend a helping hand to an unfortunate person, even though he be unworthy; to dry a tear, even though it be impure; to give relief to misery, hope to sorrowing hearts and consolation to the dying: all this means that one is part and parcel—blood and flesh—of humanity and that one is not separate and apart from it: it means a weaving of the web of human sympathy, with threads invisible yet powerful, but which bind together all human beings and make them better."

\* \* \*

## SAVONAROLA: MAY 23, 1498

IN the beautiful Piazza della Signoria, in Florence, one observes a small, humble bronze tablet with a brief inscription which informs the curious visitor that exactly upon that spot, four hundred and thirty-five years ago, Girolamo Savonarola was hanged and then burned. No majestic monument, no stately tomb: the ashes of the rebel preacher, as everyone knows, were thrown into the Arno River and thus scattered into eternity. But as the river has continued to flow these many years, so has the spirit of Savonarola continued to live through the centuries.

The recurrence of this anniversary brings to one's mind a parallel. We live in times beset with greed, immorality, social injustices and corruption. Apparently, we haven't made much progress since the day when Savonarola's eloquent voice stigmatized all wrongs and made tyrants of all sorts tremble with fear. Yet today nowhere is to be found a man like Savonarola, no-

(Continued on Page 96)

# Aspects of Inflation

By Matthew A. Melchiorre

CONGRESS has recently passed the legislation on inflation. It was done so only after hectic debating by proponents and opponents of the issue in both Houses of Congress. Probably the highlight of the debate was reached when the aged Senator from Virginia—Carter Glass, long an authority on financial problems—vehemently denounced the bill. Senator Glass' bitter speech was echoed in the House of Representatives and only because of a preponderance of "stick-in-the-line" Democrats was it finally passed. It is quite surprising that such an attitude should be taken against inflation, especially when everyone knows that it meets with the unqualified approval of President Roosevelt, whose every wish was interpreted as law by Congress. That was until the inflationary measure was introduced.

Inflation, which was put before Congress on the heels of the startling announcement that the United States was definitely off the gold standard, has, along with the latter, bewildered millions of people throughout the country. Inflation, to many people, means the debacle which was visited upon Germany from 1919 until 1923, when the new currency—the Reutenmark—was introduced. Inflation in that sense, means poverty and misery for thousands. Inflation in Germany was as uncontrolled as the winds that howl in the winter. Not only did the German Government go on a spree, printing marks by the millions, but municipalities and private industries also had their own printing presses. The result was that the mark touched the unbelievably dizzy

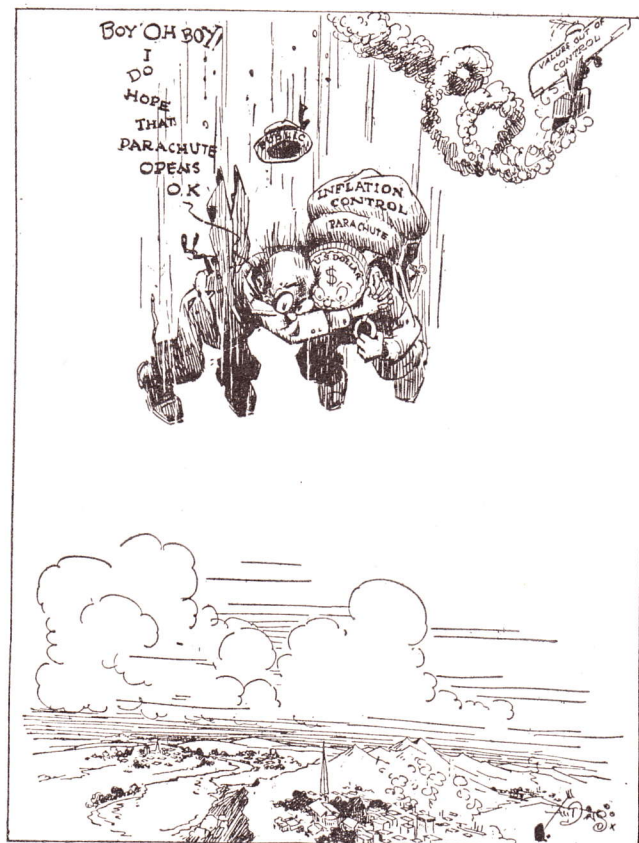
*No national question of recent months has aroused more intense interest, as well as considerable controversy, as the inflationary steps proposed by the Administration at Washington, with a view to starting the country on an upward path again.*

*The author of the following article, a graduate of the School of Journalism of the University of Iowa, is at present engaged in special economic research for Dr. Carmen Haider, prominent social worker, and Andrée Emery, both members of the Committee on the Study of Investigation.*

figure of 420,000,000,000 to the dollar. Stories were told, and are now being revived as this country prepares for inflation, that a short taxicab ride of about a half hour through the streets of any city in Germany had to be paid for by even more marks than the interior of that cab could hold! Wage-earners who were paid by the day, and even those with weekly salaries, sometimes awoke the next morning to find out that their wages of the previous day, or week, were not sufficient to purchase a loaf of bread. When pay-time came around the worker would have members of his family waiting alongside so that as soon as he was paid, he would turn over the bushful of marks to a swift member of his family, who would then scoot as fast as his cumbersome load would permit him, to a nearby grocer or butcher and convert the

marks into commodities before the currency hit a new low. Such scenes were daily occurrences. As soon as the marks were gotten there followed the mad rush to convert them into articles which the almost hourly quotation of the mark could not harm. The inflation in Germany wiped out the entire middle-class. For the latter, with its fixed income—either a wage, or perhaps a pension—could not escape the damaging consequences of the inflation, with the result that its small savings were soon swept away.

THE above example of inflation in its extreme sense is pictured vividly in the minds of many thousands of Americans. And when talk of inflation is handed out, is it any wonder that they begin to balk and become



Well, Here Goes!

—From the N. Y. Herald Tribune

cantankerous to the idea? However, the possibility that the President will allow it to become uncontrolled is so remote that the country can be assured on this point. If this decade of American citizens think that inflation is something new in recent administrations, let them be reminded that this country had, and is still having, inflation during the Hoover administration. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation is nothing more and nothing less.

The theory of inflation is built on the postulate that falling commodity prices are not the result of flaws in production and consumption but that falling commodity prices are due mainly to a scarcity of money, or the slowing down of its circulation, or perhaps due to both. Therefore, by inflating the currency—increasing the amount of money in circulation—the falling prices can be stopped and perhaps even raised, bringing with the latter higher wages. That is what the inflationists tell us in the simplest language at their command. However, there is a law in economics which does not coincide with the statement that the rise of commodity prices will bring an increase in wages. Let us go back to Germany for an illustration of this. Around 1921 and 1922 the wages of skilled laborers had advanced to more than 500 times the level of 1913. But, the cost of living had advanced to more than 1,100 times so that the German workman's weekly pay of 18,000 marks at this time would buy less than half what his weekly wage of 35 marks bought in 1913. Prof. Irving Fisher in his remarkably concise book "Money Illusion," tells us that when prices are rising, wages and salaries are, as it were, running after a lost train.

**A**S WE are mainly concerned with currency inflation, let us look at the plans given us by advocates of inflation of the currency. We find that there are three main groups, or methods, of inflating the currency. The first is by reducing the amount of gold in the dollar and thus permitting the issuance of additional currency without a corresponding increase in gold held in the Treasury or the Federal Reserve Bank. Under this method there are two sub-plans: one urging that the amount of gold in the dollar be fixed at a certain level after being reduced and the other calling for having the gold in the dollar fluctuate in accordance with some commodity price. The second main group or method calls for the addition to the gold base of a silver base, by purchasing silver bullion and using it as the basis for issuance of silver certificates. This is bimetallism, and is being earnestly advocated by certain western Senators whose States are our chief silver-producing regions. The third and last main group or method is probably the simplest one, and perhaps the most dangerous one to handle. It consists simply of expanding our paper currency by starting the printing presses and merely issuing paper dollars. The advocates of this third plan tell us that the credit of the government would warrant such an issuance of currency. They would place the authority for such an issuance of fiat money in the hands of an industrial community which would regulate the issuance of the fiat money in such a manner that it would soon stabilize prices. By following this plan the Government could pay off its obligations in fiat currency when it felt that prices ought to be advanced, and could call for a return of the currency when it found that prices were advancing abnormally fast. However, this method, conservatives feel, could easily get out of hand, and in its uncontrolled issuance of paper money so devalue the dollar that there would be a possibility of the German debacle visiting the United States.

These are the main methods of inflating currency, and those who oppose them seem to be agreed on one thing: that simply introducing the printing press into governmental financial circles is a sure means of bringing the country to ruin.

There are two other ways of inflating by means other than through the currency, which have just been discussed. One is by inflating bank credit, and the other by inflating through public works and government grants to industry. The first of these—inflation through bank credit, consists of the return to circulation of the credit money which has disappeared in the last four years. Forty-odd billions of our total money medium consists of credit, which is passed like cash, but in the form of checks or other bills of exchange. Of this sum, we are told that about fifteen billions have simply vanished in these days of economic retrenchment. The return of this credit is essential to a business upturn, say the followers of this method of inflation. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation is an illustration of bank credit inflation.

**T**HE other method is by bond issues for public works, including the reforestation act, and the Muscle Shoals development. The theory is, as quoted in *The New York Times*, "That a public works program by the United States government will thrust government credit into the hands of building contractors who will pass it on to raw material producers and laborers, who in turn will buy consumer goods, thus starting business activity. The proposal has many variants, the most important of them being to use the credit of the Federal Government not only for direct construction but rather to stimulate others into action." Along this method of inflation it is proposed that the Government subsidize payrolls up to a ten per cent increase over present employment. Another plan is to have a government corporation guarantee a portion of new commercial loans extended by commercial banks. The Rorty plan would allow a straight and unqualified subsidy on new construction activities through a ten per cent bonus payment to contractors submitting approved bids for new capital expenditures, with consequent employment of labor. To sum up, a gift of the United States along these lines would result in ten times the gift of construction.

Of course the plans of inflation by means of bank credit and public works do not frighten our conservative element of the population. It is when the talk gets around to inflation by means of issuing additional "printing press" money that the former's fears are aroused. This should not be as long as President Roosevelt adheres to his pledge to the American people via the radio Sunday evening, May 7th. On that night he promised a careful and controlled inflation. His former campaign manager, and present Postmaster General, James Farley, said in a speech recently given before a middle-western audience that the United States Government would be exceedingly careful in its handling of currency inflation. There is also the possibility, if President Roosevelt sees definite signs of the country's recovery and these signs seem to be more than temporary, that the program of inflating the currency will be shelved. This has been brought out by persons close to the White House. But whatever is done, the nation-at-large should have supreme faith in the man it elected by such an overwhelmingly large majority, and who has shown a willingness to try anything that seems workable in order to lift the country out of the morass.



# The Theatre in Italy

From the Mystery Play to the Idyl

and

The Comedy of Manners, Popular Theatre, Melodrama

By Franco Ciarlantini

I  
MANY years ago Ferdinando Martini launched the question: "Is there an Italian theatre?"

The phrase became classic. Every Italian critic has since felt that any treatment of our theatre must begin with an answer to that question. In the face of the scepticism of as great a writer as Ferdinando Martini we wish to make our declaration at the outset that an Italian theatre exists. And by that we mean not only a contemporary theatre with at least one writer—Luigi Pirandello—universally known, but also a theatre that has existed through the centuries as an historical continuity.

Lately a number of scholars, within Italy and without, have thrown light upon the early sacred plays of our theatre. They have reconstructed those plays, partly from the paintings that exist of the dancing processions of the pre-Renaissance period—those festivals over which the populace of Florence went mad—and partly from the settings of the Passion, the little constructions, like huts, called *luoghi deputati delle sacre rappresentazioni*, in which were played those sacred dramas which were at first quite purely mimicry but which later became complete and complex forms of art and constituted a true though primitive *scenografia*.

If we do not consider the *lauda spirituale*, which is not yet drama, nor the *lauda drammatica*, which sometimes is—as for example *La Donna del Paradiso* by Jacopone da Todi—we may say that the Italian theatre was born when the *lauda spirituale* became animated and enriched by voices and figures.

We know that religious spectacles, especially the silent ones, were held in Padua in the thirteenth century, and in Milan and Vincenza in the fourteenth. We have the precise date of 1304 as that of a spectacular representation of the torments of hell. In the fifteenth century similar spectacles were given in Parma, Naples, and Turin.

But the Christian drama in Italy never attained, either before or after, the artistic perfection and external magnificence that it reached in Florence in the

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second half of the fifteenth century.

That we are able today to judge the real value of these performances, and to trace their development into drama, is due to the researches made by D'Ancona, Torraca, De Bartolomeis, and other more recent scholars, who in many cases have given us the actual texts of these primitive dramatic poems. And though in the past competent critics such as Emiliani-Giudici and Francesco De Sanctis have dealt harshly with these early works, we are able now to

see them from another angle and in their true light, and to feel the strange and captivating mysticism that permeates them. However, when profane elements, scenes of crude realism, are introduced, the liturgical drama takes on a most strange form.

The *Sette dormenti* is an example of how in their decadence the *sacra rappresentazione* became sacred only in name. We find those religious performances becoming more and more like the carnival songs of the people, and finally we see emerging from them the clown Arlecchino and the famous *teatro dell'arte*, one of the glories of Italy, and the acknowledged prototype and source of the great Molière's comedies.

But in tracing the drama's development in Italy a place of importance must be given to the productions of the sixteenth century.

RELIGIOUS plays constituted the communal theatre of Italy. Processions and holy day celebrations, in the city squares and in the churches, furnished spectacles especially adapted to the people, but did not suffice for the lords and ladies of the courts. In that Renaissance period, as we know, small states were formed around a leader and governed by a tyrant or a lord who set himself up as prince. These *ottimati* took upon themselves the protection of the *belle arti*, and naturally the drama felt the effects of that shelter. So it came about that a kind of play was born that may be called the *Commedia erudita*, modeled on the plays of Plautus and Terrence. Then suddenly, before developing into the comedy of manners that continued from Ariosto to Macchiavelli and Bruno, another form

appeared, grew into considerable perfection and declined—the mythological fable and pastoral drama, of which the finest examples are found in *La favola d'Orfeo* and in Tasso's *Aminta*, unless we accept the opinion of those who consider the latter eclipsed by Guarini's *Pastor Fido*.

De Sanctis explains the flowering of the idyl and the pastoral drama thus: "A poetic imagination placed outside of life in a pastoral world, provides a relief and escape from a prosaic society lacking in any ideals. Poetry took refuge in a last asylum—in the fields—and from that source the writers of worth drew their inspiration, and from that same source came the verse of Poliziano, Pontano, and Tasso."

CARDUCCI'S opinion differs radically from this. He finds social and literary reasons where De Sanctis finds an ethical one. However this may be, the psychological underlying causes are but secondary to the actual evolution that took place in the theatre. When Ariosto, Aretino, Bruno and Macchiavelli bent over that theatre and gave to it the keen scrutiny that an anatomist gives to a body, what they brought to life as a result was as far removed from the pastoral dramas and comedies of Poliziano and Tasso as the avid life of Renaissance cities was from country idyls.

But these pastoral plays must nevertheless have a place in any examination of the historical continuity of the theatre in Italy because of their influence upon dramatic form. The characters in *Aminta* have individual and varied personalities: Elpino is wise and clever; Dafni and Tirsi are sceptical and malicious; Satiro is Mephistophelian. When compared to the lyric-dramatic form of Poliziano's *Orfeo*, it is plain what a step in advance has been taken. Then in Guarini's *Pastor Fido*, which followed close upon *Aminta*, a veritable *contaminatio* of dramatic and comic elements unite to make an authentic tragi-comedy. And this brings us to the dawn of the sixteenth century comedy which links the early origins of the theatre to its later full development. Thus as regards two centuries an answer is given to Ferdinando Martini's question.

## II

FIFTEENTH century comedy is denied by many critics to have the right, in the name of Plautus and Terrence, to call itself Italian in origin. But it seems difficult, in consideration of his deep study of the subject, not to agree with Sanesi when he says: "The premise of lack of originality in this period has been greatly exaggerated—Sixteenth century Italian comedy has a right to its own claims upon its own merits, on its own brilliant and faithful pictures of Renaissance society."

Undeniably the sixteenth century theatre was realistic, a mirror of the time and customs which Aretino mercilessly laid bare, a period as great artistically as the

best epoch of the Greeks, but a period shamelessly corrupt.

For this reason, quite logically, the plays took the form of satires, and in this, of course, they resemble those of Plautus and Terrence. But the characters are the people of the day; and man in the ugliness of his vices has been startlingly similar in every period.

It is of course true that some of the sixteenth century writers limited themselves to plain translations of Plautus and Terrence. Macchiavelli translated the *Andria* of Terrence and in *Le maschere* imitated Aristophanes. But when he produced *La mandragola*, not only his masterpiece but also that of the whole Renaissance theatre, there was no longer question of translation or imitation.

THIS entire period is stirred with new leaven. Priority must without doubt be conceded to *Il Formicone* by the Mantuan, Publio Filippo, but Ariosto is given place as the first great original writer of comedies in the language of the people. But if we admit that underneath his poetical beauty may still be seen the structure of old forms, if we consider Bibiena as a "bare-chested author" who had adapted himself to the air of the court, if we admit that Lorenzino de' Medici's *L'Aridosia* cannot lastingly command attention, we must admit also that already Pietro Aretino has shown an extraordinary power, that in Macchiavelli is found a new consciousness, and in Giordano Bruno an arresting daring in ideas and in conclusions.

A fervor of new life invaded the stage; for the first time we had a theatre in the true sense of the word.

Macchiavelli's *Mandragola* depicts the harm done to the family by the moral decay of the time. The scorn and hate for it all in Macchiavelli's severe soul could not be concealed. He could not weep over it, but the bitterness of it was in his mouth. In *Clizia*, in temperate and sensible observations on religion as a base of life, he points out a remedy. Aretino's "*L'Ipocrito*" made possible Moliere's "*Tartuffe*", and Bruno's *Candelaio* foretold Beaumarchais' "*Figaro*".

A new world entered upon the stage of the theatre, the world which the poet saw about him, the world which must reproduce itself on the stage always, in any time; the fighting *Ferraresi* coxcombs of Ariosto are close kin to later dandies, lions, fops, and *jeunes maîtres*.

Especially in the plays of Aretino are the characters alive and vital, and often as they rise above episodes and take on general significance, they become universal. But perhaps Bruno's *Candelaio* is the most unusual work written in this period in which the poets, in order to follow their own sensuous leadings, abandoned gentle rustic poetry, and faced man as he was (and is), forcing him to show himself on the stage unmasked, with all his defects and vices.

This, in itself was daring, and



Franco Ciarlantini

in language. But it would be pharisaical on our part to pretend to be scandalized at the intemperance of our sixteenth century playwrights, (even at their obscenity) if we stop to recall the lengths to which Nihilistic theories are expounded in some of the present-day plays of George Bernard Shaw.

The theatrical patrimony of the sixteenth century is very evident in the works of Ariosto and Aretino. And although we must give due consideration to the attempts at serious tragedy of Trissino, Rucellai, Alamanni, and others, the real sixteenth century theatre is in the comedy of manners where the poets laughed at the vices of the day, but where they also tried to punish them, as it were.

We must however remember always that the field of art can never be divided into clear cut sections. The development of the Italian theatre must be thought of more as a continuous chain, but one of which the firm soldering of every link cannot be shown. Unity does not necessarily imply mechanical precision of connection. Following the sixteenth century theatre came the *teatro del popolo*, from which issued the *commedia dell'arte* which made it possible for Goldoni to lay the foundations of our modern theatre.

THE most interesting point to establish is that of the birth of the so-called popular theatre. But on that point critics are not in accord. There are those who claim that it goes back to the ancient satirical fables of the *Atellane*, but that implies a survival into the middle ages of the Greek and Latin theatre, a fact which cannot be proved. Instead, we find in the religious plays of the time, certain types that are found in the popular theatre, especially in those parts where, to temper the dramatic atmosphere, interludes with comic characters are introduced.

During the rise and the decline of the sixteenth century theatre, popular plays were already being given in every part of Italy, each with characteristics peculiar to its region. There were farces based on *imbrogli* interwoven with raillery at ridiculous husbands and old misers, or built around broils of two youths who are always finally brought to an agreement.

For these purposes a world of lively personages was set in motion, whose comicalness soon became satire and caricature, perhaps without the author's intention. The personages most held up to ridicule were astrologers, old women, doctors, beggars, robbers—the same world that peopled the popular novels of the time.

We have examples of this theatre in Naples, as well as in Asti in the farces of Gian Giorgio Alione. But the genre reached its highest artistic form in Tuscany, especially in Siena through the works of the famous society called the *Congrega dei Rozzi*, still existing as an "academy".

The idea that led to the formation of this *congrega* was solely to provide themselves, "honestly, with delight and pleasure". That was written down as the article of their incorporation. Among their "honest diversions" were the productions of popular plays not dissimilar to those of other regions of Italy. But

the plebeian coarseness was here softened by the Tuscan vernacular even in the mouths of the most scurrilous characters, such as mothers who were corrupters of their daughters, lascivious priests, ignorant doctors, and braggart soldiers. Thus came about the types that were the precursors of the theatre of masks.

At Padua, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, appeared Angelo Beolco, called *Il Ruzzante*, an author to whom the theatre owes many steps in advance. In his amusing mixture of dialects (we find in his plays those of Padua, Venice, Bergamo, Bologna and Tuscany) Louis Riccoboni sees a significant indication of a national spirit, and the forerunner of the characters in the theatre of masks.

It is true that the attribution of this merit to Ruzzante has been contested. But it has been proved beyond doubt that from his works, as well as from those of Andrea Calmo and of Giancarli, was born the *commedia dell'arte* in its first timid improvisations, out of which grew Arlecchino, Pulcinella, Pantalone and Brighella, who were at first Pedrolino, Scapino, Zanni, and Frittellino.

THE real genesis of these "masks" is certainly of ancient date, but each one gained its power of life in the *teatro dell'arte* as it found an actor who transfused into it a veritable *vis comica*.

By the eighteenth century the *teatro dell'arte* had fallen into decadence; the only companies then worthy of recording are those of Calderoni, Cotta, Riccoboni, Medebac and Sacchi. The last two were friends of Goldoni, who was already knocking at the door with his reforms.

But before he comes, another form, the melodrama, appears on the scene. Plays accompanied by music are as old as acting itself; the liturgical dramas were sung, the pastoral plays of *Orfeo* and *Pastor Fido* had music, but musical drama, the opera, was born when poetry was put at the service of music.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were dominated by melodrama. Claudio Monteverde, by infusing personality and character into the recitatives and melodies, established an intimate relationship between the music and the drama, and gave it a value until then unknown.

And this musical drama brought above the horizon a star of first magnitude in the Italian theatre, Pietro Metastasio, a poet and dramatist of momentous value, whose libretti are in themselves dramas that could be acted without music. Through him there came to life on the Italian stage real persons who lived lives that were psychologically intensely interesting: Enea, Cato, Cesare, Tito, and Temistocle. The conflict between love and duty which entered the drama through him was as real and intense as life itself.

Thus, in the works of Metastasio, the question of the existence of an Italian theatre is answered for a third time. After the pastoral dramas and the sixteenth century comedies, came a new creation from out the soul of a poet and an artist.

# What Are We Doing in Politics?

The Italian-Americans Must Awake to the Fact That They Are Far Behind Other Racial Groups in Political Representation

By Samuel Mazzola

THE great influx of Italian immigrants in the 90's and in the beginning of the 20th century into the United States was such that today we find that the Italian-American population in many jurisdictions in this country is numerically second to none. Although the Jewish race is considered to have the largest population of all the foreign races, in the Empire State of New York, at least, the Italian-American population is about 25% greater than that of the Jewish race. The Jewish population is exactly 1,903,890, while the Italian-American population is 2,475,616 out of a total population in the Empire State of 12,558,066. This constitutes one-fifth of the entire population of the State, while the Jewish population constitutes about one-seventh.

Notwithstanding their numerical strength, the Italian-Americans have received hardly any recognition in the official and political life of this great country, while the Jewish race has received recognition in all the various departments of government and even in the Supreme Court of the United States and in the Executive Mansion of the Empire State.

With but one exception (viz. Commissioner of Immigration) there is not a single public official in the President's Cabinet, at the head of any of the executive and administrative departments or in the Judicial Department of the Federal Government, who is of Italian extraction, yet the Italian-American population in the United States numbers about six millions. There are only 4 Representatives of Italian extraction in Congress out of a total of 435 and not a single Senator out of 96 members.

There is not a single Italian-American in the Executive Department of the State of New York nor in any of the 24 Administrative Departments. There is only one representative out of 51 in the State Senate and 2 in the Assembly out of 150.

LET us now compare statistics in the Greater City of New York, including the five boroughs, where the total Italian-American population is 1,070,355 out of a

total population of 6,930,446. This constitutes 15—2/5% or 2/13 of the entire population of the Greater City. Not only is the Italian-American conspicuous by his lack of representation in the City Government or in any of the heads of the numerous Departments and Bureaus of the City, but even in the Board of Aldermen, which is composed of 65 members, the largest representation that the Italians have had in that Board was three, although proportionately they would be entitled to at least ten. Making a comparison with the other nationalities, let us take the Irish-Americans, for instance, with a population in the Greater City of 535,034, or almost exactly one-half as much as that of the Italian-Americans. They

have a representation in the Board of Aldermen of over forty members, though in proportion to their population they would be entitled to only five members.

The greatest surprise of all, however, is that out of a total of 148,515 office-holders in the City of New York receiving a total yearly income of some \$369,000,000, the Italian-Americans would proportionately be entitled to 22,871 out of these officeholders. Actually, what have we? Even if we wish to exaggerate and include all the very minor positions held by those of Italian extraction, even 2,000 would be such an exaggeration, and that would be less than one-eleventh of the proportion to which they are entitled. And how ridiculous this appears when we consider the very lucrative offices with which we must necessarily make comparisons!

NOW let us consider one of the five boroughs. In the Borough of the Bronx there is an Italian-American population of over 165,000 out of a total of 1,265,000, or a little more than 13% of the total population. That means that more than one-eighth of the entire population of the Borough of the Bronx is made up of Italian-Americans, whereas the German-Americans, with 106,000, and the Irish-Americans, with 109,000, each have about one-twelfth of the population of that borough. Nevertheless, in that borough,

*One of the most important and fundamental questions facing the Italian-Americans as a group in this country is that, in proportion to their numbers, they have far too little representation politically. It is a phenomenon calling for constant efforts on their part to improve this injustice, and it cannot really be claimed that the Italians have asserted themselves in their adopted land until the condition is corrected.*

*Vaguely the Italians themselves know this. The following article, however, written especially for ATLANTICA by a practicing attorney who has made a study of the subject, shows by actual figures and facts to just what extent the Italians are definitely under-represented in political life in a typical metropolitan area, that of Greater New York.*

out of two County Judges, one Surrogate, eight Supreme Court Judges, three City Court Judges, one Judge of Special Sessions, and five Municipal Court Judges, there is not a single judge of Italian extraction. The Irish-Americans, however, are well represented in that borough with one County Judge, one Surrogate, seven Supreme Court Judges, one City Court Judge, and three Municipal Court Judges. The German-Americans are represented by one City Court Judge, one Supreme Court Judge and two Municipal Court Judges. The District Attorney of Bronx County is of Irish extraction, and out of nineteen assistants, there is only one of Italian extraction. We also note that out of seven Magistrates, there are four of Irish extraction and only one of Italian extraction. Out of two Congressmen, three State Senators and eight Assemblymen, there are none of Italian extraction. To recapitulate, in that borough, out of a total of forty-seven Judges and District Attorneys, eleven members of the State Legislature and two members of Congress, there is only one Magistrate and one Assistant District Attorney of Italian extraction.

**N**OW let us take the statistics in the Borough of Brooklyn. Out of a total population of 2,560,000, there are close to a half million Italian-Americans in that borough (to be exact, 487,344), which constitutes almost 20% or one-fifth of the entire population. In this Borough, out of twenty-seven Supreme Court Judges, there are none of Italian extraction, while there are about nineteen of Irish extraction and about five of German descent. The total German population of that Borough is 153,000, or less than one-third that of Italian descent, while the Irish-American population numbers not quite 170,000, or about one-third as much as that of Italian descent. There are twenty-three Assemblymen and eight Senators from this Borough. Of these, only one is an Italian-American. Out of sixteen Magistrates, there are two of Italian extraction, and out of sixteen Municipal Court Judges, there is one of Italian extraction. There are five City Court Judges, one Surrogate, five County Judges, four Special Sessions Judges, and four Children's Court Judges. None of these are of Italian extraction.

Let us now consider the statistics of political officeholders in the Borough of Richmond. In that borough, the Italian-American population is 29,934 out of a total population of 158,346, or about 19%. This is almost one-fifth of the entire population. In that borough, we have the following:

- 1 Borough President
- 1 Congressman
- 2 Assemblymen
- 1 State Senator
- 3 Aldermen
- 1 Supreme Court Judge
- 1 Surrogate
- 1 County Judge
- 2 Municipal Court Judges
- 2 Magistrates
- 1 Children's Court Judge

Out of all these public officials, we have only one Alderman of Italian extraction.

Let us now consider the Borough of Queens with a total of 127,381 Italian-Americans out of 1,709,381, or about one-thirteenth of the entire population. In that borough we have the following:

- 1 Borough President
- 2 Congressmen
- 6 Assemblymen

- 3 State Senators
- 6 Aldermen
- 5 Supreme Court Judges
- 1 Surrogate
- 2 County Judges
- 8 Municipal Court Judges
- 5 Magistrates
- 1 Children's Court Judge
- 3 City Court Judges
- 2 Special Sessions Judges

Our race is represented by only one Municipal Court Judge and one Magistrate. The Jewish population in that Borough is only 75,800 and they have one Magistrate and one City Court Judge.

And now we come to the most important Borough in the entire city, the Borough of Manhattan, where the Italian-Americans have a population of 260,702 out of 1,867,312, which is 14% or one-seventh of the total population. Out of the following:

- 29 Supreme Court Judges
- 11 Congressmen
- 23 Assemblymen
- 9 State Senators
- 24 Aldermen
- 2 Surrogates
- 9 General Sessions Judges
- 8 Special Sessions Judges
- 8 City Court Judges
- 4 Children's Court Judges
- 33 Municipal Court Judges

or a total of 160 officials, our race is represented by only ten, or 1/16, who are as follows:

- 2 Supreme Court Judges
- 1 General Sessions Judge
- 1 Special Sessions Judge
- 2 Municipal Court Judges
- 1 Magistrate
- 1 Congressman
- 2 Aldermen.

**T**HERE is not a single Assemblyman or State Senator of our race in this, the largest Borough of the City.

In addition to the elected officials I have already mentioned, each County has the following officials:

- 1 County Clerk
- 1 Register
- 1 District Attorney
- 1 Commissioner of Jurors
- 1 Public Administrator
- 1 Sheriff

and each of these officials has many deputies or assistants and clerks. None of these officials in any of the five counties is of Italian extraction although there are a few deputies or assistants in some of these offices.

The Borough of Manhattan has the following Borough Officers:

- Commissioner of Public Works
- Borough President
- Borough Secretary
- Asst. Borough President
- Chief Engineer
- Supt. of Buildings
- Secy. Bureau of Buildings
- Supt. of Public Buildings and Offices.

All the other Boroughs have similar officers, though not as many. There is not a single Italian-American occupying any of these Borough offices in any of the five Boroughs.

There are twenty-nine Departments or Bureaus in

the Government of the City of New York, each Department or Bureau consisting of a number of Commissioners or heads, as well as numerous assistants or deputies, and secretaries, chiefs, counsel, etc. In none of the personnel of all these Departments or Bureaus have I been able to discover a single Italian-American.

It will be noted that the only representation in the Supreme Court that the Italian-Americans have is in New York County, where they have two Supreme Court Judges out of twenty-nine in that County. However, there are in all 115 Supreme Court Justices in the nine judicial districts throughout the State of New York, but there are only the two in New York County of Italian extraction, notwithstanding that the Italian-American population, as previously stated, constitutes one-fifth of the entire population of the State. Proportionately, therefore, the Italian-American population would be entitled to 23 Supreme Court Justices, or eleven and one-half times as many as they actually have. However, the Irish-American representation in the Supreme Court throughout the State is approximately 74 out of 115 Supreme Court Justices, or about 65% of the total number, notwithstanding the fact that they constitute only about one-half as much in numbers as the Italian-Americans.

Is it not surprising that the Italian-Americans have not as yet come to a clear realization that through personal selfishness and petty jealousies, and their lack of co-operation and organized concerted efforts, they have won little or no recognition in the political life of this great country of ours, notwithstanding the fact that they have made gigantic strides in the professional and educational fields. Two years ago it was estimated that there were 60,000 professional Italian-Americans in the United States. These included 24,000 lawyers, 17,000 pharmacists, 14,500 doctors and dentists, 2,000 engineers and 2,800 teachers, writers, chemists, etc. There are also many artists, bankers, architects, merchants, builders and realtors, and what with the large number of eager students of Italian extraction attending the universities throughout the country, it would not be at all surprising if some of the above figures have been doubled during the past two years.

**O**UR failure to obtain proper political recognition and adequate proportional representation cannot, therefore, be attributed to a lack of intelligence, education or ability, nor to a lack of proper political timber in our midst; for many of our professional men have become prominent figures in their chosen professions. It is simply because we have so far failed to recognize the supreme importance of organizing solidly and choosing the right kind of unselfish courageous leaders, forgetting our own personal aggrandizement and all our petty jealousies and differences in the common cause of presenting a united front to reach our political goal.

That the Italian-Americans constitute a great potential force to be reckoned with by our political leaders cannot be denied by the most skeptical politician. If, through our own neglect, however, we fail to wield this voting power, we have no one but ourselves to blame. However, we must also consider another equally important angle which our ethnic group has heretofore neglected, and that is the matter of citizenship and the use of the ballot.

It is an undeniable fact that the Italian parents are the most industrious and self-sacrificing for the benefit of their children, and the history of our immigrants in this country proves that there is no limit to the sacrifices undergone by Italian parents to give their children the advantages which they themselves were denied. Notwithstanding this praiseworthy spirit, the Italian immigrant has failed to fully realize the importance to his children of his becoming a citizen and using the ballot.

The obtaining of citizenship papers is a very simple matter, with our Italian Press willing to give all assistance, as well as with the numerous Italian political clubs in all sections of the country which offer to assist their members in obtaining their citizenship papers, and there is no reason for a single member of our race to be without such citizenship papers. It has been said that the "ballot is mightier than the sword", and especially is this true in this enlightened age in the United States. Let us therefore remind our ethnic group that political leaders are like practical business men and will not take our racial group seriously unless we can show them votes on Election Day. It is therefore imperative that all the Italians in this country be made to realize that through the ballot only will they be able to obtain the proper recognition, prestige and adequate representation in the political life of the United States, and that through the power of the ballot they will be enabled to help their youth to attain enviable positions in the political life of this great country.

If, by the foregoing recital of facts, I have created a deep interest and awakened the Italian to a better realization of his former lethargy in the political life of this great country, I shall feel that I have accomplished something.

My comparisons between the Italian representation in politics with that of other nationalities are not made in a spirit of criticism or antagonism towards these other nationalities. On the contrary, they deserve credit and merit our sincere admiration and emulation for their wonderful spirit of unity and ability to organize so solidly as to have gained so large a proportion of the political positions in the National, State and Municipal Governments of our country.

This same spirit of unity, plus the ability to organize properly and solidly, are the very things that seem to be lacking among us Italians.

### CLERKS

Tired of the commonplace and meagre ways,  
The systematic draining of the soul,  
We too possess our few rebellious days,  
Tempted to visualize a different goal

Than a shabby corner to hide in when we're old.  
We too have known the longing to assume  
The risk of living free and living bold—  
Fine candles blazing swiftly to our doom.

—Helene Mullins

# The Flowers

A Short Story

By Salvatore Gotta

(Translated by Dominick Lamonica)

“WHO?”  
“Baroness Anna Bolati.”

“But is that the name she gave you? Are you sure?”

“Anna Bolati, yes.”

“A tall, dark woman. . . .”

“Tall and blonde.”

“She used to be a brunette.”

“But now she’s a blonde—a peroxide blonde.”

“Ah!”

“And she has a lot of make up on. She looks like a doll; a forty-year-old doll.”

“Did you tell her I was at home?”

“No.”

“Good! Now go and tell her. . . .”

“What?”

“To wait; tell her to wait.”

The maid withdrew from the study and Lorenzo Guarena ran to his mother; he found her on the veranda, seated with Pina and Flora. The news, which he sprang suddenly, produced an immediate effect of irate alarm in the three women. Pina and Flora—two old maids, forty-five and thirty-eight respectively—protested at once, bitterly:

“You should not receive her.”

“After twenty years she shows up again! Why? For what reason? A whim, certainly: to do you harm again, Lorenzo.”

“For twenty years she has ignored us: she has been ashamed of us, as of all her poor relations.”

“What has she come for? What does she want?”

“I don’t know. But I think it would be awkward not to receive her. After all. . . . You, mother, what do you say?”

The old lady, her austere and haughty person rigid, replied calmly:

“We must receive her.”

Pina and Flora bent their heads over their sewing and said no more. Lorenzo returned to his study, undecided, still incredulous, and somewhat astonished. When he took from his desk the photograph of Anna as a young girl and gazed at it—almost as though to imprint on his memory the face he had always seen there on the desk and which he had always thought of as pale, marked with deep shadows in the large eyes,

*Salvatore Gotta, not very well known on this side of the Atlantic, since his work has never been translated into English, is probably unique among Italian novelists in that his literary output has been confined entirely to fiction. Unlike other Italian novelists, he does not write articles, poetry, literary criticism, etc.*

*One of the features of Gotta’s novels is that they are all related to each other in some way, although each one is an independent whole, some of the same characters re-appearing in several novels. The cycle may in this respect be compared to Galtsworthy’s “Forsythe Saga,” and goes under the name of “I Vela” (The Vela Family). His is the sort of novel made popular in 19th century France by De Maupassant and others: the so-called psychological novel.*

*Read mainly by Italian women of society and the cultured classes, Gotta has no ultra-modernistic tendencies, nor is he interested in presenting any esthetic ideas or theories of his own. He is primarily a good, orthodox novelist in the accepted fashion.*

*He first achieved real recognition when, in the early 20’s, the eminent Italian critic G. A. Borgese, wrote about him at some length in the “Corriere della Sera” of Milan. Born at Ivrea in the Piedmont region, where he still lives, Gotta is in his forties, and is also noted as a writer of short stories, of which the following, translated from the volume “Il Diavolo in Provincia” (Mondadori, 1926), is a good example.*

with its provoking and full young mouth, the whole framed by dense, raven-black hair—his hands trembled. He put away the photograph in a drawer, because the woman who was to enter that study, she who had been false to him and had illusioned and disillusioned him to desperation, and was now the wife of the very rich Baron Franco Bolati, must not know, now, that she had been remembered by him with such persistence and heartfelt sorrow.

“Come in, come in. Maria, admit the Baroness. Oh, who is this I see! . . . who . . . .”

“Lorenzo! I’ll bet you don’t recognize me any more! Lorenzo! How good it is to see you again! It’s not a whim, believe me. How are you! Let me look at you! Gray hair at your temples looks well on you. How many years have passed, tell me? The fault is mine? No, the fault is fate’s. For many years I

have wanted to come looking for you up here in your beautiful hermitage. You have a magnificent house; I have admired it even from the outside. And what a view! How well Mont Blanc can be seen! Tell me! Tell me!”

“I decided to come to see you up here suddenly, last night. Franco and the children are at Stresa. I went to Turin to try on some dresses. And this morning I left by auto especially in order to come to see you. Your mother, your sisters . . . are they well?”

“Yes, well, thank you. I’ll call them.”

“Are they here?” She could not quite conceal a very slight gesture of annoyance. “I thought they had

already returned to Turin."

"For a number of years now they have been here with me, even in the winter. We no longer have a house in Turin."

"I stopped at the *Hotel Royal*. I'm the only guest in the hotel, imagine."

"The season here is over. Early in September the transients all leave."

"But I don't intend to stay more than three or four days."

"Here is my mother. And also Pina and Flora."

**D**URING the lunch and the two hours of the afternoon which she spent in the house of her Guarena relatives, Anna did considerable talking, with the excessive cordiality of one who feels uneasy and wants to be dulled in order to avoid the bitterness provoked by the ill-concealed diffidence of the hosts.

But the hostile silence of the two maids, the resigned kindness of Lorenzo, and the cold courtesy of Donna Elisa, all ended up by prevailing over the useless efforts of Anna, who surrendered to an inexorable melancholy.

Looking through the wide windows of the veranda at the valley hemmed in by mountains black with pines, and barricaded in the background by the icy immensity of Mont Blanc, she felt rising up in her soul all the memories of the distant past: of the time when she called her aunt Elisa "mamma", and Lorenzo grew up together with her in the great *villa* of San Vito, enfolding her in his soft and tenacious love, absolute in devotion, vassal-like in loyalty, almost feminine in tenderness. At that time—before the financial upset—the Guarenas were quite wealthy.

"Anna . . . I must go."

"Where, Lorenzo?"

"To visit my patients."

"I'll go too. Will you accompany me to the hotel first?"

They left together. It was late September, already a bit cold. In the green valley, on both sides of the river, was spread the Alpine village, with the coquettish irregularity of its little white houses with their dark slate roofs.

At once Lorenzo said:

"You must excuse us, Anna, if we did not welcome you with the cordiality which you expected, perhaps. We never see anybody; we have withdrawn into ourselves, like hermits. After our misfortune, I have never seen mother laughing again; Pina and Flora are pining away in this squalor of mountains. And I . . ."

"And you, Lorenzo, why do you persist in wanting to stay up here?"

"I have taken a liking to this country, to these rough and sincere people who received me with kindness when misfortune befell our house. I love my work; I consider it more than work: a mission."

Anna sighed, and leaned on his arm, tired:

**'H**OW long does winter last here? From October to June, I imagine. It must be terrible. Snow and snow . . ."

"The snow covers everything, enfolds everything: a white, even mantle of solemn silence."

"It must be terrible."

"No! This is the worst month: September. Early in September, all the hotels are emptied. The people who in August crowd the hotels, the *villas*, the houses and the huts, and throng the streets, animate the meadows with vivid colors, lose themselves in all the



"Enough, enough, Lorenzo!"

most hidden recesses, and are met with everywhere, on the mountains, in the valleys, noisy and festive with voices, musicales, dances, songs and games—these people early in September all go away, almost obsessed by one fear: to get away!"

"Lorenzo! Listen, Lorenzo, I came especially to persuade you to come back down there." Her voice quivered with a grief that was probably sincere. "I have never forgotten you, Lorenzo. I know I have wronged you. And I would so much like to make up for it, now. . . . You must believe me, you must forgive me."

His smile was sad, but he did not answer. After an interval he continued, following his earlier thoughts:

"I was telling you, then . . . that this month of September is terrible for me. The hotels still remain open for repairs and cleaning. But what squalor. Here is one now. See? A month ago this courtyard was always filled. So many young people! You won't laugh, will you, if I confess to you that I endure living up here for ten months of winter in order to be here during those two summer months when the country is transformed and, it seems, almost enlivened by a marvelous flowering of youth? Youth, Anna! What a gift! I don't live the life of the hotels, I don't make friendships with the guests. I am the country physician: I work. But I see, I observe, I feel and I enjoy. There's a tennis court. A month ago it was continually animated by young ladies dressed in white, playing. I used to stop here often, with my hands clutching this railing, following with my eyes the rapid movements of those creatures. One of them looked like you: looked . . . looked like the Anna of other days."

"Enough, enough, Lorenzo!"

**'L**ET me speak! This sincerity of mine should not offend you. Why? I have remained firmly, in my soul, at the point at which you abandoned me. And I am not as unhappy as you think. I have learned to enjoy, from a distance, the spectacle of feminine youth as one enjoys looking at a flowered garden whose flowers must not be touched so as not to spoil them. Here youth flourishes only during two months



of the year. But during those two months what a marvel, what a feast of colors, what intoxication of perfumes! Do you see that salon, now deserted? I remember seeing it full of young people—laughing, dancing, and coming and going with flushed faces. And here, in front of the Post Office, in crowds, arm in arm with each other at the hour of distributing the mail—how many they were, how many! Every year they change. Rarely do I see the same faces again. Or sometimes they return, but married, older, changed; and then they interest me no longer. Every year that goes by brings its own new flowering. The slight, slender shoulders of youth, mouths like red petals, eyes alive with careless joy, hair flowing over their shoulders, small, budding breasts, faces the color of tea-roses."

Now Anna's crafty face had become animated by an ugly expression; at the sides of her faded mouth, a network of fine wrinkles appeared more evident with the contraction of a sardonic smile:

"Ah! Ah! And haven't you yet been able to select one of these flowers to bring home with you, for your

delight?"

"For my delight I would have plucked a magnificent magnolia, with pale, flesh-colored petals, so perfumed within the dark abyss of its chalice, as to make one faint. But . . ."

"You lacked the courage and you were not in time . . ."

"Fortunately! I would have spoiled it also . . . too soon."

But suddenly he stopped, surprised at having dared to say so much. That poor vendetta of words would bitterly reproach his soul, afterward, for whole days and days, in the winter.

Anna left that same evening, hostile. Lorenzo remained in the middle of the road bidding her goodbye until he could no longer see the car. He returned to the house, for it was getting dark. In the silent little lanes of the village he encountered a bent old man who greeted him and said:

"Good rest to you, Doctor! The sky has become troubled. Tomorrow morning we will be surprised by the first snow: my legs don't sustain me any more."

## THE NEW BOOKS

(Continued from Page 50)

in the election, and the account of that election, with its devices and appeals that are calculated for the most utterly morose of audiences, though excruciatingly funny, is a sad commentary on the state of democratic municipal government in America.

After the election, though the rival party gets into office, there is still enough graft to suit both parties, and the politicians fall in with a will, one of the schemes being the "Contracts Contacts Corporation," which constitutes the ever-extended palm to be greased. Meanwhile, as the one Big Splash for the year 1932, the administration presents the Miss Malta competition, and soon the natty Mayor is Europe-bound with the several winners on the prize trip. By this time the taxpayers become tired of it all. In one frenzied evening, they burn down the City Hall, thereby frightening the politicians into adopting a panacea: City Manager Government. Since this satisfies the people, the two parties work hand in glove behind the City Manager system, and the same old crowd collects the same old graft all over again.

There is hardly any chance that the satire of the book will be missed for the slapstick humor. Yet the latter relieves the former, and makes it more palatable, though the effect of the whole is a devastating one.

**THE AMERICAN YEAR BOOK: A Record of Events and Progress for the Year 1932.** Editor, Albert Bushnell Hart; Associate Editor, William M. Schuyler. Edited with the cooperation of a supervisory board representing national societies. 947 pages. New York: The American Year Book Corporation. \$7.50.

Perhaps never before in world history has it been so vital for American citizens to be informed on what is going on in the world about them. Whereas this in-

terest previously was more or less an academic one, maintained largely for the sake of discussion, today the current history that is emanating from the world's capitals, and especially Washington, is linked directly with the pocketbook or purse of the average citizen. He must know intelligently, if he is to maintain his savings, property or investments, how all the recent legislation will affect them, and there is no doubt that they will be affected.

Of course the American Year Book will not provide that information directly, but it will provide the background against which the news of the day, week, or even month, can be read with some understanding. Year by year this indispensable reference work is issued, the latest link in the chain of current history. Facts and statistics are here, concisely and selectively told with the help of forty-five national learned societies, assisted by two hundred contributors.

One of the features of the bulky volume this year is the complete account of the 1932 Presidential election, which makes for absorbing reading in perspective.

**THE LANGUAGE OF THE EIGHTH-CENTURY TEXTS IN NORTH-EASTERN FRANCE.** By Mario A. Pei, Ph.D. 405 pages. New York: Caranza & Co.

This is the study of forty-seven original Eighth-Century documents from Tardif's "Monuments historiques," written under the Merovingian kings, Pepin, and Charlemagne. Mr. Pei has made painstaking analyses of phonology, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary upon which to base his conclusions concerning this controversial period of language in France. Because of the thoroughness and solidity of his research work, Mr. Pei's theory is convincingly

acceptable, even though it departs from the views of a number of eminent philologists. He finds that what have been called the errors of the scribes of these documents are not at all haphazard or due to their ignorance of the classical language. Rather they are the mark of a definite transition from Vulgar Latin to Romance.

Anyone interested in the study of language will be interested in this presentation of language transition. The book is equipped with qualitative and quantitative tables, partial transcriptions of several of the documents, an index, and summaries that facilitate its use.

—Edith Witt.

**HONORABLY DISCHARGED.** By Marc Leclerc. Translated by John Heard. Introduction by André Morize. Preface by René Bazin. 24 pages. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc. \$1.00.

Written in the dialect of Anjou, a province in Northwestern France, this book was considered an excellent piece of poetry when it was published in France under the title of "La Passion de Notre Frere le Poilu." Yet, although the translator has interpreted the original with considerable talent, much is now lost of the particular flavor given it by the Angevin dialect.

Concerning the simple religious belief of the peasant serving his country, "Honorably Discharged" is reminiscent of medieval fables. It relates the story of the interview which takes place between a soldier killed in battle and St. Peter, following which he is admitted to Heaven and appears before Christ to be judged guilty or innocent.

The narrative of the audience and judgment is very touching, full of spirit and emotion.

—R. M. Janin.

# Women of Foreign Birth-- Vote!

By James Lovatelli

**T**O what may we attribute the lack of interest of women of foreign birth in the political life of this country?

Should we believe the accusation formulated by some authorities on political problems that they are less patriotic, less interested and less aggressive than their sisters of American descent, or should we instead be rather inclined to admit that their reluctance to participate in public life is due to the opposition which they encounter from the men at home?

We have reason to believe the latter, for we know that men of foreign birth are not only still imposing old world ideas of women's place upon their wives and daughters, but treat them with a pronounced air of condescension regardless of the culture, education or intelligence that they may possess.

It's true that woman suffrage was a completely new—if not revolutionary—thought to the average immigrant and that the mental process of evolution has been and is still slow; immigrants were brought up, on the other side, with the century-old idea that women should not be allowed to share equal rights with men for the very simple reason that "it was above their mental as well as physical forces."

Such belief was justified and supported by all religions which, in their first expressions—and for reasons which have since disappeared—were specific in placing women in an inferior role. From the Indian philosophy through the Old Testament and up to Christianity may be noticed the decided protection accorded by religions to men and the still more decided allusion to the "inferiority" of women.

**A**S DISAGREEABLE as the truth may be, it must be admitted nevertheless that, if such conditions are still existing, the blame rests largely on the American institutions which did not make the slightest effort to remedy the situation; by institutions we mean the various civic groups as well as the organized political parties.

Had such effort been made it is to be admitted that the women of foreign birth, who possess a great facility for absorbing new ideas and becoming assim-

*In the talk concerning the Italian-American's political representation in this country—or lack of it—not much is said concerning the part that is played or should be played by the Italian-American woman in politics. The question resolves itself into this: Shall the Italian-American woman, in becoming Americanized, do so to the point of participating actively in public life, as is the case already with the American woman, or shall she remember the traditional Italian and Catholic admonition that the woman's place is in the home? An answer to this question, which must necessarily be an individual and personal one, is of profound importance especially to the young American woman of Italian parents.*

*The author of the following discussion of the subject, an ardent campaigner in the recent Presidential elections, is a member of the Board of Advisers of the National Republican Committee for the Foreign Language Division. He is also Assistant National Director of the National Republican League, which is devoted to the civic education of youth in preparation for voting. A member of one of the oldest Roman families, Mr. Lovatelli, 37, is a Wall Street broker by profession.*

lated in their new surroundings, would have joined hand in hand with their American sisters in the fight for the complete recognition of women's rights and privileges.

This, however, not having been done, the result is that the proportion of women of foreign birth in politics and public office is so insignificant as to be considered almost nil. Thus the unjust accusation that they are less aggressive than their American sisters. This condition should be corrected at once and by the women themselves—since, after all, they are the principal losers.

If all women would participate in public life with the same ardor and interest that they participate in charitable works and beneficial organizations they

would undoubtedly oppose many new wrongs—the effects of which are reflected in our daily lives—correct old abuses and oblige our men legislators to enact better laws; they would, most of all, inculcate into political life that sincerity and honesty which are first requirements in good government.

**F**URTHERMORE, they could force the party machineries to select a higher class of candidates and impose upon them moral obligations that could not be overlooked in case of elections; for the higher the type of legislators, the better the laws enacted; the better the laws enacted, the greater the nation; the greater the nation, the better the general condition of its citizens.

Hence the lack of participation in political life by the majority of women of foreign birth reflects not only upon their own happiness but on the nation as well.

What has been accomplished to date in favor of the women and children legislation is the result of the constant fight of the women of American descent. Such accomplishments could have been far greater and more far-reaching had all the women given their moral and electoral support.

In analyzing the particular conditions existing in New York City and surrounding territory, with its high percentage of women of foreign birth, we must recognize that the reason why they have been "ignored" by the party organizations may be found in the fact that the leaders of the party in power have not

been too anxious to attract their votes, since experience had taught them that women seem to have a decided preference for the opposite party. (See 1932 official registration, in which women reached an incredibly high proportion in the Republican vote.)

Unfortunately the Republican party did not derive all the advantages that it could have derived from such a condition; the reason for its lack of organization may be explained when we remember that the Republican party is in local New York politics the "minority party" and that as such it was unable to offer to the women the same opportunities that they would have obtained in national politics. Furthermore the Republican party may have justly considered that an educational campaign amongst women of foreign birth would have immediately encountered the opposition of the men who, as we have seen, do not look favorably upon the participation of women in public life.

As a matter of record and in support of the theory advanced that the Democratic party opposed women's interest in public life and especially their activities at election time, it is well to recall that previous attempts to emancipate women *were defeated in both Houses by the Democratic forces* and that even in 1918, that is, when most women were offering their full co-operation for the sake of the nation and for the success of the war, the Democrats voted against the proposed amendment to the Constitution. The records of the vote are:

1918

	<i>House of Representatives</i>	<i>Senate</i>
Voted for:	165 R. 104 D.	32 R. 30 D.
Voted against:	33 R. 102 D.	12 R. 22 D.

1919

Voted for:	22 R. 102 D.	40 R. 26 D.
Voted against:	19 R. 70 D.	9 R. 21 D.

The Democratic opposition to the recognition of woman suffrage appears inexplicable, especially if we stop to think that the Democrats mention continuously in their campaign speeches and literature the "rights and equal opportunities of the people"; that the American Democracy was mostly inspired by the heroes of the French Revolution who, first of all, faced openly the question "whether women should receive complete emancipation and be elevated from an inferior position to full equality, and be allowed to share with men the same opportunities of life."

Revolutions are so named because they revolutionize the established order of things; from them spring new ideas and movements: sometimes for the better, other times for the worse.

The women's rights movement may justly be called the child of the French Revolution, the motto of which: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" meant more than mere words. To them *liberty* meant the right of each indi-

vidual—regardless of sex—to do as he or she pleased, provided these actions would not encroach upon the liberty of others; *equality* meant the opportunity for all alike—rich, poor, man or woman—to share in the opportunities of life; *fraternity*, the spirit of brotherhood that as a matter of course would have ensued in the common aim to co-operate for social betterment.

The problems of education, home protection and child welfare were well defined in the thoughts of the 1789 legislators: they were well aware that in women were to be found that high idealism, faith and spirit of sacrifice that made immortal the Spartan women; that as mothers, they mould the characters of their children; as women, the habits of Society, determining to a certain extent its moral tone; and as wives, influence men in checking their natural temper and cynical dispositions.

These and many other reasons made the revolutionaries sponsors of the great movement for women's emancipation which came—at least in this country—to a successful end in 1919.

In the present era and especially today, in these times of depression, the complicated problems accompanying the ups and down of life affect equally men and women. But on woman falls the real repercussion of economic distress upon the home, the problem of the education of the coming generation and the laying of the foundation on which, later on, the teachers will be able to develop the mentality of good citizens.

That is why the necessity for women to participate actively in public life is more than ever felt. It is up to them to demand better legislation for the children and for old age, it is up to them to inspire their surroundings with a nobler sense of duty and to inculcate in men that sentiment of honesty and patriotism that pertain to perfect citizenship.

To arrive to such a result requires the *participation of all women* in public and political life: women citizens—regardless of their birthplace—should join once for all in the fight for better government.

They should organize themselves in a close nucleus so as to be able to impose upon the Nation the principles that they consider beneficial to the home, to the child and to the community.

*Once organized they should register and vote.*

*As a matter of fact they should vote even if not organized.*

Thus and only thus they will be recognized by men as a real power and only then they may be able to apply in practice the concept "that all human beings are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among them are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

## THE PIER

Green, slimy, ponderous, clumsy columns, encrusted with tiny shells, and marine insects, resist valiantly the pounding of tidal waves.

From a distance the wooden poles have the majesty of an aquatic forest, mysterious and treacherous. The enormous Pier, stretching far into the Ocean, looks like a Venetian palace facing a limitless canal grande.

Under the sulphurous arrows of a setting sun the wooden ramparts turn to bloody swords. They pierce the gloomy sea with jeweled darts. Mournful shrieks seem to issue from the cavernous depths, and the black waves glisten like liquid ebony. Bands of silver dart around the fluctuating water and nets laden with precious stones are strewn in the folds of the dark blue waves. Sunsets transform the Pier into a Taj Mahal floating towards arches of topaz, chrysolite, emerald, and ruby.

The Pier turns into a dream of rock crystal and the submerged columns of wood have the beauty of white sapphire

circled with a garland of flame. A patina of amethyst is sprinkled in the folds of the maroon colored waves, here and there deepened to scarlet and gold.

The pattern of the water under the bowels of the vast, translucent Pier becomes fierce under the dripping colors from the sky.

Evening grips the imagination with strange yearnings for a voyage on the icy waves.

For a moment the scene turns into a monumental panel. Then electric lights dart on the shore, and the marine pageant looks like an artificial creation made by some eccentric artist.

Under the Pier the water is dead black. A glacial aura envelops the horizon and gradually the splendors fade into one dominant color, a light green turning into lavender.

The aquatic columns sink into oblivion, in the lap of the rising waters. Night is falling fast.

—Mary Iacovella

# The Imaginary Fiancée

By Carola Prosperi  
A Short Story

(Translated by Ione della Sala)

SINCE this story I know and would like to relate is a poetic, sentimental story, all those who don't believe in the timidity of men or the faithfulness of women, all those who disdain illusions and are not interested in young girls' dreams, would do well not even to begin it. For this is simply the tale of a young girl. A young lady of the provinces. A delicate young lady, white of hands, who always wore extremely long dresses and had a clear little head, with golden hair that formed a bright cloud on her forehead, leaving bare her fine temples, patterned with blue-green veins. I don't recall the rest of her face very well, but certainly it must have been graceful and moving, like a faded painting. This young lady was called Romilda. She lived on the main street of the village, in the house people still knew as "the house of the notary", even though the notary, grandfather of Romilda, was dead these many years. Even her father and mother had died; the brother had married and lived in the city. In the notary's house, Romilda lived with her older sister, who was named Adelaide. This Miss Adelaide resembled Romilda immensely, only instead of a golden cloud, she wore one of silver on her forehead, and her temples, instead of being embroidered in blue-green veins, were wrinkled and furrowed like dried-up rose petals. Notwithstanding the difference in their ages, the two sisters dressed exactly alike, in long violet or maroon skirts, went to church twice daily, and the rest of the time they spent in the ground floor parlor, before their work table, beside the window. In that same room, decorated throughout in deep red, with its untuned piano which no one had played since time immemorable, with an assortment of ancient style books on the end table, and the family portraits on the mantel in their velvet frames, beside the grandfather's clock, the mother and grandmother of the two maidens and perhaps many women as well had spent the monotonous days of their long provincial life, seated at the work table, raising their heads from time to time to watch the few souls who passed by on their way to church or to the drug store across the street, and staring with dead faces through the interminable days of rain, at the damp stains on the opposite wall. Now Miss Adelaide and Miss Romilda were doing the same thing. They, however, at least had something to look forward to: every evening the druggist's son came to visit them! He was a really fine fellow, that druggist's son, quiet, unassuming and devout, full of respect and manners: he used to rub his feet on the mat

*Of the novels written by Carola Prosperi, "Vergine Madre" and "La Nemica Dei Sogni" are generally conceded to be her best, although she also has one or two volumes of short stories to her credit. In 1911 she gained recognition by winning the Premio Rovetta, an annual novel prize much sought after in those days.*

*Born in Turin of a Tuscan father and a Piedmontese mother on October 12, 1883, she still lives a secluded and quiet life in her native city. Her writing career began when she wrote some little stories for the bulletin of Italian teachers, stories intended for little children. Now her greatest appeal is among the bourgeois class, people with fixed and comfortable positions in the social hierarchy, and who are satisfied with themselves.*

*Luigi Russo, a well-known and none-too-smooth critic, says of her: "She is one of our most moderate writers. She has a modest poetic feeling for life, all her own, which distinguishes her from the manufacturers of fictional and commercial literature."*

for half an hour before entering; with special care he handed his hat and top coat to the little maid, then he set the lenses of his eye-glasses more firmly on his nose and advanced into the parlor, holding in his hand now a bag of sugar caramels, now a box of cough drops, but always, however, some token of gallantry. Every evening, every evening . . . One already knows what to make out of such persistency. In a province, moreover! . . . There were old friends at mass who after the "vangelico," reseating themselves, raised a corner of their head veil and whispered in Miss Adelaide's ear:

"Well, can we offer our congratulations yet? . . ."

SURELY he was in love with Romilda. But among all his fine qualities, he had a single bad one, terribly bad, for in this matter he was timid, really timid! So timid as to be ridiculous. On occasions, Miss Adelaide had left the parlor on some pretense or another, to leave him alone with her sister to see whether he could profit by that intimate moment and to propose; but, upon her return, she had always found him seated in the same place, at a respectable distance from Romilda, silent, crimson, restless, watching the doorway with an anxious air, as if beseeching her to return. At other times it was Romilda who had disappeared, and Miss Adelaide had attempted some skillful questioning so that he might be encouraged to confide in her; but at such times he would remove his eye-glasses, would begin frantically wiping them with a handkerchief as if that were the most important occupation of his life; and at the same time his near-sighted eyes, light and bulging, rolled and rolled desperately about as if seeking a way of escape.

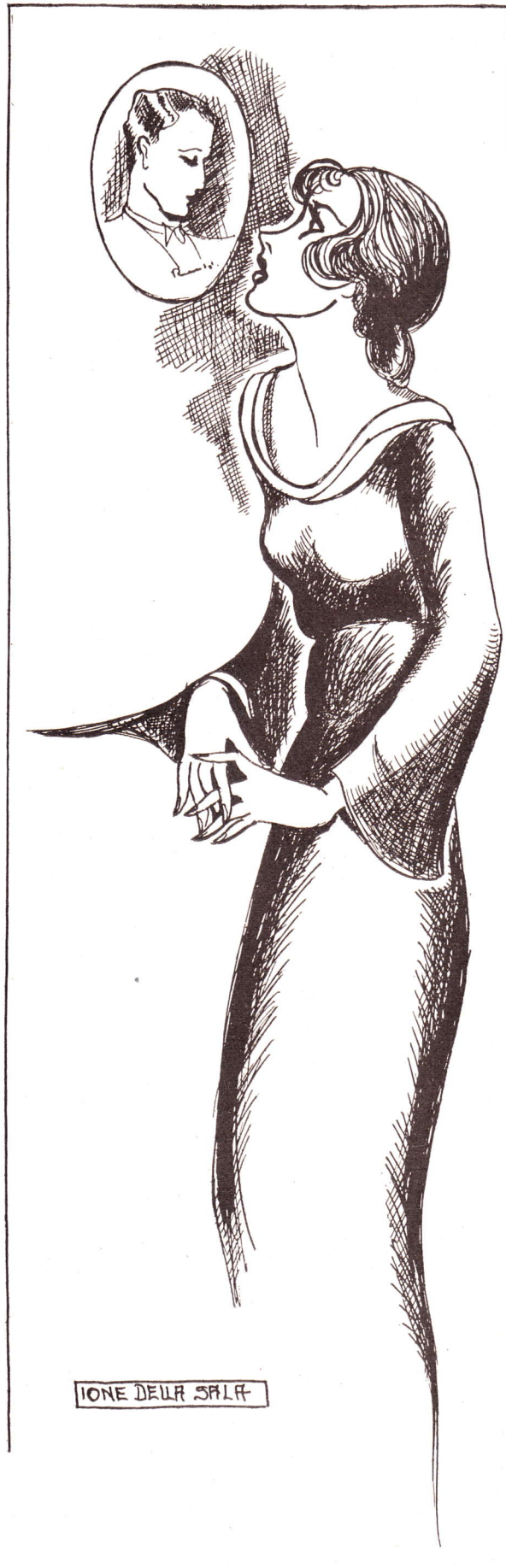
"No," said Miss Adelaide one night, while getting ready for bed, buttoning diligently the collar of her night gown, "No, that man will never make up his mind to speak up; he will spend his whole life in our house to sigh, look at you when you are not looking, and to offer you cough drops. It surely can't go on this way!"

Romilda, already in bed, with her arm beneath her cheek and her eyes languid with boredom and sleep, shrugged her shoulders.

"For my part," she murmured, "were it not for the people . . ."

But Miss Adelaide was not thinking of the people

only. Far into the hours of her sleepless nights, she be dead (that didn't matter thought of the day, sooner or later, when she would much, since she faithfully believed in the life after death) and Romilda would be left all alone in the notary's house, to spend the monotonous days of the rest of her uninteresting life, without love, without sons; and this thought disturbed her and caused her many bitter tears. If the druggist's son had still had a mother, all would have been solved smoothly, because, among women, among mothers, one can always come to an agreement, but the poor soul had been dead for some time, and he lived alone with his father, a grumbling old man, and a grim old servant who never opened her mouth, not even to speak evil of her master. Thus other plans had to be resorted to; it would be necessary to confide in someone, not of the common, envious crowd. . . . At this point Miss Adelaide suddenly remembered her friend Candida and smothered a shout of joy. Candida's friendship, it must be explained, had been a shining light in Miss Adelaide's youth. Candida was full of poetry and imagination; she used to recite most marvelously and wrote in an amazing way. For a long time she had said that she wanted to study dramatics, to go on the stage and become a great star, then she had felt the irresistible urge of writing and had filled numerous note books with verse and prose, finally succeeding in printing a playlet in an illustrated weekly. After which she had married a photographer, gone with him from one tiny provincial town to the other, and now lived far away, with a half dozen children, with gray hair, wrinkles on her temples too, and bent under the burden of worries of her long battle with life. But she would always be Candida—one felt it in her few letters — always bubbling



"She looked at him a long time, day-dreaming . . ."

with poetry and dreams!

MISS Adelaide wrote to her, to ask her aid; and the answer came almost immediately, in a huge letter with double postage —always grandiose Candida!—that even contained a photograph. The photograph was that of an elegant stranger, with handsome, expressive features, a lovable mouth and sentimental eyes; and under it was a romantic name: Renato, in a slanting hand. The letter contained a complete romance: they had to pretend that Romilda had been asked in marriage by a young man who had seen her once as a child and had never forgotten her; and to ask him, the druggist's son, as an intimate of the family, advice on the matter. The fear of losing her, the thought of a rival, the approaching danger, the sudden jealousy, all these together would cause such an explosive as to banish on the instant the lover's un-called-for bashfulness, endowing him, instead, with the strength of a lion. She was even enclosing the picture. Candida had come upon it lying at the bottom of an old trunk in her husband's studio. Heaven alone knew who the young man of the photograph was or where he was! . . . She had even baptised him: Renato Delmare. Wasn't it a lovely name? . . . Reading all these fantasies, Romilda laughed somewhat nervously and Miss Adelaide admiringly exclaimed: "Always full of ideas, that Candida!"

The druggist's simple son, who never even remotely suspected such a turn of events, was met by her that same evening, as Romilda had prudently retired to the bedroom. With great effort, for lying, to her, was strenuous work even for such a good purpose, the poor woman came out with her little romance, adding many significant sighs and suggestive pauses, and then waited with downcast eyes for the result, the

bursting of the bomb. The very-much-agitated young man listened in silence, reddened and paled by turn, coughed several times with a hand before his mouth, raised his eyeglasses, put them on again, stammered some words to the effect that he was not in a position to advise . . . that he would never have dared to intrude . . . he didn't know . . . and at the end he rose, showing a great and sudden desire to escape.

"I thought," said Miss Adelaide, sending the last dart at his wretched shyness, "I thought that the future of my sister interested you a bit . . ."

He nodded several times, turned as red as a turkey, and slipped through the door.

"I beg of you!" called out the maiden, following him to the threshold, "It's a secret . . . I have confided a secret to you; don't forget it!"

The young man laid one hand on his bosom gravely and walked away unsteadily.

**M**ISS Adelaide remained puzzled. Certainly the bomb had not burst, but it might well burst the next day, especially considering that all night—as she could see—his window across the way remained illuminated.

But the timidity of the druggist's son was of a remarkable resistance, and nothing shook it. He came less often, each time a little paler, a little more consumed by the internal, consuming fire; and Romilda, instead of taking pity, experienced a new irritation towards him, a dull hostility, an annoyance which rendered her cold and a little cruel. She had Renato's picture within hand's reach; she kept in her work box the love-letters Candida wrote, copying them from her old girlhood note books; she spoke of them to the young man as if wishing to make a confidant of him. And while Adelaide became sad and sour, bowing her head over her work, Romilda laughed her nervous laugh and to each remark spoke of Renato, as for instance—What would Renato say to this?

The imaginary fiancee was always there, in the parlor, among them, then, little by little, he invaded the whole house. Romilda, for the fun of it, ended by always talking of him, even when dressing to go out, asking her sister:

"Do you think Renato will like this hat?"

Adelaide suffered, even more since the druggist's son came but rarely, and in lengthy letters she confided in her distant friend. Candida then judged it necessary to change the situation with an energetic move: the fiancee was to die and once more leave a clear field. At the news, Romilda began to giggle harder than ever and to clap her hands; but Adelaide seemed lost.

"Ah! Lies bring no one any good!" she sighed, "It wasn't such a good idea after all."

"What a glum face you're making!" . . . Romilda would cry, "Just in keeping with the occasion . . . Instead, you'll see how well I'll act. It will be fun!"

In that act she was as delighted as a child. She put on a long, black gown, set her small face in sorrowful lines, and when the young man came, having seen her so dark through the window, she carefully broke the news to him. He sighed, reddened, swelled at the neck as if to say heaven only knows what, then, thinking one must respect so great a sorrow, found no better then to say:

"My . . . sincerest . . . condolences . . ."

**A**ND he left in a great haste. Ah, what entertainment for Romilda!! She threw herself on the divan, her mouth to the pillow, to smother her laughter.

"My dear," she afterwards told her sister, "Not even an earthquake will make up his mind."

She took the fiancee's picture and looked at him for a long time.

"You know, you're much better . . ." she said to him tenderly, in a warm, veiled tone; and bending slowly, kissed the mouth of the beautiful image. Then she placed the photograph in a frame of black velvet, and hung it on the wall where she could always see him every time she raised her head from her work. And she raised it every moment, and looked at him for a long time, day-dreaming. Sometimes she even read the love letters which she kept in her work basket, and then she became thoughtful, and laughed no longer, and always had, without being aware of the fact, the look of one who will never be consoled. . . .

The one who consoled himself was the druggist's son, who married, about a year later (a certain cousin of his, stout and pecunious), and who, in later years, became so like his father that they all mistook one for the other. Poor Miss Adelaide died from double pneumonia one winter that was colder than the rest, and Romilda remained alone in the notary's house, alone all the monotonous days of her life, near the same window, raising a dead countenance to stare on rainy days at the damp stains at the opposite wall.

Until, after many years, she too died during a severe winter when the snow lay deep on the fields all around the town.

A little discolored photograph of her remains in the notary's house beside that of Renato, her imaginary fiancee. The nieces, already married and mothers, when they came to the notary's house used to tell their children that Aunt Romilda had for many years been engaged to that beautiful youth and at his death had remained faithful to his memory throughout her life. In time this fantastic story became reality in the annals of the family, and the young girls will in their turn tell their children, and for years and years, from generation to generation, so long as the notary's house remains standing the two faded images will give out to the bright eyes and the loving hearts of the listening girls the poetry of that love that was merely a long dream.

# What's Wrong with Opera?

By Guido Negri

IT TOOK courage for the outstanding masters of music of present day Italy to denounce modern music; it took more than ordinary courage: it took what in the modern American terminology is called "nerve".

These men have risked forfeiting their standing as musicians in the estimation of a blasé world. To admire Verdi, Bellini and Donizetti is little less than a reversion to a primitive musical civilization. The um-pa-pa music of *La donna e' mobile*, known and sung in every nation in the world, should not be compared with the latest Stravinsky and Debussy numbers any more than Hottentot paintings should be placed side by side with the latest cubistic output.

It does not matter whether you can sit in your chair and listen to *Pelleas and Melisande* or *Siegfried* or *The Emperor Jones* and retain your dignity, whereas uncontrollable tears flow from your eyes at the despair of *Rigoletto* or the sad plight of *Il Trovatore*. You do not want to cry when you go to the Opera; it is not dignified. You go to the Opera to be amused, in a dignified way; or, if you want to risk your dignity, you do it in a modern way, by taking a good stiff drink and going to the movies, or, in the music line, to a comic opera.

A maestro is supposed to frown upon such antique works as came out of the pen of Rossini, Verdi and other antiquated composers. To approve of them and their like would lower his artistic standards in the eyes of the paying public, that is, that part of it which assumes the air of a music critic and which wants the rest of the world to believe that what they cannot understand, is easy for him. That nothing remains impressed in the memory of these elite of the piece just heard is of no consequence, and is rather an alibi, for nobody else can remember anything else either.

After a concert in which Stravinsky, Ravel and others formed the program, I had an opportunity to try out the theory that what I say above is true. I invited a piano teacher, one of those enthusiasts of the above composers, and played for him an impromptu piece on the piano (I hardly play it), pretending it was a composition of Stravinsky. I merely banged out some chords here and there, following the fortissimo with a pianissimo of a crazy melody in no key whatsoever, then with arpeggios at random and a forte finale ending in a middle C, just one note, the middle C. It went over in great style, and I was asked what particular piece of Stravinsky this was. I wriggled out by saying I had forgotten.

*The recent appeal of the Metropolitan Opera Company for support from its public (an appeal which met with gratifying results and assured the continuance next season of this world-famous institution) focussed considerable attention on the decline in this country in opera as opera.*

*Linking that fact with the manifesto against modern music signed by ten leading Italian composers, made public not long ago (the text of which was translated in ATLANTICA in last February's issue), the author of the following article has been moved to set down his opinions on a subject that of course admits of many opinions. It is to be hoped that other opinions will be forthcoming from readers.*

But this sounds like ridicule of the great modern composers, which is not what I am trying to do. I rather desire to ridicule those people affecting a knowledge of music which they have not, and these same morons are the very ones who, with their unauthorized and destructive criticisms, are causing composers to believe that something new is wanted all the time.

Music, provided it is not just noise, is the most beautiful way in which a human being can express himself. No matter what sort of music, it all has a meaning: the most primitive melody, the ballad, the gay song, the choral, opera, operetta, oratorio, etc., all have their places in the hearts of the people. The different types of music, however, cannot be judged by comparison. Waltzes by Strauss cannot be compared with *Elektra*, nor can *O Sole Mio* be placed side by side for judgment with *Tristan and Isolde*. There is music for the high-class musician and the mediocre musician, for the music student and the ignoramus. The so-called ignoramus, who does not understand theory or technique, and who constitutes by far the greatest part of humanity, does not respond to depth of theory or finesse of technique, and this lack of response is reflected at the box office, where the much despised antique operas still hold their own.

Here is exactly where the shoe pinches, for whenever music is criticized, it usually is operatic music, symphonic works being the object of a different sort of discussion and not always the subject of criticism. I view this differentiation as an usurpation of symphony in the field of opera.

OPERA was originally, and should remain, the field of singing, of *bel canto*, where the human voice should be paramount, the orchestra serving to support the singer. When Wagner introduced his *Musikdrama*, the orchestra took the entire floor and the human voice was relegated to the background. The lead of Wagner was followed by other progressists who thought this system was better, until we have a climax in *The Emperor Jones*, in which singing is practically done away with and there remains only a symphonic opus.

Now Wagner's operas might be just as beautiful without any singing, but why do away with singing? In order to have good singing there simply must be good melodies and good choral works, and where are the beautiful melodies and the good chorals in present-day opera? There are none. The orchestra has supplanted the human voice almost entirely.

(Continued on Page 75)

# The Story of Pierina

A Short Story

By Arvid Young

FUNNY, but have you ever noticed how the most interesting events in our lives usually happen by accident? Here I had struggled the whole summer long, with brush and palette, painting what I, of course, thought were downright masterpieces, but not a one could I sell for any price that was not an insult. My little studio on top of old Montmartre, in Paris, had become a rendezvous for all the artists of the neighborhood. Our evenings were jolly, the absinthe was good, so were the brandy plums, but my funds were running low; I was tired of climbing a million steps every day; and one evening saw me busily engaged in the melancholy task of packing up my treasures, preparatory to going back to my home in San Francisco.

A jerk on the old tinkle-bell brought me to the door. An American tourist and his family were looking for the former occupant of my studio, of whom I regretted I could tell them nothing. Well, they stepped in: "just to look around" and have a chat with a fellow countryman. When they left they carried with them what I considered my poorest piece of work, and I had in my hand a check for an amount I had mentioned as a reckless joke, and for which I would gladly have sold every piece of painted canvas I had ever turned out.

THAT'S how I came to go to Naples. I had always dreamed of seeing the bay of Naples, and now I could afford to do it. Not by train, no sir. Leave that to the tourists who are "doing" Europe, come in by night train from the Riviera, and think when they have visited the Cafe of Beautiful Naples, Caruso's house, Via Roma, the Blue Grotto of Capri, taken the Amalfi Drive, and spent an evening at the San Carlo, that's all there is, except to "die". No, the way to see the Bay of Naples, as also the Bay of our San Francisco, is by boat right up through the front door, with time on your hands, money in your pocket, and no excess baggage to bother with. That's how I went there, and how I know.

For a day or two I hit the high spots, of course, marveled at the turquoise of the Mediterranean, azure of the sky, and the smoking top of Vesuvius, spending my evenings over many a carafe of Castelli Romani in the Gambrinus, not to mention countless *caffè espresso* and rainbow-hued liqueurs. But, beautiful though I found everything; and it would be foolish for me to try to describe the beauties of Naples that defied even the pens of Byrons and Shelleys, it was in the humbler quarters of Naples I found my greatest enjoyment and inspiration.

In mean, narrow side streets that the tourists overlook, in tumble-down shops, in old door-ways, in the

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mance, beauty, music, art and love in that little sunny spot on the shores of the Mediterranean than in all the rest of the world put together. I can understand now why our Madonnas are Italian. Every woman I met was a Madonna, though I had to wash and comb the one I used for a model for my humble brush. I can understand now too, why the Italians cluster on top of our Telegraph Hill in San Francisco. It's Naples to them, it's the sun they love, for "senza sole, senza niente".

Well, I'll rave about that some other time. What I wanted to tell you about now was another of those "accidents" that seem to come into our lives when we least expect them, and mean so much to us, if we only take the chance they offer. Perhaps they are not such chance accidents as we think, but part of a greater scheme that we cannot grasp. This happened to me right there in Naples, or rather on the road to Sorrento, where I had strolled for the day, to put in a little work with my brush.

With easel stuck in the sand, palette on thumb, and brushes in both hands and mouth, I was so intent on putting the finishing touches to a little aquarelle of the bay, that I scarcely noticed a handsome, elderly Italian gentleman standing beside my umbrella, very picturesque in white yachting costume and gleaming gold buttons. He turned out to be the owner of the yacht anchored in the offing, which I had made the feature of my painting.

PERHAPS the vivid contrast of the pure white ship against the brilliant aquamarine of the Mediterranean and the sapphire of the cloudless sky appealed to his Latin love of colors. Anyway, he paid me a handsome price for my picture, and told me of his yacht and the oceanographic work which it seemed was his life hobby.

For political reasons, he was a voluntary expatriate, seeking solace and forgetfulness in cruising tropical seas, exploring submarine worlds in the interest of science.

He had on his staff, beside two black-and-white artists, a clever artist in oils, but had found it impossible to reproduce in oil colors the brilliant iridescent hues of tropical marine fauna. He offered me a berth as water-color artist, I accepted, and for two years now I have travelled the waters of the world, painting prac-



tically nothing but fish. I never dreamed that such marvels as I have seen these years live in the curious ocean world of which we know so little; angel and devil fish, creeping, flying and walking fish, fish with veils of rainbow hues, blue cow-fish grazing on submarine meadows. At times I have to dive down with helmet and harpoon, for a fish-eye view of the ocean floor.

Crew and scientific staff are Italians. Leonardo, our harpooner, taught me the use of diving helmet and harpoon, and in return I taught him to swim, and painted him in oil, erect in the bows, harpoon in fist, ready for shark or ray.

Leonardo is a Sicilian, from Castellamare, my best friend on board, and typical of his race: savage, intense, and emotional; a Hercules in body, with the soul of an artist and a thirst for show, a picturesque disregard for veracity, and a voice worthy of the Scala di Milano. His proud spirit of fierce, primitive passion holds for me a peculiar fascination. When I am not painting, and Leonardo is not cleaning gear or mending nets, we lie curled up on deck, swapping stories and songs.

HE likes my Bohemian stories and I like his concertina and Sicilian songs of love, hatred, vengeance and crude killings. Perhaps the most characteristic and, if somewhat gory, certainly the one Leonardo renders most dramatically, is the song of Pierina; *la grande storia di Pierina*, as he calls it.

The music of this ancient song of the *piscatori* and *contadini* is a rhapsody of tenderness, tempest and abandon. I'll try to give you the story of the song as I heard it from Leonardo one night when we lay at anchor off the shore of Port-au-Prince.

Bastianino was a handsome *piscatore* who loved Pierina, the handsomest girl in the village. No other girl had such raven hair, such red lips, such sparkling eyes, such white throat. She was an orphan and rich. Her wedding chest was full of linen, her hands loaded with rings, and gold ear-rings hung to her shoulder.

At sunset she would wait on the shore for Bastianino's little boat to come in, and he would bring her chocolates and sugar plums from the continent. Along vineyards and terraced orange and lemon orchards they would walk to their little favorite walnut grove. Bastianino would lie on the grass, his curly head in Pierina's lap, while she made garlands of red geraniums and sang to him:

"Bastianino, il mio diletto,  
Bastianin, il mio moroso,  
Bastiani, sar  il mio sposo,  
E Bastianin, io voglio amar."

When Bastianino was called to military service with the Bersagliere, it was in the walnut grove they swore to be true to one another. She gave him a gold watch chain with a blood-red coral horn-charm to keep evil

from him, and he gave her a ring of gold with two clasped hands.

BUT, in Bastianino's absence, Pierina felt lonely and sad, and listened to caressing words of Constantino, the rich vineyard owner. He was not as handsome as Bastianino, always grimy from treading grapes or shoveling olives under the millstones of the oil press, but he was rich, and he loved her.

Bastianino, serving with his regiment, heard of Pierina's faithlessness and his friend's treachery. He was furious, and jealousy and hatred turned all his thoughts towards one thing only—revenge.

Pierina stood in her kitchen, one morning, stirring *ricotta*, when Bastianino, home on furlough, came to her door, flushed and handsomer than ever in his uniform and tasseled red fez.

"Pierina, sweetheart", he said, "I dreamed of white grapes, and felt as if evil had come between us, so I came home to see you. Leave your work and come with me for a walk out to our old grove."

In the shade of the walnut trees, he turned on her, his voice husky with anger and his body quivering with emotion, and accused her of having broken her oath of fidelity to him.

Frightened by his anger, Pierina wept and confessed that she had promised to become the bride of Constantino.

At her words that she had abandoned him for another, Bastianino drew his pistol and, beside himself with pain and rage, shot her through the heart.

\* \* \*

"I AM home on a holiday from the army, *compare*," said Bastianino to Constantino who was standing in the doorway of his presshouse. "Come and take supper with me."

Constantino accepted, and soon they sat down to fresh tunny, artichokes, and veal hearts which Bastianino told his friend he had brought along for the feast, and which the landlord of the little albergo allowed him to cook as he liked them.

Supper over, Bastianino raised his glass to Constantino. His eyes were blood-red and his face distorted, as if the devil had gripped his soul:

"Drink to the heart of Pierina, *compare*. If you enjoyed it, run out to the walnut grove and you will find the rest of what you stole from me."

They found Pierina in the grove; her pale lips sealed in death; her pretty head resting on her bright headshawl. In her breast was a gaping wound. And the heart was missing.

Bastianino disappeared and was never again seen.

Such is the song Leonardo sang to me there on the deck of the ship in the warm tropical night. And I had a feeling as if Bastianino had not disappeared, but just changed his name to Leonardo and found a berth on a private yacht sailing the seas of the world. But then, *per bacco*, that's none of my business.

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Well, I'll rave about that some other time. What I wanted to tell you about now was another of those "accidents" that seem to come into our lives when we least expect them, and mean so much to us, if we only take the chance they offer. Perhaps they are not such chance accidents as we think, but part of a greater scheme that we cannot grasp. This happened to me right there in Naples, or rather on the road to Sorrento, where I had strolled for the day, to put in a little work with my brush.

With easel stuck in the sand, palette on thumb, and brushes in both hands and mouth, I was so intent on putting the finishing touches to a little aquarelle of the bay, that I scarcely noticed a handsome, elderly Italian gentleman standing beside my umbrella, very picturesque in white yachting costume and gleaming gold buttons. He turned out to be the owner of the yacht anchored in the offing, which I had made the feature of my painting.

PERHAPS the vivid contrast of the pure white ship against the brilliant aquamarine of the Mediterranean and the sapphire of the cloudless sky appealed to his Latin love of colors. Anyway, he paid me a handsome price for my picture, and told me of his yacht and the oceanographic work which it seemed was his life hobby.

For political reasons, he was a voluntary expatriate, seeking solace and forgetfulness in cruising tropical seas, exploring submarine worlds in the interest of science.

He had on his staff, beside two black-and-white artists, a clever artist in oils, but had found it impossible to reproduce in oil colors the brilliant iridescent hues of tropical marine fauna. He offered me a berth as water-color artist, I accepted, and for two years now I have travelled the waters of the world, painting prac-

tically nothing but fish. I never dreamed that such marvels as I have seen these years live in the curious ocean world of which we know so little; angel and devil fish, creeping, flying and walking fish, fish with veils of rainbow hues, blue cow-fish grazing on submarine meadows. At times I have to dive down with helmet and harpoon, for a fish-eye view of the ocean floor.

Crew and scientific staff are Italians. Leonardo, our harpooner, taught me the use of diving helmet and harpoon, and in return I taught him to swim, and painted him in oil, erect in the bows, harpoon in fist, ready for shark or ray.

Leonardo is a Sicilian, from Castellamare, my best friend on board, and typical of his race: savage, intense, and emotional; a Hercules in body, with the soul of an artist and a thirst for show, a picturesque disregard for veracity, and a voice worthy of the Scala di Milano. His proud spirit of fierce, primitive passion holds for me a peculiar fascination. When I am not painting, and Leonardo is not cleaning gear or mending nets, we lie curled up on deck, swapping stories and songs.

HE likes my Bohemian stories and I like his concertina and Sicilian songs of love, hatred, vengeance and crude killings. Perhaps the most characteristic and, if somewhat gory, certainly the one Leonardo renders most dramatically, is the song of Pierina; la grande storia di Pierina, as he calls it.

The music of this ancient song of the *piscatori* and *contadini* is a rhapsody of tenderness, tempest and abandon. I'll try to give you the story of the song as I heard it from Leonardo one night when we lay at anchor off the shore of Port-au-Prince.

Bastianino was a handsome *piscatore* who loved Pierina, the handsomest girl in the village. No other girl had such raven hair, such red lips, such sparkling eyes, such white throat. She was an orphan and rich. Her wedding chest was full of linen, her hands loaded with rings, and gold ear-rings hung to her shoulder.

At sunset she would wait on the shore for Bastianino's little boat to come in, and he would bring her chocolates and sugar plums from the continent. Along vineyards and terraced orange and lemon orchards they would walk to their little favorite walnut grove. Bastianino would lie on the grass, his curly head in Pierina's lap, while she made garlands of red geraniums and sang to him:

"Bastianino, il mio diletto,  
Bastianin, il mio moroso,  
Bastiani, sarà il mio sposo,  
E Bastianin, io voglio amar."

When Bastianino was called to military service with the Bersagliere, it was in the walnut grove they swore to be true to one another. She gave him a gold watch chain with a blood-red coral horn-charm to keep evil

from him, and he gave her a ring of gold with two clasped hands.

BUT, in Bastianino's absence, Pierina felt lonely and sad, and listened to caressing words of Constantino, the rich vineyard owner. He was not as handsome as Bastianino, always grimy from treading grapes or shoveling olives under the millstones of the oil press, but he was rich, and he loved her.

Bastianino, serving with his regiment, heard of Pierina's faithlessness and his friend's treachery. He was furious, and jealousy and hatred turned all his thoughts towards one thing only—revenge.

Pierina stood in her kitchen, one morning, stirring *ricotta*, when Bastianino, home on furlough, came to her door, flushed and handsomer than ever in his uniform and tasseled red fez.

"Pierina, sweetheart", he said, "I dreamed of white grapes, and felt as if evil had come between us, so I came home to see you. Leave your work and come with me for a walk out to our old grove."

In the shade of the walnut trees, he turned on her, his voice husky with anger and his body quivering with emotion, and accused her of having broken her oath of fidelity to him.

Frightened by his anger, Pierina wept and confessed that she had promised to become the bride of Constantino.

At her words that she had abandoned him for another, Bastianino drew his pistol and, beside himself with pain and rage, shot her through the heart.

\* \* \*

"I AM home on a holiday from the army, *compare*," said Bastianino to Constantino who was standing in the doorway of his presshouse. "Come and take supper with me."

Constantino accepted, and soon they sat down to fresh tunny, artichokes, and veal hearts which Bastianino told his friend he had brought along for the feast, and which the landlord of the little albergo allowed him to cook as he liked them.

Supper over, Bastianino raised his glass to Constantino. His eyes were blood-red and his face distorted, as if the devil had gripped his soul:

"Drink to the heart of Pierina, *compare*. If you enjoyed it, run out to the walnut grove and you will find the rest of what you stole from me."

They found Pierina in the grove; her pale lips sealed in death; her pretty head resting on her bright headshawl. In her breast was a gaping wound. And the heart was missing.

Bastianino disappeared and was never again seen.

Such is the song Leonardo sang to me there on the deck of the ship in the warm tropical night. And I had a feeling as if Bastianino had not disappeared, but just changed his name to Leonardo and found a berth on a private yacht sailing the seas of the world. But then, *per bacco*, that's none of my business.

# The Educational Horizon

By Sylvia Scaramelli

## THE ITALIAN TEACHERS MAKE THEIR REPORT

IT IS particularly fitting that the first publication issued by the Casa Italiana Educational Bureau is the Eleventh Annual Report of the Italian Teachers Association as submitted by Dr. Mario E. Cosenza. As President of the Association for the past eleven years, Dr. Cosenza has given willingly and generously of his time and talents to further the aims of both of these organizations, viz., to foster a friendly feeling between nations through cultural means.

In these years of depression when financial reverses are often coupled with a depletion of mental resources, it is encouraging to read a report that shows an eagerness to succeed in the face of all difficulties. It records definite achievements during the past year and looks to the future with optimism.

\* \* \*

Among the nineteen points covered by the report, outstanding are the following:

### Middlebury College

Long noted for its excellent summer schools for French and German, Middlebury College added in the Summer Session of 1932, a Casa Italiana. Teachers and students of Italian will rejoice to know that they may now study Italian amid the pleasant surroundings of Middlebury College.

### Circolo Day

Among the High School activities, the report included Circolo Day. This is the one day in the year when all the Italian Circoli in Greater New York gather in reunion to entertain their members with recitations in Italian, one-act plays in Italian, Italian folk songs and dances and Italian instrumental music. It is an excellent means of creating closer ties among the Circoli, and provides an interesting climax to the year's work.

### Choral Society

The younger generation has re-

sponded wholeheartedly to the invitation of Mr. Leonard Covello and his organizing committee to enlist in an Italian Choral Society. The So-

ciety held the interest of its members from the first. They eagerly sought out individual regional costumes, learned the folk dances of choral groups and gave a pleasing

## THE INFERIORITY COMPLEX OF ITALIAN YOUTH

BY PETER SAMMARTINO

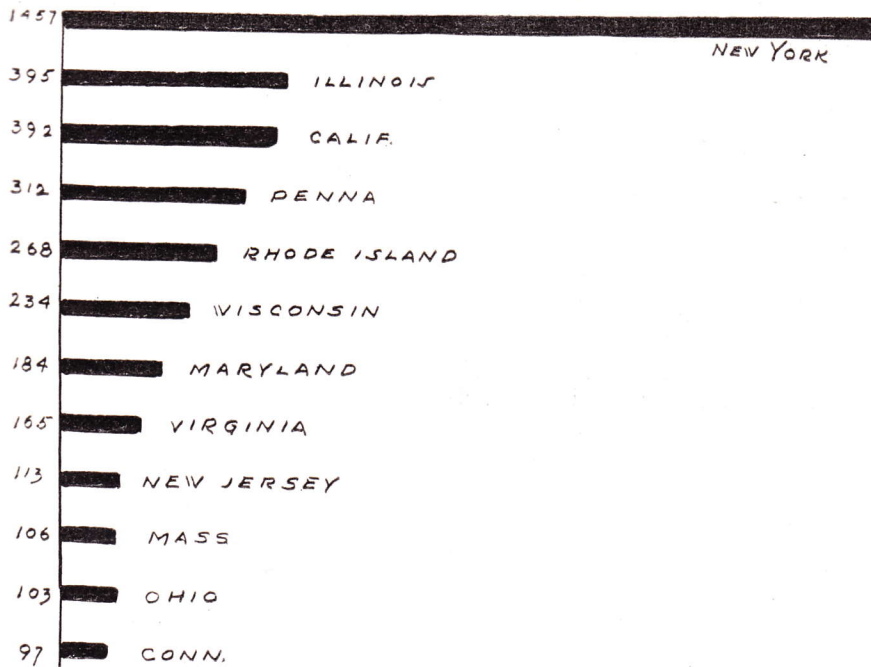
*Regarding the assimilation of Italians in this country, there are two opposing schools of thought. The first believes in the preservation of the little Italys in the midst of American communities. The activities, the very thoughts perhaps, of the newcomer must be bound up in an attempt to preserve absolute unity among the Italian-speaking people in America. The other school believes in the exact opposite. They argue that in order to help along the process of that mythical melting pot, whatever it may be, the newcomer must divest himself of everything foreign and enter immediately and forcibly into the American milieu. He must forget that he is of Italian stock and surround himself with things American during every moment of his activity. Of course, each school is wrong in its extreme attitude and fortunately, neither one works out in the regular course of events.*

*There are two factors that are forgotten in such discussions. First, there is, on the one hand, a natural tendency on the part of the foreigner to engage in some phase of American life and, on the other hand, a balancing tendency to keep up his contacts with his compatriots in the new land. The latter tendency takes place because of two reasons: first, because of a loneliness that is often felt, and secondly, because every time one of those only too natural maladjustments take place, he seeks to alleviate his suffering by surrounding himself with people of his own racial stock.*

*The second great factor usually forgotten is that the whole problem is a more or less temporary one and will tend to solve itself in two generations or so. Changes take place quite naturally, in spite of all human efforts to retard or accelerate them. Viewed in this light, the problem is really a temporary one of making this change as frictionless and as pleasant as possible. When we decide to attack the problem, we may have in mind the older generation or the newer one. This article is concerned with the younger one only.*

*The American youth of Italian extraction is, in most cases, afflicted with an inferiority complex. The causes for this feeling are too deep to be discussed at length here. It is this feeling which often causes extreme maladjustment and in an effort to lift himself out of it, the youth transcends the bounds of organized society.*

*How can we build up the personality of the youth so that he can conquer that feeling of inferiority? Undoubtedly, there are many things that might be done. Foremost, however, we must make the younger people feel the richness of the cultural heritage of their racial stock. If they can be made to appreciate the contributions that Italy has made to the world, the power it once wielded, the inspiration it has given to the arts, there is no doubt that the pride they would experience would overcome any feeling of inferiority. That is why it is of such great importance to promote the study of the Italian language and literature in Italian communities. In the light of modern pedagogy, the student must be given those activities which build up his self-respect, which give him a creative outlook on life, and which give him the mental strength to tackle those problems which come up. For the boy or girl of Italian extraction nothing can fulfill this purpose better than an adequate appreciation of Italian civilization.*



The number of college students taking Italian, by States. Other figures: Missouri—32; Indiana—29; New Hampshire—22; Alabama—20; Iowa—18; Texas—14; Colorado, Florida, Oklahoma and Utah—13 each.

and gratifying performance. The Italian Choral Society is continuing its study weekly at the Casa Italiana on Saturday afternoons.

**Syllabi in Italian**

Of interest to teachers is the announcement that the New York State and New York City Syllabi in Italian are now ready. These Syllabi are the result of experience and experimentation in the teaching of Italian over a period of more than ten years' duration. The new Syllabi are an attempt to meet actual conditions and real situations as they arise in the class room, and should be particularly helpful wherever a new course in Italian is being initiated.

**Work in Progress**

Improved methods in teaching languages usually follow the work of the experimentation groups, and therefore we are glad to hear that the Italian teachers have not been inactive in this field. At present, Mr. Frank Sabato of the James Monroe High School of New York City, assisted by a large group of teachers from the various Senior and Junior High Schools, is undertaking a tense frequency count. The results of their findings will be valuable to all who are writing grammars or readers in Italian.

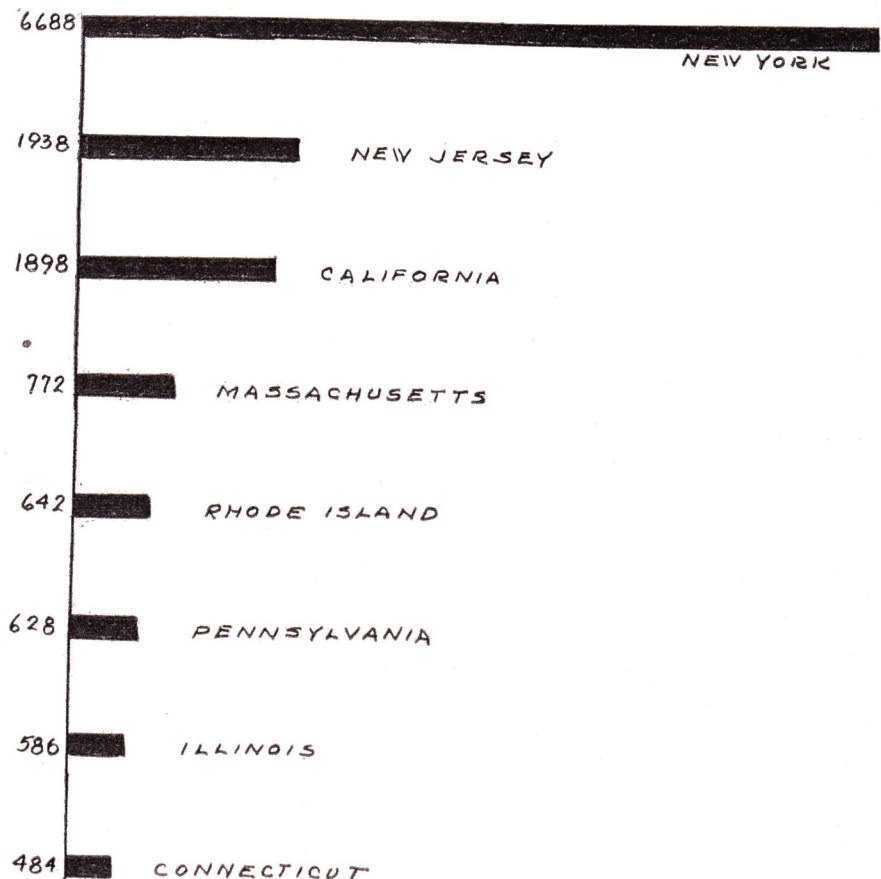
Miss Annita E. Giacobbe of De Witt Clinton High School is chair-

ing with the committee in each of are preparing the ground for an auxiliary syllabus in modern language of the Italian group co-operatives. Each language group has

three committees, namely, a Committee on Civilization, with a bibliography for teachers and students; a Committee on Visual-aural and Instruction Material; and a Committee to prepare a list of graded reading texts. A great deal of valuable information will be collected that will be helpful to the teacher of Italian.

**Drama**

Each year the students of Italian turn more and more to plays as a form of entertainment and the reason is evident. They can kill several birds with one stone. Not only do they learn to enjoy the work of a good dramatist, but they also learn beautiful Italian and, under a good director, will gain a certain facility in handling the cadences of the Italian sentence. The new student of Italian is especially pleased with the play form, for here, at last, the verb endings and the articles, are in order and ready to be spoken, and the young actor can speak his part fully confident that the teacher in the front row will not scowl at a badly constructed sentence. The performance leaves the student elated and with a new eagerness to continue the study of Italian. In a



Far greater is the number of high school students taking Italian, as shown in this graph. Wisconsin, with 24, and Texas, with 15, should also be included.

Italy, and, under the able direction of Maestro Sandro Benelli, studied the delightful Italian folk songs. As soon as the members were thoroughly prepared, they met in competition with twenty-three national period of eleven years the Italian students have produced seventy-nine different plays, representative of the best drama Italy has to offer.

\* \* \*

These reports of the Italian Teachers Association, published annually, gather up and place in order all of the important achievements in the field of Italian culture during the preceding year. They provide a convenient history and in many instances contain material not recorded elsewhere.

### AT THE CASA

Dr. Robert Underwood Johnson, American Ambassador to Rome in 1920-'21, presented recently to the Casa Italiana, Amsterdam Ave. and 117th Street, the Italian and American flags which flew from the chancery during his term of office. Prof. Giuseppe Prezzolini, director of the Casa, formally accepted the flags and Antonio Grossardi, Italian Consul General in New York, thanked Dr. Johnson on behalf of the government.

Prof. Giuseppe Prezzolini addressed the Dante Society in the auditorium of the Casa Italiana on May 14th. The occasion was the commemoration of the fourth centenary of the death of Ariosto. Prof. Prezzolini spoke on the life of the poet and of his memorable poem "Orlando Furioso".

### FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

The department of Romance Languages of Columbia University announces the appointment of Dr. Enrico De Negri, Libero Docente, as visiting foreign instructor in Italian Literature at the Summer Session. Dr. Negri is at present Lektor in Italian Literature at Köln Universität.

The Casa Italiana at Middlebury College for the 1933 Summer Language School will be headed by Gabriella Bosano of Wellesley, who received her doctorate from the University of Bologna and has held the position of Professor of Italian and History at Genoa.

Among the promotions listed for the faculty at Yale is that of Ugucione Ranieri di Sorbello, promoted to Instructor of Italian.

### FELLOWSHIPS

Fellowships for study in the United States and Europe during 1933-34 have been announced by the Social Science Research Council. Among the nineteen Fellows named we note that of Elio D. Monachesi, formerly instructor in Sociology, University of Minnesota, who received a one-year extension of his 1932-33 fellowship for study of treatment of criminal offenders in Italy.

The Italian Exchange Fellowship at Yale has been received by Valentine J. Giamatti of New Haven. Among the University Scholarship awards, covering tuition, are those given to Joseph Foladare of Los Angeles, in English, and Ida Mendillo of Waterbury, Conn., in French.

### ART AWARDS

On May 2nd, Dr. Roscoe Guernsey, Director of the New York office of the American Academy in Rome, announced the winners of the Annual Prix de Rome in sculpture and painting at the Grand Central Galleries, where the entries of the sixty-eight competitors are on exhibition. Robert F. P. Amendola, an Italo-American of Natick, Mass., won the sculpture award on the merits of his entry, an archer, life-sized in plaster. The award entitles him to two years of study at the Academy with a cash allowance of \$1500 each year, instruction at the Academy, travelling allowances and bed and board in Rome. Mr. Amendola, who is twenty-four years old, studied for five years at the Massachusetts School of Art in Boston, under Cyrus Dallin, and is being graduated this spring from the Yale School of Fine Arts, where Robert G. Eberhard was his master. The young sculptor does not intend to confine his work to sculpture, but will include the study of languages, music, painting and invention during his stay in Rome. A similar award was won by Mr. Daniel Boza for his painting of a family piece in a landscape, three figures painted in subdued reds and browns with simplified forms. Mr. Boza, who is twenty-two, has studied for the last five years at the Cleveland School of Art where he has won a number of prizes.

In an Art Competition of graduates from High Schools in the Metropolitan area outside of New York, second honorable mention recently went to Charles Randazzo of

Lynbrook High School, Lynbrook, L. I., and honorable mention to William Reduto of Sweanhaka High School.

A Scholarship in Art has been received by Maurice Ambrose de Vinna, Jr., of Tulsa, Oklahoma. He will study at the Institute of Art and Archeology of the University of Paris during the five-week Summer Session. The award came through the Institute of International Education, of which Dr. Stephen Duggan is director.

### CLUBS

"The Graduate Club", formed by Philadelphia Italians in 1931 to promote the advancement of the Arts and Sciences and to encourage ethical idealism in professional fields, has grown steadily until it now has a membership of seventy-five young men with collegiate and professional degrees. The first social bow of the club was taken at the Purple and Silver Ball held at Warwick Hotel on April 21, under the supervision of Frank Amodei, Chairman of the dance committee. The officers of the club are Vincent C. Vendore, president; Dr. Charles De Luca, vice-president; Don J. Colubiale, recording secretary; Orlando M. Carrozzino, corresponding secretary, and Folido M. Famigliini, treasurer.

The Alpha Phi Delta Fraternity of New York University presented a three-act Comedy, "Mary's Ankle", at the Hecksher Theatre, New York, on April 8th. The young players enjoyed acting and successfully transmitted their pleasure to an appreciative audience. Several of the actors showed unusual talent and we hope we shall see them again behind the footlights. The guests of honor included the Hon. John J. Freschi, Prof. J. P. Salvatore, Dr. Francis Pagano, and Prof. A. U. Camera. The University was represented by Dean Collins Bliss, Dean Archibald Bouton and Prof. Theodore Distler. The play was followed by dancing, in which a jovial fraternity spirit was manifest.

Elsewhere in the columns we have spoken of the Italian Choral Society. A tribute to its success is seen in the organization of another group of choristers at the Washington Irving Evening High School under the name of the Verdi Choral Society. They turned at once to Maestro Sandro Benelli for assistance and he consented to direct the

Society at its weekly meetings. Maestro Benelli instructs the group in the elements of music and conducts the choral rehearsal, while Mr. Peter Galucci of the College of the City of New York has taken charge of the instruction in the Italian language. Miss Rosina Gilletti, a prominent social worker in the Italian colony, has undertaken to take care of the social activities of the group. An instrumental ensemble under the direction of Frank Randazzo has also been formed, which meets with the Choral Society and co-operates with it in its activities. The Verdi Choral Society made its debut on May 17th at the school assembly. The officers for the coming year have been elected and include the following:

John Generale, president; Marie F. Bartolino, vice-president; Marie Galati, secretary; Frank Campagna, treasurer. Mr. John Franchini is concertmaster and assists Maestro Benelli. The faculty adviser is Dr. Peter Sammartino, who is very pleased with the enthusiastic response of the students.

The Pi Phi Alpha Sorority produced Eduardo Scarpetta's charming comedy, "La Santarella", at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on May 13th. The comedy, concerning the presence in a convent of a mischievous young lady with an angelic countenance, was an enjoyable one, and well-portrayed by the young ladies of the cast, who included the Misses V. Cantarella, E.

Lucia, E. Aquaro, M. Alfano, E. Belfi, E. Localis, and L. Passanesi, supplemented by an able chorus.

President of the sorority, and a teacher of languages at Girls' Commercial High School, is Miss Antoinette Casale, with the Misses Sue Schisano, Mary Decorata and Rose D'Amato as vice-president, secretary and treasurer respectively. Miss Frances Mistretta is chairman of the Publicity Committee, and Miss Venera Cantarella of the Play and Dance Committee.

The affair, which included dancing after the performance, was given for the purpose of establishing a scholarship fund to aid needy Italian students.



## WHAT'S WRONG WITH OPERA?

(Continued from Page 69)

THESE is no law which forbids composers to write for the voice, yet it seems that in composing, great thought is given to orchestral effects and very little to the possibilities of the voice. The self-respecting maestro does not approve of the old way for fear of being considered antiquated; he, also, looks at the works submitted with the eye of the accomplished musician, disregarding the fact that 99 per cent of the public is, musically speaking, an ignoramus that cannot understand why such cacophony he has just heard has failed to please him, despite the fact that critics considered it a masterpiece.

If I have made the point that opera should be the exclusive field of singing, then I must add that no singing is of any value, even if performed with a beautiful voice, unless it expresses one of the deeper human sentiments: joy, sorrow, anger, etc. If a melody, no matter how simple, causes me to feel in my heart what the music is meant to convey, then the purpose of the music is achieved. On the other hand, the most perfect piece of work, theoretically, might fail to produce the desired effect.

Here we have the great divide between the music as played, sung and heard of the past century, and that of the present day technicians. The former is music written with the heart, and the latter with the head. Per-

fection of balance, of tone quality in the orchestration, the observance of the rules by the conservatives and the infraction of all the rules by the modernists, the most efficient use of all the instruments, brass, wood, string and percussion—all this is largely work of the brain, of the technician, of the orchestral wizard. It does require intelligence of a high order and a profound knowledge of everything pertaining to music, but the heart might, and then again it might not enter into the ingredients of this music. On the other hand, opera must be written with a great deal of sentiment, of which the old composers seem to have had a great deal more than the modern ones.

In considering, then, the sentimental values contained in an opera, it cannot be denied that none better than the Italian operas of the Romantic period can stand out as examples. The great masterpieces, therefore, should be divided into Symphonic and Operatic classifications, and the latter should also be subdivided into Symphonic opera and just plain opera, the adjective "symphonic" standing out as a warning to the public not to expect any singing in its performance, but rather a good piece of symphonic work.

Better yet if the field of opera be left entirely to the development of *bel canto*, which seems to be just what we lack now and the cause of the diminishing interest in grand opera.

# The Art World

By Maurice J. Valency

## JAMES, MY HAT AND COAT

THE Rivera mural at the Rockefeller Centre is now on exhibition under its canvas cover, behind which the annoying head of Lenin still joins the hands of the negro, the soldier and the worker. The entire thing, mural, canvas and all is unfortunate, and it is predictable that no one will come off with honor. For whatever the political importance of the artist's conception may be, it is not diminished by the cover, which has been put on it. A head of Lenin is certainly not in its natural habitat in the Rockefeller monument to capitalism, but a head of Lenin shrouded in canvas has a significance, acquires a mystery and a portent, that no uncovered head could have. There will always be people to say—do you know what's under that? . . . The Rivera mural. Fresh air is a fine thing for a fresco whether it contains matter of political import or not, and while it seems obvious that an artist of Rivera's political tendencies, however fine an artist he may be, should not have been commissioned to decorate Rockefeller Centre, it seems too clear for words that his work will not be less annoying covered than uncovered. The ointment of the apothecary should be kept free from flies, but if flies get into it, it will hardly improve the odor of the ointment to cover it up.

## THE MOONEY CASE: DOWNTOWN GALLERIES

ART is rarely protestant. The more depressing aspects of civilization, injustice, cruelty, stupidity, and horror, have been left largely to the literary set. It is possible to close a book, and put it aside, and this is one of the great beauties of literature. But art must withstand the test of continual inspection. If it is critical, it is unremittingly critical. Thus with the exception of certain subjects with which we have enjoyed reproaching ourselves for centuries, we do not require of the artist that he confront us with our weaknesses, correct our morals, or

be other than innocuously aesthetic. Paintings of flowers and peaceful country landscapes (with cow) are always nice to hang in the parlor. We wonder a little at the taste of an age which adorned its walls with the sufferings of saints and martyrs, disembowelings, massacres, and burnings. We no longer revel in these mediaeval pastimes, we derive no comfort from them, they hardly concern us, though we know they exist among the simple people of the rural districts. None the less, such a tradition of course exists in art, and, by no means revolutionary, it is exemplified in the popular prints of countries such as Mexico, in the countless versions of the Passion, in the work of Goya, and in a different key, in that of Doré, and Daumier.

It is, I think, to this tradition that we must refer Ben Shahn's paintings of the Mooney Case.

Few who see these pictures will doubt that the artist disapproves of the judicial outcome of the action. But his disapproval is restrained and thoughtful, by no means spectacular. It is disapproval based upon rational elements. Not purely aesthetic disapproval. The result is a quietness and simplicity of effect, a hieratic quality which spends itself fully without excitement, or the need of rhetoric. The "Mooney Case" lacks the dramatic element of the "Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti." But Tom Mooney is not the

figure that Sacco was. There is little enough about Mooney to kindle the imagination save the injustice that was done him, and Shahn has been too honest to make of the facts more than they are. To the contrary, he has been careful to purge his work of melodrama, and it is a little immature to insist that he adorn the villain of the piece with fierce mustachios, and glorify the hero with a halo and McAfee boots. The work is careful. It is neither voluble, nor enthusiastic. The pictures argue a little, but they do not insist. None of the paintings is highly charged. Only "Apotheosis" is sentimental.

"Apotheosis" is a triptych in tempera. On the one side sits the court about the green-covered table. Over the row of narrow faces, injured to the exigencies of the law, timidly stands the terrible figure, infinitely frail, of Mrs. Mooney. Across her breast is pinned her slogan, 'My son is innocent'. In the center sits Tom Mooney in his chair of cadmium red, and contemplates through flimsy prison walls his mother, where she towers now mutely above the crowd, spectacled, and gloved in black, and pinned on her breast, again the affirmation of her son's innocence. "Apotheosis" pretty well sums up the show. Around it are assembled in detail the materials of canonization, the devil's advocates, the judges and the jury, the witnesses, the crowd—all



From "The Mooney Case," by Ben Shahn

—Courtesy the Downtown Gallery





"Rearing Horse" by Randall Davey

—Courtesy the Ferargil Galleries

but the miracle. That you must reconstruct for yourself. For in this work Shahn is largely interested in facts, and he has set them down soberly in a medita[m] over which he clearly has considerable mastery. The color is good, sometimes luminous and transparent, more often flat than vibrant, but occasionally astonishing with a flash of insight.

Shahn has possibly not improved upon the best of the "Sacco-Vanzetti" set of last year, but he has certainly gained in poise what he may have lost in vigor. The characterizations may not be just—they are certainly not always merciful—there is, however, no lack of verisimilitude, and the artist's warm humor saves them from being catty. And when you see these pictures, as you certainly should, if you hear anyone say "caricatures", it is as well to be prepared with a bellicose stare and a ready answer, for example, "Caricature yourself!" But if you hear someone say quietly that this fine young artist should perhaps not take up some other legal tangle, say *Lawrence v. Fox*, 20 N. Y. 268, or *Sanders v. Pottlitzer Fruit Co.*, perhaps you had better quietly agree:

#### WALT DISNEY KENNEDY GALLERIES

I SUPPOSE we must sternly reject the view that the greatest artist is he who makes the widest appeal. The great public is wholeheartedly addicted to Mickey Mouse, but it is addicted to the newspaper comic strips too, and if the plaudits of the public are the criterion of art, or the size of the wages it is willing to pay, then the Katzenjammer Kids, and the dreary business about Little

Orphan Annie, or whatever it's called, are finer than the best the museums can show. More people enjoy Mickey Mouse in a single day than have ever enjoyed the "Last Supper" of Leonardo. This does not furnish us with a basis of comparison. A piece of work may be fine and yet very popular, but it may be very popular and be trash, and generally is, and this seems too obvious to be dwelt on, save that it is apparently possible to be too enthusiastic about the discovery that success is sometimes deserved. If we leave our seats in the movies crying in tones of anguish, "What? No Mickey Mouse?" it is not because we are pained at being denied a deep aesthetic experience. It is because we desire to be amused—we went there for that—and the movies are on the whole a lugubrious business.

We have always rejoiced in the Mickey Mouse cartoons, unashamedly stupid as they sometimes are, but when we saw "King Neptune", I think we realized we were dealing with a horse of another color. "King Neptune" was not very funny, but it was beautiful. It was a distinct departure and a happy one, and will have, I hope, consequences. The paintings on cellophane from which "King Neptune" was made are in every sense works of art. In color and design, they have all the brevity, the deftness and the sparkle of a fine Japanese print. These charming decorative motives, the swordfish squadron, the "Compleat Angler", and the king's horsemen blowing their conches at the bottom of the sea,

need neither explanation, nor animation, nor the glamor of gold, nor fine phrases, to make them fine.

The Mickey Mouse drawings in black and white are not up to "King Neptune". God knows to what heights of enthusiasm one might rise if some movie stills were pinned up next to them. But divorced from their context, they are but mediocre illustrations, and however ingenious they may be once they get chasing each other about, in repose they do not help us forget that "*jam proximus ardet Ucalegon*".

#### WALLACE HARRISON: VALENTINE GALLERY

THERE is no need of a preamble to establish the fact that Wallace Harrison stems from an authentic tradition. For here, if anywhere, Matisse and Picasso, Rouault and Severini and Soutine speak out for themselves loud and bold, and all together.

It is easy enough to recognize Harrison's obligations, and while these are sufficiently heavy, it is equally obvious that he fulfills them, on the whole, quite handsomely. Were it simply a question of obligation, there would be no reason to suppose that this artist is not artistically solvent, for then clearly, Matisse et Cie. would be also indebted to him for lending blood to a tradition which sometimes grows a little anaemic. I cannot see that any apology is necessary for this kind of wholesale borrowing. If you paint as well as Matisse and in the same way, then as far as painting is concerned, you are Matisse, and what virtue exists in the argument that Matisse was there first, is largely its own reward. "You will be there last, and that's all right too."

But Harrison is not content to be simply eclectic. He desires also to make a synthesis. And indeed, if he merely compressed the French three-ring circus into a concentrated one-ring affair, a sort of synoptic view of the French tradition, we should be most grateful to him. However, Harrison has progressed far enough on the path of originality to dim Matisse's color, subordinate Rouault's line, and distort Picasso's form—in short, he has made of the painting of the contemporary gods, a twilight piece, in itself not displeasing, but somehow fraught with infinite sadness.

(Continued on Page 86)

# The Theatre

By Anthony H. Leviero

## THE PULITZER PRIZE

THE Pulitzer Prize Committee has at last taken notice of Maxwell Anderson. Perhaps they felt that in these parlous times criticism of our political philosophy—or lack of it—seems to be in order. Last year the laurels went to “Of Thee I Sing”, which, with song and light humor, lampooned the Presidential election and all its ballyhoo. This year the committee has seen fit to reward “Both Your Houses”, which goes about the business of lambasting the Congress of these harried United States.

No better choice could have been made this year, and if idealism bound up in social justice means anything, the play of this Rooseveltian year is worthier than last year's song-fest. True, there have been several works this season which might be labeled American plays about American life. “One Sunday Afternoon”, and “The Late Christopher Bean” were reported to have been considered by the committee, and “Alien Corn” and “Another Language,” which has been revived, all got their due measure of applause.

But these plays were devoted to the purpose of depicting comparatively narrow phases of our national life. Some of them may have aimed higher, in the sense that spiritual emancipation is higher. These, however, concerned themselves with a very personal need of the individual. “Both Your Houses” speaks for the material and political emancipation of the country's underdogs from the machinations of the very demagogues whom they must paradoxically elect if they are to have any government at all. It is a strong denunciation of unscrupulous legislators who can calmly place the country in bankruptcy and joke about it.

There is this much in Mr. Anderson's favor when he is considered

*A scene from  
“Both Your  
Houses” the play  
by Maxwell An-  
derson which re-  
cently won the  
Pulitzer Prize*



as a propagandist: his work is free of that mingling of the rabid and the maudlin which despoil many otherwise excellent plays. The biggest blackguard of “Both Your Houses” is also the most affable and personable, and the idealist—there must be an idealist in a prize play—is a young man from Nevada who has just won his political spurs, a true-blue American, whose blunder only furthers the scheme of his veteran colleagues.

Yet with all the humor and restraint of which Mr. Anderson is capable, his audiences were roused to the point of cheering when Alan MacClearn denounced his vote-buying fellow Congressmen. For a propaganda play this spells success, whatever the box office proceeds may be. “We, the People” also caused its audiences to react like mass meetings, but Elmer Rice did not keep his hand on the throttle and his stew slopped over the pot.

As a portrayer of character Mr. Rice is a match for the author of “Both Your Houses”. As a propagandist he lacks restraint and the little counterbalance of cynicism which takes Mr. Anderson out of the Union Square class of radical and makes of him just another depression-conscious American who is more articulate than his fellows.

We feel that Mr. Anderson deserved the prize for “What Price

Glory?” which he wrote with Laurence Stallings in 1924, or rather the prize should have been given to both of them. It was the consensus then that its profanity and bald outspokenness militated against it. Yet it was in these things that the play found its strength, for they merely showed what was reality on the Western Front. The Pulitzer who founded The World of blessed memory, we feel, would have rewarded such a play.

## THE LAST PAGE

“Man Bites Dog,” perhaps for that very reason, died early, very early, in its career, at the Lyceum Theatre. It was a play by Don Lochbiler and Arthur Barton about newspaper life—in fact, about a tabloid in an unenlightened section of the West, where ignorant Poles can enjoy a newspaper because everything printed in it is far from true. It was a play that imitated “The Front Page” in more than one way and succeeded in none. There were some touches of good humor and some good acting, and we might mention Dennie Moore, who played the part of Renee Brennan, the drunken murderess, and who staggered around the stage in a chorus girl's Indian costume. But why go on? The play was—but now it can't even make the last page.

# Things Italian in American Periodicals

## A Bibliography of Recent Publications of Interest to Italian-Americans

AGAIN THE PILGRIMS TURN TOWARD ROME—By Arnaldo Cortesi—*The New York Times Magazine*, May 7, 1933.

"In the special Holy Year celebration now in progress the Eternal City renews its churchly splendors." This article describes the ceremonies that take place, "distinguished by that mixture of regal splendor and mystic ritual for which the Vatican is famous."

LETTER FROM ITALY: THE FASCIST EXHIBITION — By Irene de Robilant—*Saturday Review of Literature*, Feb. 25, 1933.

ITALY'S LEDGER A DECADE AFTER—By A. R. Pinci—*Barron's Weekly*, Feb. 26, 1933.

A review in the economic field of what has been accomplished by the Fascist regime in Italy since 1922. Says the author: "One may or may not agree with Fascism politically—a question which does not enter here—but, economically, with few exceptions, it has come very close to achieving what American democracy has sought and failed to attain."

THE MUSSOLINI PLAN — *The Business Week*, Feb. 15, 1933.

MESSAGE FROM ROME — By Michael Williams—*The Commonwealth*, April 26, 1933.

An article on the climax in Rome of the celebration of the 1900th anniversary of the death of Christ, commemorated with great pomp and magnificence during the Easter holidays by Pope Pius XI.

BIRTH RATES AND FECUNDITY IN ITALY—*American Journal of Public Health*, March, 1933.

CONTROL OF INDUSTRY: THE ITALIAN SYSTEM—By Arnaldo Cortesi—*The New York Times, Sunday Supplement*, May 14, 1933.

In this lucid outline of the Fascist "corporative state", the author says: "Fascism stands between the two extremes of Capitalism and Communism and attempts to maintain an even balance between the contrasting claims of capital and labor." The author's conclusion is that "The corporative system on the one hand and specific legislative measures on the other, which empower

the State to control the industrial activities of the nation, have placed the Fascist government in a position to guide and direct Italian production in a manner which finds no parallel in any other country with the exception of Soviet Russia. The government has been enabled to embark on a policy of economic planning which, though it has not received the wide publicity attending the announcement of the Soviet Five-Year Plan, may prove to be the deciding factor in shaping the future destinies of Italy as an industrial nation."

PRINCIPLES OF THE CORPORATE STATE—By H. Goad—*The American Review* (formerly *The Bookman*), April, 1933.

BLACKSMITH'S SON—by Charles Spencer Hart—*The Elks Magazine*, April, 1933.

The business manager of the *Elks Magazine*, after a trip through Europe in which he saw things through the eyes of a business man, is more enthusiastic about Italy than the other countries he visited. Mussolini, the blacksmith's son, he says, "belongs in the ranks of the giants."

PORTOFINO BY THE SEA—By D. M. Howell—*Arts and Decoration*, April, 1933.

"STUPENDOUS IMPERSONATOR"—*Time*, March 13, 1933.

The story of the sculptor Alceo Dossena, the sale of whose sculptures by unscrupulous agents as original antiquities by Donatello, Verrocchio, Mino da Fiesole, Niccola Pisano and other famous Renaissance artists, caused a sensation in 1928. Dossena, innocent, recently held an exhibition of his work under his own name in the National Art Galleries in Manhattan. "If Alceo Dossena is not the greatest forger," says this article, "he is certainly one of the few imitators of antiquities whose work has real value after the hoax has been exposed."

TWILIGHT AT CASERTA—By C. Baker, Jr.—*Travel*, February, 1933.

WAR DEBTS—By Count Carlo Sforza—*The Commonwealth*, May 12, 1933.

The alleged inside story of the late Prime Minister Bonar Law's offer of a

compromise with France and Italy, the two war debtors in Europe toward Great Britain, by a former Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, now persona non grata with the Fascist Government.

LETTER FROM ITALY—By Samuel Putnam—*Saturday Review of Literature*, April 8, 1933.

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLUB IN THE SCHOOLS—By Joshua Hochstein — *High Points Magazine*, May, 1933.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE IN NEW ITALIAN SCHOOLBOOKS — *Hygeia*, April, 1933.

OUR ABSURD NATURALIZATION PRACTICES—*The Christian Century*, April, 1933.

QUIET ORVIETO—*House Beautiful*, March, 1933.

VENETIAN SHIPPING DURING THE COMMERCIAL REVOLUTION—By F. C. Lane—*American Historical Review*, January, 1933.

THE EUROPEAN IN AMERICA: A ruling by the Department of Labor—By E. Pound—*Poetry*, February, 1933.

GARDEN PATH THROUGH ITALY—By C. Berg—*Country Life*, April, 1933.

FORGOTTEN ORTA—*House Beautiful*, April, 1933.

OCCUPATIONAL TRENDS IN IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES, 1928 to 1932—*Monthly Labor Review*, March, 1933.

PROF. MAIURI OPENS UP THE GROTTA OF THE CUMAEAN SIBYL NEAR NAPLES—*Art and Archaeology*, March, 1933.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR FOREIGN STUDY BY THE COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK—*School and Society*, March 11, 1933.

# The Italians in the United States

## THE PRESS

On April 28th, "The Italian News" of Chicago, edited by Oscar Durante, completed its 47th year of existence. Its Italian name is "L'Italia", and it is a daily.

After having edited "The Italian Courier" of Buffalo for 20 years, Ferdinando Magnani left early this month to make his home in his native land. At a banquet held in his honor just before he left, there were present eminent Italians and Americans, including the Italian Consul, who have a warm regard for Mr. Magnani and admiration for his work in bringing to the attention of Buffalo the part the Italians have played in building up that city.

Mr. Magnani's outstanding contribution during his 33 years of residence in Buffalo lay in making better known the Italian early explorers and builders of Buffalo, men such as Paolo Busti, Henry Tonti, and Father Joseph Bressani. Besides writing "A History of the Italian People in Buffalo", "Three Italians" (brief biographies of the three explorers mentioned above), "Paul Busti of Milan" and several other pamphlets, Mr. Magnani not long ago presented to the Historical Building in Delaware Park a bust in bronze of Busti. His connections with Italian societies were numerous, and he helped them all. He was born in Faenza, Province of Ravenna, in 1874.

"L'Eco" of Springfield, Mass., an Italian weekly edited by Francesco S. Marinaro, last month celebrated its 20th anniversary.

"Il Progresso Italo-Americano" of New York, Italian daily, suffered the loss last month of its most brilliant foreign commentator, Senator Vincenzo Rastignac, whose penetrating dispatches from Italy were signed with the pen-name "Rastignac". His loss was mourned by the entire Italian press of Italy and America, and his death was commemorated in the Italian Senate, of which he was a member.

Said Dr. I. C. Falbo, editor of "Il Progresso", in an editorial entitled "Addio, Rastignac": "We have lost a noted collaborator, a master who had our most heartfelt, constant and devoted admiration, a loyal, sincere and incomparable friend."

The Italian daily newspaper of Boston, "La Notizia," recently published the following pertinent editorial, under the title "A Vicious Practice":

"Whenever a serious crime is committed, the daily newspapers usually carry in their press reports, names of gangsters whom the authorities suspect and wish to investigate in connection with these crimes.

"We do not question the right of either the authorities to investigate these suspects or that of the press to publish their names, but we do most emphatically question the integrity of

both when they obviously make it a general practice, in almost all cases, to choose gangsters with Italian names.

"This is a vicious practice that should be stopped once and for all as it tends to create erroneous impressions in the minds of the public and is in general detrimental to the good name of six million American citizens of Italian origin."

Volume 1, Number 1 of "Lo Sprone", a monthly paper published by the Circolo Dante Alighieri of the Evening Session of the College of the City of New York, recently made its appearance. Edited by Salvatore Motta, and with Dr. Mario A. Pei as faculty advisor, the paper is in tabloid form, and contains contributions also by Angelina R. Milano, Salvatore Liguori, Gemma Battaglini and Madeline Staffieri.

Said Alexander Bevilacqua, editor of "The Italian Echo" of Providence, R. I., in a recent editorial apropos of criminal data and statistics concerning the Italians:

"Instead of concentrating on getting individuals into political positions, we should create social agencies to divert all our activities into normal and constructive channels. Community centers, boys' clubs, Scout troops, clinics—these are the vital and important things, the 'back-stops', when family life fails. Through mental hygiene, child guidance and organized play we can, to some extent, make up for the disintegration of the family unit caused by the rift between the clash of old and new world viewpoints. Through such activities and by eliminating all snobbish impulses we could do much to reclaim our community from the doldrums of neglect and decay.

"Here is a clear-cut mandate for those who egregiously clothe themselves in the robes of 'leaders', without actually possessing any true sense of leadership. Here is an opportunity for them to show that the professed concert with 'their people', is not based on narrow, personal interest and dedicated to the cause of self-advancement. Stands there a leader with soul so dead who never to himself hath said, 'These are my people, my very own, let me help them?'"

Among the many Italian student publications coming into being, we note "Lo Studente Italiano", a monthly paper published in Stockton, California, by the Italian classes in Stockton High School. Louis J. Vannuccini is its advisor, and its staff consists of Mabel Diven, business manager, Ruth Beasley, editor, and Melvin Caviglia, news editor, assisted by a staff including J. Freni, A. Botto, B. Grondona, L. Basso, L. Giovannoni and Charles Nicora. The paper, rich in news items, also contains a few reprints from *Atlantica's* Italian section.

The U. N. A. Association of Brooklyn, comprising 75 members, has begun publication of a quarterly: "Nik-Naks", edited by A. E. Camardella. There are many contributions by the members in the first issue, including a poem by Susan Lampitelli, president of the society.

The Graduate Club of Philadelphia last month made its journalistic bow with the first number of "The Graduate Club News", to be published monthly. The staff consists of Frank Baccari, editor, assisted by V. C. Veldorale, F. B. Masino, O. M. Carrozino, and A. A. Donizanti. Frank P. Ingenito is business manager.

The Italian Country Club of Tampa, Fla., recently issued a booklet containing considerable information on the Italians in that State, with a flattering foreword by Governor Scholtz written especially for it, as well as contributions by Mayor Chancey, Senator P. Whitaker, and many other important American officials. An article by Peter Tomasello, who is Speaker of the House of Representatives in that State, compares Florida with Italy.

## SOCIETIES

At the annual meeting of the Italian Historical Society of Massachusetts, held on April 28th in Boston, Cav. Uff. Prof. J. D. M. Ford of Harvard was re-elected President of the Society for the coming year. Other officers elected were: Comm. Judge Frank Leveroni, vice-president; Prof. Joseph H. Sasserno, vice-president; Abramo Re, treasurer, and Miss Lucille A. Harrington, secretary.

The following directors were also elected:

Walter C. Baylies, Prof. Gabriella Bosano, Dr. Giannetto D. Bottero, Cav. Vincent Brogna, Paul Cifrino, Miss Eleanor M. Colleton, Ralph Adams Cram, Miss Emilia DeFerrari, Comm. Dr. Gaetano Faillace, Cav. Prof. J. D. M. Ford, Cav. Judge Felix Forte, Cav. Prof. James Geddes, Miss Lucille A. Harrington, Comm. Judge Frank Leveroni, Judge Henry T. Lummus, Charles A. Pastene, James J. Phelan, Abramo Re, Comm. Savario R. Romano and Prof. Joseph H. Sasserno.

The interesting annual report of Prof. Sasserno, retiring secretary, pointed to the numerous activities of the Society and showed that despite the economic depression the membership had not diminished in quantity or quality.

The final Spring Meeting of the Society was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Abramo Re in West Medford on May 20th. Professor Gabriella Bosano of Wellesley College spoke in Italian on Giuseppe Verdi, followed by a musical program.

A bridge party was held on May 12th by the Italian Welfare League at the Hotel Ambassador in New York,

under the direction of a committee headed by Mrs. Siro Fusi and including Mrs. E. Aufiero, Mrs. Felice Bava, Mrs. George Beer, Mrs. Vincent Bellezza, Mrs. Berizzi, Miss Felicia Cafferata, Miss Margherita De Vecchi, Mrs. Gaetano De Yoanna, Mrs. Joseph Di Giorgio, Mrs. Salvatore Di Giorgio, Mrs. Fortune Gallo, Mrs. George Handel, Mrs. Robert Ireland, Mrs. Henry Lamadine, Miss Nina Maresi, Mrs. Guido Perera, Mrs. Angelo Ruspini, Mrs. Riccardo San Veniero, Miss Carlotta Schiapelli.

The League, whose president is Mrs. Lionello Perera, recently issued its annual report, outlining its many beneficial activities of the past year. Reports were submitted by Mrs. George L. Beer, chairman of the Social Service; Miss Carlotta N. V. Schiapelli, Executive Secretary; Mrs. Stefano Berizzi, chairman of the Membership Committee; Mrs. Siro Fusi, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee; and Mrs. Emanuel Aufiero, chairman of the Sewing and Clothing Committee.

Under the high patronage of His Excellency Gr. Uff. Augusto Rosso, Italian Ambassador to the United States, and Comm. Antonio Grossardi, Italian Consul General in New York, the Italian Historical Society of New York held its annual Primavera Ball early this month aboard the Rex in New York Harbor, through the courtesy of the Italian Line. The elite of Italian-American and American life in New York were present at the Supper-Dance, including the Ambassador and the Consul General. The officers of the Society, which constituted the Executive Committee in charge of the affair include Comm. Dr. Giuseppe Previtali, Chairman of the Board, Dr. G. M. Mortati, President, Gr. Uff. Dr. Wm. S. Bainbridge, Vice-President, Count Alfonso Facchetti-Guiglia, Treasurer, and Dr. Howard R. Marraro, Secretary. Mrs. Huntington Clark was Chairman of the Women's Committee and the Junior Committee was headed by Prince Virginio Orsini and Frank A. Vanderlip, Jr. Entertainment was furnished by Broadway stars, including Jimmy Durante, Tullio Carminati and Nino Martini, and a further feature was the dancing of the historic "tarantella" by the members of the Junior Committee, who appeared in costume.

The purpose of the Italian Historical Society is to bring to the attention of the American people the development and progress of Italian thought, and to cement the intellectual bonds which unite the peoples of the two countries. Under the supervision of its Trustees it conducts a far-reaching program of historical research, publications, and lectures.

The proceeds of the Supper-Dance were devoted to the support of this international educational program and to its enlargement.

The new S. S. "Rex", through the courtesy of the Italian Lines, will be the scene of a colorful Shipboard Party on Thursday evening, June 1st, under the auspices of the Junior Auxiliary of Columbus Hospital of New York City, which, under the guidance of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, renders splendid treatment to all creeds and races, particularly to

needy Italians.

The entire proceeds of the affair on June 1st will be used to furnish the hospital with an Orthopedic Department for which there is urgent need. In this department will be treated needy children suffering from rickets and its ensuing deformities. The undertaking marks another step for-



A bust by Miss Clara Fasano  
—Donna Rosetta Parini,  
wife of H. E. Comm. Piero Parini,  
Director of Italian Schools Abroad  
(See Page 51, Column 3)

ward in the progress of the Junior Auxiliary, which furnished the Children's Ward in the new hospital when it was erected in 1930, and which now maintains this department.

Features of the affair will be bridge, music, diversions, entertainment and supper and tickets at \$4.00 may be obtained from Miss Madeline Repetti, care of the Columbus Hospital, 227 E. 19th Street, New York City.

The Executive Committee in charge of arrangements consists of the Misses Madeline Repetti, Chairman; Mildred Poggi, Vice-Chairman; Candida Acerboni, Ann Balletto, Tiney Bonaccolto, Laura DiGiorgi, Josephine Fedele, Lillian C. Mule, Josephine Personeni, Ex. Off. (President), Adele Principe, Margaret Repetti, Anne V. Spica, Marie Tarabella and Louise Venturi.

Next month will witness the fourth annual national convention of the National Unico Clubs at Bridgeport, Conn. Since its inception in 1930, the Unico Club idea has grown until it now includes even some Western States: New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado. Its purpose is to unite in a great family, sub-divided autonomously by States, the Italian-American professional and business men, especially of the younger generation. The national officers of the Unico Club Movement are Frank Fasanella of Bridgeport, Conn., President; Prof. John D. Sullo of Torrington, Conn., Vice-President; Dr. Joseph Pantaleone of Trenton, N. J., Secretary and Treasurer; and Dr. Anthony Vastola of Waterbury, Conn., Honorary President.

The Democratic Junior League of Kings County, a group of young professional and business women actively interested in the civic and political affairs of New York, held its annual Spring Dance on May 13th at Sherry's in New York City. Miss Cloe Monaghan was chairman of the affair. She was assisted by Miss Anne J. Boylan, Miss Lillian C. Mule, Miss Ethel G. Murphy, Miss Ethel Byrne, Miss Josephine M. Cain, Miss Josephine Corsello, Miss Heien M. Haggerty, Miss Frances Monaghan, Miss Rita Vickers, Miss Evelyn C. Ryan and Miss Margaret M. Geohan.

Miss Mary E. McGrath is President of the League, and Miss Lillian C. Mule, the first Vice-President, was in charge of the ticket sale.

On April 17th, officers were elected for the newly organized Post of the American Legion known as Italian Post of Baltimore No. 106. About 70 men of Italian extraction, who served in the American Army and Navy during the World War, have organized the Post. The officers are Hector J. Cotti, Commander; A. Francis Ritota and John Battagna, Vice-Commanders; John L. DeMarco, Adjutant; Joseph L. DeMarco, Treasurer; Joseph Liberto, Historian; Vito DeLenardi, Sergeant-at-Arms; and Vincent Kusso, Chaplain. Meetings are held the third Monday of every month.

Under the Supreme Patronage of Atty. Rosario Ingargiola, Grand Venerable of the Independent Order Sons of Italy, the Ausonia Association of Brooklyn held its Second Annual Ball on May 14th in Brooklyn. Chairman of the Committee was Francesco Provenzano. The officers of the Society are Pietro Scaminaci, President; Francesco Provenzano, Financial Secretary; Gaetano Paolillo, Treasurer; and Michael Gallo, Corresponding Secretary.

The Annual Ball of the Italian Legion Auxiliary of Boston was held on April 21st at the Hotel Somerset in that city, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Vincent Vollono. Among the prominent guests were Governor and Mrs. Ely, Mayor Curley, Comm. Ermanno Armao, Italian Consul General, representatives of the American Legion, and many other notables. Mrs. Joseph A. Tomasello is President of the society, which is under the patronage of Nobil Donna Antonietta De Martino. Other officers are Miss F. H. Smith and Miss Emilia De Ferrari, Vice-Presidents; Miss Louise Carangelo, Recording Secretary; Mrs. Frank Scigliano, Corresponding Secretary; and Mrs. Luigi P. Verde, Treasurer.

In celebration of the Birth of Rome and of the Italian Flag recently given it by Premier Mussolini, the Mutual Aid Society "Cittadini di Sant'Angelo dei Lombardi" of East Brooklyn held a concert and ball on April 23rd at the Elks Club in Brooklyn. The Executive Committee was headed by Rocco Tarantino, and a large and handsome souvenir book was a feature of the affair, printed by the Worthy Printing Company of New York.

More than 100 young men and women of the Italian community of Boston formed the cast of "Page the Prince", a musical comedy given at the Boston Opera House on May 8th in aid of the Home for Italian Children. More than 2500 patrons attended the affair, which was handled by an executive committee consisting of Miss Luisa De Ferrari, Charles Ruggiero and Ernest Martini, assisted by Monsignor Richard J. Haberlin, president of the Home.

Dr. Frank Pacifico, of Detroit, was recently unanimously elected Grand Sub-Chief Ranger for the State of Michigan, of the Order of the Foresters of America.

Dr. Pacifico is the first Italian to occupy such a prominent office in one of the best known fraternal orders in the United States.

The Circolo Dei Giovani of Bridgeport, Conn., composed of young Italian-Americans, held its second annual ball on April 28th at the Stratfield Hotel in that city.

The recently formed Federation of Italian Societies of New Jersey, meeting on April 30th at its second congress at the West End Club in Newark, decided to bring to the attention of Italian-Americans of Newark and Essex County the importance of civic duty and political rights. About 54 delegates from as many organizations attended. The speakers included J. Victor D'Aloia, chairman of the Essex County Board of Elections and Dr. Louis Martucci, temporary president of the Federation. Plans were discussed for establishing Italian and naturalization schools, and 21 councils, one in each county in the State, with headquarters in Newark. Committees were also appointed.

#### INDEPENDENT ORDER SONS OF ITALY

The Grand Lodge of the State of New York held its annual dance on the evening of May 21st at the Hotel New Yorker in New York. The affair was given under the high patronage of the Italian Consul General, Comm. Antonio Grossardi.

Among the honorary guests were Edward Corsi, Commissioner of Immigration; Comm. Generoso Pope, Hon. Jerome G. Ambro, Prof. Giuseppe Prezzolini, and many others prominent in the civil and political life of New York.

The Committee in charge of the affair was headed by Mr. Michele Guttila, assisted by Mr. Augustale D'Elia. The hundred Lodges of the Order in the State of New York all sent down a large representation to this annual festival of the Grand Lodge.

On April 30th, 1933, a banquet was given by the Lodge San Donato of Staten Island in honor of the Grand Venerable, Mr. Rosario Ingargiola. The Banquet was held at Filomeno's Restaurant in New Brighton and many representatives of the local lodges were present. The banquet was given in honor of the Grand Venerable to celebrate the third anniversary of the Lodge's entry into the Independent Order. Speeches were delivered by the guest of honor, by the Grand Sec-

retary, Mr. Manganaro, who acted as Toastmaster, by Dr. Ianora and many others. Mr. Ingargiola was presented with a Certificate of Merit, beautifully engraved on parchment paper.

The Lodge Umberto Cagni on April 23rd held a meeting for the purpose of presenting to Hon. James J. Lanzetta, Congressman from Harlem, a Certificate of Merit in recognition of his services to the Italian Community of the District. The presentation was made by the Grand Venerable, Mr. Rosario Ingargiola, assisted by the Venerable of the Lodge, Mr. Angelo Burlon. Speeches were delivered by Commissioner Hubbard, Leader of the District, by Assistant District Attorney Cosentino, by Alderman Pasquale Fiorella and by Mr. Lanzetta, who thanked the Lodge for the honor bestowed upon him.

A dance was given on May 6th by Lodge "Riscossa-Cesare Battisti", at the Amalgamated Temple in Brooklyn. The Committee in charge was headed by the Venerable of the Lodge, Mr. Ignazio Coyais, assisted by the Chairman, Mr. Cardillo.

Among those who attended the festival were the Grand Venerable, Mr. Ingargiola, and the Grand Secretaries, Messrs. Manganaro and Cipollina.

The Lodge Duca degli Abruzzi—Conte M. Magnoni has held commemoration exercises in honor of the memory of the late Duke of Abruzzi. The event took place at the headquarters of the Lodge at No. 532 Union Street, Brooklyn. The address was delivered by Mr. Paolo Parisi, Editor of Corriere d'America, and among those present were the Grand Venerable of the State, Mr. Ingargiola, the Grand Orator, Mr. Lorello, the Grand Secretary, Mr. Manganaro, the Supreme Treasurer, Mr. Ferri, the Supreme Secretary, Mr. Cafiero and the Supreme Trustee, Mr. Odorisio.

#### EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Five Italian young women of the class of June, 1933, of Hunter College in New York recently received the highest possible honors that American colleges give to students of graduating classes. These five young ladies, Mary J. Bongiorno, Adalgisa Falzone, Mary R. Gori, Josephine M. Iacuzzi, and Laveria Semisa, were elected members of the most important honorary college fraternity, the Phi Beta Kappa.

It is of interest to note that of approximately 600 young ladies graduating from Hunter College this June, about 60 are of Italian origin. This represents one-tenth of the total number graduating. Of these 600 graduates, 29 were elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and of these 29 thus honored, 5 were of Italian origin. This is highly significant, for it shows that the Italians in the schools and colleges are holding their own and even doing a little better than is expected of them.

Gr. Off. Prof. Torquato Carlo Giannini, the R. Consigliere d'Emigrazione of Italy, has been on a speaking tour of the United States, having made several important speeches and conferences in this country. Among the

places at which he spoke were Cleveland, where he spoke on a comparison between the Italian Risorgimento and the American War of Independence, Buffalo, where he met representatives of Italian organizations, and Washington, where he spoke on the 14th Centenary of the Digest at the Riccobono Seminar on April 28th before the Catholic University of America. Prof. Giannini, attached to the University of Rome, is an authority on Canonical Law, and is also the author of, among other books, "George Washington", published in Italian by Cappelli in Bologna. The book deals with the American hero as a farmer, a general and a statesman, and might bear the sub-title: "George Washington as seen by Italians."

With the Italian Consul General, Dr. Antonio Grossardi, officiating in behalf of the Italian Ambassador, the presentation of gold medals by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Dr. Charles Paterno, Mr. Joseph Paterno and Mr. Michael Paterno for the promulgation of Italian culture took place on May 17th at the Casa Italiana in New York City.

A performance of "Fatemi La Corte", a 3-act comedy by G. Salvestri, was given last month by members of the Circolo Italiano of the University of Pennsylvania at the Philomusian Club in Philadelphia. The cast included Nicholas Luongo, William Fedeli, Ada Carretta, Louise De Marco and Erasmus Ciccolella. The direction and coaching of the play was ably taken care of by Ugo Donini.

Early this month Dr. Robert Underwood Johnson, former American Ambassador to Italy, presented to the Casa Italiana in New York the two flags that hung at the American Embassy in Rome while he was there. Dr. Johnson also read some of his poems concerning Italy. Others present were Comm. Grossardi, Italian Consul General, and Prof. Prezzolini, Director of the Casa.

A committee of Italians, headed by Dr. F. D. Badia, presented on May 12th a bust of Dante to Monroe High School in New York.

Before more than 1000 members of the Women's Professional Club at the Hotel Statler in Boston last month, Cav. Joseph A. Tomasello spoke on the contribution of Italian women to civilization.

James V. Tarzia, of Haverhill, Mass., has been awarded a medal by the Wilber M. Comeau Post of the American Legion of that city for the best essay in a contest held recently in connection with the graduation exercises of the Americanization classes.

Under the auspices of the Dante Club of Boston last month at the Teachers College Building in that city, Judge Frank Leveroni spoke on the subject: "Dante and his influence on the Italian language and literature."

Professor G. Prezzolini, Director of the Casa Italiana in New York, spoke last month on Garibaldi at the Aguilar Branch of the New York Public Library on East 110th St.

Professor Francesco Ventresca, foreign language instructor at Crane College in Chicago, was in charge of the program for Pan-American Day, held last month for the first time at Crane College. Professor Ventresca, who formerly served for six years as linguist in the navy, war and treasury departments at Washington, also officially introduced the celebration with a short address.

Prof. Olin H. Moore early this month spoke on "What Modern Culture Owes to the Italian Renaissance" before the Italian Club of Notre Dame College.

## RELIGION

The Right Reverend Monsignor Ernest A. D'Aquila, pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church in Newark for the last 37 years, died early this month at the age of 65, mourned by all who knew him. In recognition of his 40 years of social welfare work in Newark, he had been made a Chevalier of the Crown of Italy last January, and he had been made a monsignor and elevated to the rank of domestic prelate by order of Pope Pius XI last December, following which he had been praised by Mayor Congleton at a banquet in Father D'Aquila's honor.

One of Monsignor D'Aquila's most notable achievements was the opening of the parish school of Maestre Pie Filippini, in Oliver Street in 1927. The school has an enrollment of 111 boys and 157 girls. A lover of music and a talented organist, Monsignor D'Aquila during his long career here had organized many chorals and church operas, proceeds from which were devoted to improving his parish. In 1922, when his church was struck and badly damaged by lightning, he directed a choral which raised the \$20,000 needed for repairs.

Five years ago Monsignor D'Aquila gave funds to establish a home for fifty orphan children at Vinchiatura, in the province of Campobasso, Italy, where he was born in 1868. The home was named after his sister, Miss Julia D'Aquila, who died in Italy two years ago.

Ordained into the priesthood at San Severo, in the Province of Foggia, Italy, Monsignor D'Aquila was professor of music and French at the French College at Cairo, Egypt, for several years. He later taught the same subjects at the theological seminary of Boiano, Italy. In 1892, when he was twenty-four years old, he came to the United States. For a year he was assistant at St. Philip Neri's Roman Catholic Church here. Then he was transferred to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, at Ferry and McWhorter Streets. He became pastor in 1896.

"The Tragedy of the Ages", a sacred drama by Rev. Giuseppe Congedo, was recently produced at the Mecca Auditorium in New York.

A banquet was given last month in honor of Rev. Comm. Antonio Fasulo, member of the Order of Salesians, in New York prior to his departure for Italy.

Rev. Filippo Robotti, president of the Nastro Azzurro Society, gave a talk illustrated by lantern slides last month at the Harlem House in New York on "Angels and Demons in the History of Art." A musical program followed.



Miss Madeline Repetti

(See Page 81, Column 2)

Salesian Week was celebrated from April 23rd to the 30th in New York by an elaborate program drawn up by a committee including S. E. Mons. Coppo, Rev. Cav. Riccardo Pittini, Rev. Prof. Antonio Fasulo, Rev. Dr. Paolo Zolin, Rev. Dr. Modesto Valente and representatives of Italian societies.

The Italian Catholic Union of the Church of Santa Lucia in Newark last month inaugurated its new \$75,000 headquarters at the corner of Summer and D'Auria Streets. Three stories in height and with an auditorium seating 700, the building was constructed by the John Illaria Construction Company of Bloomfield, and its architect is Joseph Centanni. Following a parade, the new Italian center was blessed by the Bishop of the Diocese, Monsignor T. J. Walsh, whose secretary, Rev. John Delaney, acted as master of ceremonies. The officers of the Italian Catholic Union are Wm. Ricigliano, president; Jos. Cocozza, vice-president; Samuel Verniero, financial secretary; Jos. Chirico, corresponding secretary, and Michael Capetta, treasurer.

Rev. Francis Cagnini, rector of the Church of Santa Chiara in the Bronx, N. Y., celebrated the 25th year of his priesthood last month.

On Tuesday, May 16th was celebrated the 80th anniversary of the arrival in this country of Alessandro Gavazzi, the Garibaldinian Reverend who inflamed thousands of Americans in favor of Garibaldi with his fiery and eloquent words.

## BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL, OCCUPATIONS

Prof. Roberto Alessandri, Director of the Surgical Clinic of the University of Rome, and Honorary Member of the College of Surgeons of England, the College of Surgeons of America, and the Academy of Medicine of New York, will arrive in this country on May 23rd. Prof. Alessandri is coming at the invitation of the Medical Staff of the Columbus Hospitals in New York, and of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who operate them. He will be a guest of the Hospitals, and will deliver a number of lectures there, the first of them on the 23rd, followed by a dinner in his honor the following day.

The eminent surgeon will afterward visit the Columbus Hospital of Chicago and he will also stop at various other cities where he has already been invited by the local medical organizations. His coming is important because it is the first time such an important personage will have come at the invitation of an Italian medical group such as the one which is in charge of the Columbus Hospitals, and because he will undoubtedly be followed by others as guests of the same institution.

At the recent annual elections of the Italian Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco, Cav. M. L. Perasso was re-elected President, and Gr. Uff. Ettore Patrizi and Emilio Granucci were elected Vice-Presidents. The Board of Directors consists of Atty. S. Adriano, P. Bricca, J. M. Fabbris, A. Giurlani, R. Matteucci, P. Monteverde, T. Porcaro, A. R. Riva, A. Scampini, G. Torti, G. Vannucci and A. Zirpoli. The Secretary of the organization is Dr. Giuseppe Facci, and the honorary members are Comm. Ludovico Manzini, the Italian Consul General, A. P. Giannini and Gr. Uff. A. Pedrini.

Count Luigi Criscuolo of New York has been made a Fellow of the Royal Economic Society of Great Britain, of which King George is patron and the noted economist J. M. Keynes is secretary.

The Columbia Association of New York, composed of Italian policemen, held a meeting on May 16th at the Governor Clinton Hotel, at which the guests of honor were Gr. Uff. Generoso Pope, its honorary chairman, Hon. J. J. Freschi, Justice of the General Sessions Court, and Comm. Clemente Giglio, radio artist. President of the Association is Maurice R. Sasso.

The first recruit in the newly organized Civilian Conservation Corps was the young Italo-American, Fiore Rizzo.

More than 300 guests were present last month at the annual supper-dance of the Association of Italian Physicians in America at the Biltmore Hotel. No speeches were made, and among the guests of honor were Comm. Antonio Grossardi, Italian Consul General, Gr. Uff. G. Pope, Judge Salvatore Cotillo, Hon. Edward Corsi, Judge J. J. Freschi, Dr. I. C. Falbo, Dr. L. J. Cassano, president of the Bronx Medical Society, Dr. M. L. Fleming, Supt.

of the Dept. of Hospitals in New York, Dr. Arcangelo Liva, president of the New Jersey Italian Medical Society, Dr. V. P. Mazzola, president of the Brooklyn Italian Medical Society, Dr. T. M. Townsend, president of the New York County Medical Society, Dr. F. Cassola, chairman of the Medical Board of the Columbus Hospitals, and Dr. G. Previtali.

The Dance Committee was chaired by Dr. Hannibal De Bellis, and a Ladies' Committee was headed by Mrs. John M. Lore.

The present officers of the society, which now has over 200 members, are John M. Lore, president; A. M. Sala, C. Perilli, H. De Bellis and S. R. Scorza, vice-presidents; A. C. Cipolaro, secretary; and A. T. Rossano, treasurer.

Thursday, August 3rd, will be Italian Day at the Chicago World's Fair. The architects of the Italian Building there are M. Derenzi, A. Libera and A. Valente of Rome, with Alexander V. Capraro of Chicago as associate architect.

Ralph De Palma, who has been a famous automobile racer for 25 of his 50 years, was the guest of honor last month at a dinner given him by friends in Detroit, commemorating the silver anniversary of his entry into the racing game. It was about a quarter of a century ago that he electrified the racing world by beating Barney Oldfield three times in succession and won the championship that season with 30 victories out of 36 starts. The dinner was sponsored by F. P. Book, a friend of the veteran driver.

Governor Park of Missouri last month appointed Dr. Jerome F. Fontana of 2605 Chippewa St., St. Louis, as a member of the State Board of Chiropractic Examiners. The appointment is for three years, and is the first time an Italo-American has been picked for such a position.

Dr. Maria A. Serra of North Bergen, N. J. recently gave a lecture on "The Health of Women in Industry."

Secondo Guasti, president of the Italian Vineyard Co., of Fruit Industries, Ltd., and Guasti-Giuli, Inc. of Santa Barbara, Cal. died last month in that city. Mr. Guasti was born 42 years ago in Los Angeles.

Angelo J. Cincotta, a Brooklyn lawyer, commander of the New York detachment of the Marine Corps League, has been appointed a captain in the reserve of that famous corps.

Captain Cincotta fought in France during the World War and served in the U. S. Army of Occupation in Germany. He is vice-president of the N. Y. State Second Division Association, chairman of the publicity committee of the Kings County American Legion, etc.

Francis A. Mazzone, of the Editorial Staff of "Il Progresso," has been named one of the three judges who will preside at the Good Will Court recently established by Judge Nathan Sweedler of the Municipal Court.

The Court, the only one of its kind in the world, was established for the

settlement of disputes of every kind without technicalities, delays or law suits. Its services are free of all charges, to all persons, irrespective of race, creed or color.

Joseph Campana, of Boston, has been elected president of the Credit Union League of Massachusetts, to succeed Charles W. Harvey.

Mr. Campana is treasurer of the Women's Industrial and Educational Union and of the North Bennett Street Industrial Union.

A. Obici, president of the Planters Nut and Chocolate Company of Suffolk, Va., announced recently that he has increased the wages of his 700 employees by 20 per cent. Mr. Obici's company is the largest peanut distributing organization in the United States.

Theodore A. Galucci, president of the Gridiron Club of Flushing, L. I., was the guest of members at a testimonial dinner attended by more than 200 men and women recently at the clubhouse, Beech Avenue and Parsons Boulevard, Queens.

The function was arranged as a tribute to his services to the club and community at large. He received a gold wrist watch and Mrs. Gallucci a bouquet of flowers. Dr. Thomas M. Neafsey, founder of the club, was toastmaster. Others at the speakers' table were County Judge Downs, Magistrate Frank Georgio and Joseph J. Leahy, chairman of the dinner committee.

The 35th annual banquet and ball of the Italian Pharmaceutical Association of New York state was held last month at the Hotel Pennsylvania, with the guests of honor including Consul General Antonio Grossardi, Dr. John Scavo, founder of the Association, Nicholas S. Gesoalde, toastmaster, Congressman James Lanzetta, and others. After brief speeches by the above, Miss Anna Lannutti, soprano, sang the aria "Fra le trine morbide" from "Manon Lescaut", and the "racconto" from "Cavalleria Rusticana". Chairman of the organizing committee was J. J. Setaro; of the reception committee, Dr. John Scavo; and of the ladies' committee, Nancy Gullo.

Mayor Wert of Paulsboro, N. J., recently appointed Miss Jennie Di Nardo, 21, as a full-fledged member of the police force. Three years ago, he made her his secretary on her graduation from high school, and since then she has been studying finger printing and criminology.

A banquet in honor of Peter C. Fiorentino, who was recently appointed police captain in the city of Everett, Mass., was given last month at the Boston City Club.

Capt. Fiorentino, before his appointment, was engaged in practicing law.

## PUBLIC LIFE

Breckenridge Long, recently appointed by President Roosevelt as the new Ambassador to Italy, was the guest of honor at a banquet given in his honor by the Italy America Society this month at the Waldorf-

Astoria Hotel in New York, prior to his sailing for Italy. The speakers included Ambassador Augusto Rosso of Italy, Thomas W. Lamont, who presided, and Ambassador Long. Henry Rogers Winthrop was chairman of the dinner committee, and about 100 guests were present. Mr. Long, who now occupies the post for which Judge Salvatore Cotillo had been recommended by considerable Italian-American sentiment, is a native of Missouri, and he was Undersecretary of State during Wilson's administration.

The recent death of Prince Luigi Amedeo di Savoia, Duca degli Abruzzi, was solemnly commemorated last month at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, under the auspices of the Italian World War Veterans, of which Dr. S. Bonanno is president of the New York section, the Italian World War Wounded Veterans, of which Capt. Calamai is head in New York, of the "Decorati al Valor Militare" of which Rev. Filippo Robotti is president, of the Vittorio Emanuele III Foundation, of which Cav. Luigi Berizzi is president, and of the Royal Italian Consul General, Comm. Antonio Grossardi. Representatives high in Italian and American life were present at the commemoration, at which Maestro Pietro Yon and Giovanni Martinelli provided the funeral music. The ceremony was presided over by Archbishop Mons. Dunn, assisted by Rev. Comm. F. Grassi, and Rev. Robotti and Monsignor Lavelle delivered funeral eulogies.

For the first time in the history of Newark politics an Italo-American has been elected to the high office of member of the City Commission, which consists of five men.

The winner is Judge Anthony Minisi, well-known to the local Italian community.

Judge Minisi's victory, as the Commissioner himself declared soon after the result of the elections was announced, is "a great victory for our people and not only for the Italo-Americans, but for all others, because it proved that a man can get into City Hall without buying his way in."

Two other Italo-Americans who ran for the office were Judge Albano, who received 28,397 votes and Dr. Bianchi, who polled 6,186 votes.

A great banquet, to celebrate the victory, will be given in the near future by the Newark Federation of Italian Societies, headed by Dr. Martucci.

Joseph Imburgio, General President of the Italo-American National Union of Chicago, was elected Mayor of the city of Melrose Park, Ill., at the elections held last Tuesday. Other Italians who came out victorious at the polls were Mr. Sorvillo, who was elected Trustee, and C. Montino, who became City Librarian.

Dr. Augusto Castellani has been appointed Italian Vice-Consul in Newark, and Dr. Pier P. Spinelli, former Vice-Consul, has been promoted to Consul and transferred to the Consulate General of the district in New York.

Under the auspices of the Italian societies of Santa Barbara, Cal., an



evening in honor of the Italian Vice-Consul, Marchese Rolando Dalla Rosa, was held last month. In addition to a musical program, there were talks by Mayor Nielson and by the guest of honor, who spoke on "The Italian Colonies in California."

Dr. Rocco A. Spano has been confirmed as Acting Italian Vice-Consul in Buffalo, N. Y.

Judge Edward Mascolo, the first man of Italian extraction to become a judge in the city of Waterbury, Conn., recently took office.

Luigi P. Longobardi of Elizabeth, N. J., has been appointed Assistant Prosecutor of Union County in that State.

In New Britain, Conn., James Bordiere was recently elected Alderman from the 5th District of that city.

The Italo-American Pietro Ianni was last month elected Mayor of Northport, Washington.

Wisconsin last month reported a sizable number of victorious Italian candidates for public office:

At Pence, Wis., Antonio Reinerio and Giuseppe Negri were elected City Councillors; Giorgio Bertagnoli was elected Secretary for the City Council; Lorenzo Corticchia, Assessor, and Girolamo Mattei, constable.

At Montreal, Wis., two of the four City Councillors are Italians. They are: Giovanni Bertone and Giovanni Grasso.

At Upson, Wis., the present Mayor, Oliver Peteffi, was re-elected.

In the village of Iron Belt, Wis., Eleanor Trione was elected Secretary and Giuseppe Franzoi Judge of Peace.

At Kimball, Wis., Giovanni Da Ronco was elected Mayor, and David Pinardi, City Councillor.

And in Michigan recently, in the town of Bessemer, Michele Gedda was elected Mayor; Leonardo Bartelli and Giovanni Brusso became City Councillors, and Battista Ghiambretti village constable.

A banquet in honor of Mayor Frank Gugliotti, of Lodi, N. J., was recently held at the United Democratic Club in that city.

The campaign undertaken several months ago by former Judge Francis X. Mancuso for his candidacy as leader of the northern half of the 18th Assembly District of New York City has received approval by the population of East Harlem. In connection with this movement, the East Harlem Democratic Club held its first annual Entertainment and Dance on May 11th at the Odd Fellows Temple in Harlem.

The followers of Mr. Mancuso are determined to bring this campaign to a successful victory. They have rallied around the former judge of General Sessions in a spirit of solidarity.

The political development of this section of New York City has followed a very slow course, owing perhaps to the fact that 90% of the population is made up of Italians who only in recent years seem to have become conscious of their civic forces.

Although the district has given American Public Life such outstanding names as Supreme Court Judge Salvatore Cotillo, former Congressman Fiorello H. La Guardia, and former Judge Francis X. Mancuso, to mention only a few, it is only in recent years that the bulk of the population has taken an active part in any political event.

Paradoxical as it may seem, only 5% or less of the public offices in this district are held by Italians, although, as has been mentioned above, they constitute 90% of the population. It is in view of this fact and to remedy this injustice that Mr. Mancuso and his friends are struggling for the supremacy of leadership.



Miss Lillian C. Mule  
(See Page 81, Column 3)

John C. Gittone, independent, was elected to the office of City Commissioner for Vineland, N. J. The City Commission consists of three members.

At the recent elections held in Highwood, Ill., C. V. Mocogni was elected Mayor of that village. At the same elections Charles Fiori was elected Judge of Peace, and J. Mazalorso member of the Village Council.

New Jersey held its primary elections on May 16th and the results were as follows, as far as the Italo-Americans were concerned:

Three Italo-American Mayoralty nominees emerged, Oliver Patri, Democrat, for Bergenfield; Caesar Impemba, Democrat, for Englewood Cliffs; and Michael Cavallo, Democrat, for Lodi.

Eight Italo-Americans were nominated as delegates to the New Jersey repeal convention. One, Minnie Crozzelli, Somerset County, is against repeal. All the others, as follows, are for repeal: Charles Carella, Bergen County; Anthony J. Cafiero, Delegate-at-Large, Cape May County; Pellegrino Pellechia and Wm. I. Ricigliano, Essex County; Frank C. Scerbo, Morris County; Nicholas F.

Cimmino, Passaic County; and Francis J. Regula, Union County.

The following were nominated for the State Assembly: A. J. Siracusa, Republican and present incumbent, from Atlantic County; L. Cavinato, Republican and present incumbent, and D. F. Pachella, Democrat, from Bergen County; F. M. Travaline, Republican and present incumbent and Attilio C. Marino, Democrat, from Camden County; Frank Calabrese, Republican, and Herman Russomanno, Ind., from Essex County; John J. Grossi, Republican and J. J. Galdieri and Frank Bucino, Democrats and present incumbents, from Hudson County.

## FINE ARTS

Two of the four prizes given out annually by the American Academy in Italy this year were won by Italo-Americans, Olindo Grossi, who took the Prix de Rome in architecture, and Robert F. P. Amendola, who took the Prix de Rome in sculpture.

Mr. Amendola, a resident of Natick, Mass. and a student at the Yale School of Fine Arts, wins a \$5000 scholarship and free tuition for two years at the American Academy of Fine Arts in Rome, for his prize sculpture entry; "The Archer", exhibited at the Grand Central Galleries in New York. Born in Boston on April 24, 1909, he studied for five years at the Massachusetts School of Art before going to Yale.

Mr. Grossi, of 1729 Paulding Avenue, the Bronx, N. Y., was the one to solve best the problem in architecture, which was a country clubhouse for 1000 members. Born 23 years ago in New York, he was graduated from Columbia College in 1930 with a Bachelor of Arts degree, and now, at the Columbia School of Architecture, from which he has already received a Bachelor of Architecture degree, he is studying for the degree of Master of Science. He will receive \$1450 a year for two years beginning October 1, 1933, with free residence and studio at the American Academy in Rome. The estimated value of the fellowship is \$5000, with a competition open only to unmarried American citizens under thirty.

Just before sailing for Italy for a stay abroad early this month General Manager Giulio Gatti-Casazza of the Metropolitan Opera Company announced plans for the next Metropolitan season which will begin on December 26, and will last 14 weeks. Among the new singers, he announced, were Nino Martini, young Italian tenor, who has sung in New York in concert and over the radio, and has appeared with the Philadelphia Grand Opera Co., and Claudia Muzio, who returns after an absence. The appointment of Armando Agnini as stage director was also announced. Mr. Agnini is promoted to his new post after many years as stage manager. Among those who will not be in the roster next season are Giacomo Lauri-Volpi, Claudio Frigerio and Aida Donielli.

Mme. Muzio, a native of Pavia, Italy, made her debut at the Metropolitan in 1918 as Tosca and went to the Chicago Opera in 1922.

The Philharmonic-Symphony Society's Beethoven cycle under Arturo Toscanini's direction, which came to an end last month in a blaze of applause for the director, will be repeated under the Maestro's baton next season, it was announced recently in the society's prospectus for 1933-34.

A praiseworthy attempt to make opera at moderate prices as popular as the movies was begun on May 15 at the Forrest Theatre in New York, where the Associated Operatic Artists, under the general direction of Cola Santo, produced Verdi's "Il Trovatore". An enthusiastic audience applauded at length the second night performance of "Trovatore", in which Irene Elliott, as Azucena, starred. Robert Cann conducted the symphony orchestra of forty pieces, and Miguel Sandoval alternates with him.

The company, with a bi-weekly change of program, intends to follow "Trovatore" with performances of "Hansel and Gretel", "Cavalleria Rusticana", "Pagliacci", "Carmen", "La Traviata", "Rigoletto", and "Faust". It should prove a bright spot in the current musical season on Broadway.

Guest artists from the Metropolitan Opera Company appearing with Fortune Gallo's San Carlo Grand Opera Company on its Canadian tour closing in Quebec May 20th, include Leon Rothier, distinguished basso, Mme. Thalia Sabanieeva, soprano, and Claudio Frigerio, baritone. They have been heard with Comm. Gallo's company recently in Montreal at the Imperial Theatre, and will continue with them in Quebec, where they will give eight operas at the Municipal Theatre. The press of Montreal reports the current engagement as the most important opera season that city has enjoyed for a long time. The Montreal "Gazette" wrote:

"Fortune Gallo must surely be a bit of genius. Last night's performance of "Madame Butterfly" by the San Carlo Grand Opera Co. showed that even in these days of depression he can still mount an opera in a way which may be unhesitatingly called a genuine theatrical production. Not many established opera houses are in existence to do this nowadays. For a touring company to achieve it is phenomenal."

"Venice," an oil painting by Louis Polotti of Mariners Harbor in Staten Island, N. Y., was recently awarded a \$1200 prize at the Anderson Galleries in New York.

A gold and bronze plaque was presented to Joseph V. McKee, formerly President of New York's Board of Aldermen, at a testimonial dinner given in his behalf by the Sons of Knickerbocker. The trophy was designed by Attilio Piccirilli, sculptor of the Maine monument, the Columbus monument in the Bronx, and the medallions for the Morgan library.

A first prize for organ playing was recently won by the 17-year-old Vincent J. Persichetti of 1913 So. Broad St., Philadelphia. The contest took place in the Irvine Auditorium of the University of Pennsylvania in that city. The winner, who was graduated last February from South Philadelphia High School, played with great skill and mastery a Bach fugue and a composition by Alexander Russell.

"Romanticismo", a four-act drama by Gerolamo Rovetta, was presented early this month at the Little Theatre in New York by the Italian Teatro d'Arte under the direction of Comm. Giuseppe Sterni, who also played the leading role. The entertainment was under the auspices of Italian World War veteran associations.

## THE ART WORLD

(Continued from Page 77)

Thus, in fairness to the artist, it must be said that his chief difficulty is that his originals are unjust to him. Without the living memory of these, we could not otherwise than praise his work, for his work in itself is very good. There is no question of affection: Harrison does not coquette with the work of the great. This is wholesale plunder, and given a little more energy, it might be magnificent. Although he is conversant with the *style Francais*, and his work is full of gallicisms, it is apparent that this is so because he likes that sort of thing and has made it his, and is a French painter, though one who has at

present little of his own to offer save good taste and a brilliant technique.

### THE WASHINGTON SQUARE SHOW

In the Square, birds twitter, and under the trees old gentlemen, in soft Neapolitan brogue and brittle Genoese, discuss pleasantly in the sunshine problems too intricate for language, and almost beyond the efficacy of gesture. In the Spring, this city is the pleasantest city in the world, the Square is the pleasantest spot in the city, and the pictures exhibited there occupied therefore the most favored spot in the world, a

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Under the auspices of the Santa Maria Institute, and with a program prepared and directed by Mrs. Anna Meali Di Girolamo, the Music Hall in Cincinnati was the scene last month of a brilliant Italian Night Festival, participated in by scores of Italians in many musical roles.

veritable earthly paradise, where almost everybody is unemployed.

They are gone, alas! And policemen with flaming swords will see to it that there is no more excitement until some time in the dim and unpromising future.

Why should this be? There were some very fine things there; the whole thing was a fine invention, and I wish it were permanent. I wish there were books, also, and moth-eaten tapestries, and some antiques, and tables and beer. And well—why not the Seine around the corner towards Houston Street? What the devil—are such things too good for us?

# ATLANTICA

## IN ITALIANO

Rassegna della della vita contemporanea

A cura di Salvatore Viola

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### IL PRIMO PASSO

di Giovanni Papini

Lo scritto che pubblichiamo qui sotto fa parte di un volume intitolato **IL PRIMO PASSO** dove si trovano raccolti saggi del genere dei più celebri autori italiani viventi. Come il lettore vedrà nel ragazzo Papini era già bello e delineato l'uomo Papini il quale si è venuto sviluppando e affermando in questi ultimi trent'anni con opere ormai divenute famose. L'ultimo libro di Papini: **DANTE VIVO** esce proprio di questi giorni. Già sin dal 1905 quando stampò quel celebre saggio "Per Dante contro il Dantismo" il nostro scrittore aveva manifestato le sue idee sul come studiare e interpretare l'opera dell'Alighieri. Col questo organico volume egli ci dà finalmente il suo Dante e forse anche il nostro Dante.

NEL 1890 ero un imitatore di Giuseppe Giusti, l'ultimo, spero. E poco dopo pubblicai — in esemplare unico, manoscritto, illustrato, smarrito — un quaderno di poesie tra il satirico e il gioioso, dove figuravano, unici temi che ricordo, una rimenata contro il gioco del lotto e un ritratto burlesco in settenari d'un "Maestro del Villaggio."

Ma le mie opere non cominciarono a esser tradotte in piombo che assai più tardi, cioè nel 1896, a quindici anni finiti.

In quel tempo, sobillato dalla mia fame di libri, avevo fatto di tutto per entrare in dimestichezza col mio professore di francese, che si chiamava Altobelli, era bolognese e tremava sempre specie il capo e le mani. Gli studenti raccontavano che quel tremito perpetuo era cominciato dal giorno che l'obbligarono a sposare quella ch'era sua moglie colle pistole alla gola. Fatto si è che ogni volta andavo a trovarlo — stava a un ultimo piano in Piazza Santa Maria Novella — era sempre chiuso per fare un degli infiniti bagni freddi che non riuscivano a debellare il suo tremore. Mentre sguazzava di là io frugavo nel suo studio fra i libri, che non eran molti ma quasi tutti francesi e nuovi per me. Un giorno misi la mano sopra una grossa cretomazia in più volumi che s'intitolava *Les Poetes Français*, mi pare, ed era in grandi caratteri, con grandi margini e in gran formato. Ci trovai una poesia di Victor Hugo che mi piacque, e

appena tornato a casa la riscrissi a modo mio in prosa italiana. Si trattava, se mi rammento bene, d'un leone scappato e d'un bambino salvato e mi riuscì, o mi parve, più patetica assai che il modello. Il fatto che c'era di mezzo un bambino mi dette l'idea e la speranza di farla stampare.

IN quegli anni un cartolaro ebreo, che si chiamava Lopez e aveva bottega in Via Palazzuolo, pubblicava una rivistucola per ragazzi intitolata *L'Amico dello Scolaro*: otto pagine a due colonne, con vecchie incisioni in legno, sotto una copertina d'un rosa tra il sudicio e il tiscio.

Ricopiavi d'impegno, colla mia scrittura da esami di calligrafia, la novella leonina, la chiusi in una busta gialla senza neanche una parola d'accompagnamento, e corsi difilato in Via Palazzuolo. Ma quando fui vicino alla bottega dov'era la Direzione dell'*Amico* sentii un non so che alle gambe e un insolito batticuore sotto la camicia. Il signor Lopez, che ho conosciuto bene molti anni dopo ed era un buon uomo e tutt'altro che da ispirar soggezione, non era ricco, benchè ebreo, e faceva da sè tutte le parti: direttore, amministratore, stampatore e purtroppo, anche venditore di pennini e di quinterni a due righe. Ma l'idea d'entrare in bottega, d'avvicinarmi al banco, dinanzi a colui che doveva giudicarmi a stamparmi, e, invece di chiedere un pennino Mitchell o una gomma marca Elefante, porgergli quella busta che si chiaramente

rilevava la mia qualità d'autore — e d'autore novizio e minorenne — mi parve, ad un tratto, assurda e spaventosa. Detti una sbirciata là dentro: il signor Lopez stava al banco, sorridente e cordiale, e chiacchierava con due donne che compravano della carta velina per i fiori finti. Mi fermai davanti alla vetrina, a contemplare le file dei bersagli stampati a colori, tutti eguali fino all'ultimo svolazzo di piuma, e le calcomanie dei fiori e delle farfalle, passione della mia puerizia. Le donne se n'andarono, il signor Lopez rimase solo ma io non ebbi il coraggio d'entrare. Girai su e giù sul marciapiede cinque o sei volte, colla speranza che il coraggio mi spingesse, ad un tratto, oltre quella soglia: invano! Ma il cartolaro-direttore si dovette accorgere del mio sospetto pendolare davanti al suo sporto e, ad ogni buon conto, si fece sull'uscio e mi fissò più trucemente che gli fosse possibile, coll'aria di dirmi: se per caso sei un ladracchio bada che t'ho visto ed è meglio tu giri largo!

CHI gli avesse detto, invece, che aveva dinanzi a sè uno dei suoi "autori" e, forse, il più celebre collaboratore dell'*Amico dello Scolaro*!

Tornai a casa avvilito e indispettito senza aver potuto consegnare il fatal manoscritto. Che strada prendere? Mi direte che anche a quei tempi c'era la posta e che potevo spedire, come fanno tutti, un plico raccomandato. Ma prima di tutto mi pareva ridicolo servirmi della posta quando editore e autore stavano nella stessa città e io avevo le gambe buone. Eppoi c'era il pericolo che la preziosa busta andasse persa: non avevo, allora almeno, una gran fede nei servizi pubblici. E infine, senza bisogno di queste due ragioni, ce n'era una terza e fondamentale, che rendeva superflue le prime: non avevo, cioè, i quattrini necessari per affrancare e raccomandare il capolavoro.

Dovetti ricorrere alla diplomazia. Cominciai col dire alla mamma che la

mia sorella piccina — aveva otto anni meno di me — da molti giorni non usciva di casa e che un pò d'aria le avrebbe fatto bene, e che l'avrei portata volentieri a fare una girata verso i viali. Mia madre si meravigliò assai della fraterna offerta, chè di solito l'andar fuori colla sorella m'era sempre parso un supplizio, ma nonostante vestì alla meglio la bambina e me l'affidò. Coll'aria noncurante di chi girella a caso trascina la mia vittima in Via Palazzuolo e quando si fu vicini alla famosa bottega le dissi: "Guarda, tu devi entrar lì dal cartolaro e metter sul banco questa busta. Se mi fai questo piacere ti compro un soldo di brigidini appena s'arriva alla Porta al Prato."

La mia sorellina, timida al par di me, ma che non sapeva di che si trattasse, parve un pò stupita della fac-

cenda insolita e più ancora dell'insolita promessa e presa la busta entrò di corsa in bottega e di corsa uscì — senza la busta! La presi per la mano e via a passo di bersagliere fino alla prima cantonata. Il manoscritto, primizia della fama avvenire, era giunto a destinazione.

**P**ASSARONO parecchie settimane, uscirono parecchi numeri dell'*Amico dello Scolaro* ma del mio racconto nè puzzo nè bruciaticcio. Finalmente, un sabato sera, aprendo per la strada, al lume rosso del gas, il giornale, vidi la figura d'un cipiglioso leone in mezzo a ciuffi d'erbe a punta e, in fondo a una colonna, il mio nome e cognome. Son passati, da quella sera, trentacinque anni — la metà d'una vita — eppure mi ricordo ancora il caldo che

mi sali al viso e l'ondata, mista di pudore e di trionfo, che mi riempi il quindicenne cuore.

Per un pezzo lasciai in riposo i tipografi. Ma nel 1898 entrai, con penne tutte mie, nella congregazione degli scrittori stampati. Per un numero unico sulla morte di Cavallotti — compilato dal futuro romanziere Giuseppe Brunati — feci un articolo dove si parlava, nientemeno, dell'Agatodemon e di Andrea Chenier, e alla fine dello stesso anno, in un altro numero unico messo insieme dagli studenti, pubblicai uno scritto sulla "Poesia del Natale" dov'era conciato in mal modo l'inno del Manzoni.

Stroncatura e Natività di Cristo: germi e presagi. Tutto l'uomo è nell'adolescente come tutto l'albero è già nel seme.

## I FIORI

Novella

di Salvator Gotta

**Salvator Gotta, nato in Piemonte nel 1887, a differenza dei suoi colleghi i quali pubblicano libri di poesia, biografia, romanzi e critica estetica, è uno dei pochi scrittori italiani la cui produzione letteraria consiste di sole opere narrative e di qualche dramma. Il bagaglio letterario di Gotta comprende una dozzina di romanzi appartenenti tutti al Ciclo de "I Vela," sei volumi di novelle e quattro lavori drammatici. Il Gotta ha ricevuto la definizione da un suo critico, di medico sociale. Egli ha voluto mostrare, continua lo stesso critico, i facili precipizi che si inabissano sotto le famiglie moderne dove non vegliano le lampade della morale.**

—Chi?

—La baronessa Anna Bolati.

—Ma ti ha detto proprio questo nome? Sei ben sicura?

—Anna Bolati, sì.

—Una signora alta, bruna.....

—Alta e bionda.

—Una volta era bruna.

—Ma adesso è bionda..... ossigenata.

—Ah!

—E anche molto dipinta in faccia.

Pare una bambola: una bambola di quarant'anni.

—Le hai detto che sono in casa?

—No.

—Brava! Ora vai a dirle.....

—Che cosa?

—Che aspetti, che aspetti.

**L**A cameriera uscì dallo studio e Lorenzo Guarena corse da sua madre; la trovò nella veranda, seduta accanto a Pina ed a Flora. La notizia data così d'improvviso, produsse un effetto immediato di iroso sgomento nelle tre donne. Pina e Flora — due vecchie signorine l'una di quarantacinque anni l'altra di trentotto — si ribellarono subito, aspramente:

—Non la devi ricevere.

—Dopo vent'anni si fa viva! Perché?

Per quale scopo? Un capriccio, certo: farti del male ancora, Lorenzo.

—Per vent'anni ci ha ignorati: si è vergognata di noi come di tutti gli altri suoi parenti poveri.

—Che cosa viene a fare? Che cosa vuole?

—Non lo so. Ma mi pare difficile non riceverla. Dopo tutto..... Tu, mam-

ma, che ne dici?

La vecchia signora, rigida nella sua persona austera e signorile rispose, calma: — Bisogna riceverla.

Pina e Flora chinarono il capo sul loro cucito e non aggiunsero più verbo. Lorenzo tornò nel suo studio, incerto, ancora incredulo, un poco intontito. Quando prese dalla scrivania il ritratto di Anna giovinetta e lo guardò quasi per stamparsi nella memoria il volto sempre veduto lì sulla scrivania e sempre pensato così pallido, segnato di folte ombre nelle occhiaie grandi, provocante nella turgida bocca giovane, incorniciato di densi capetti corvini, gli tremarono le mani. Chiuse la fotografia in un cassetto, perchè quella che doveva entrare lì nello studio, quella che gli aveva mentito e l'aveva illuso e deluso fino alla disperazione, la moglie del ricchissimo barone Franco Bolati, non doveva ora sapere d'essere stata ricordata da lui con tanta insistenza di accorato dolore.

—Venga, venga pure. Maria, fai entrare la baronessa. Oh chi vedo!... chi..

—Lorenzo! Scommetto che non mi riconosci più! Lorenzo! Che piacere rivederti! Non è un capriccio, credi. Come stai! Fatti vedere! Sei quasi immutato! Ti stanno bene i capelli grigi sulle tempie. Quanti anni sono passati, di? La colpa è mia? No, la colpa è del destino. Da tanti anni desidero venirti a cercare quassù nel tuo bel romitorio. Hai una magnifica casa; l'ho ammirato anche di fuori. E che vista!

Il Monte Bianco, come si vede bene! Dimmi! Dimmi!

Gli teneva le mani. Sedettero accanto, sul divano. Egli continuava a fissarla, stupito. Era una bella signora, elegante e profumata, bionda e colorita in volto, formosa. Ma non era Anna. Gli venne quasi voglia di ridere. Anna si era nascosta nel cassetto, sdegnosa come allora, un poco aspra e beffarda, timida nei moti di tenerezza, franca di giovanile audacia negli slanci istintivi della passione. Veramente Lorenzo ora ebbe voglia di ridere per effetto della troppa differenza.

—Mi sono decisa a venirti a cercare quassù, tutt'a un tratto, ieri sera. Franco e i figliuoli sono a Stresa. Io sono andata a Torino per provarmi dei vestiti. E stamane sono partita in macchina proprio con lo scopo preciso di venirti a cercare. Tua madre, le tue sorelle stanno bene?

—Sì, bene. Ora le chiamo.

—Sono qui? — La signora non seppe celare un piccolo moto di noia. — Le credevo già tornate a Torino.

—Da qualche anno stanno sempre qui con me, anche d'inverno. Non abbiamo più casa a Torino.

—Io sono discesa all'*Hotel Royal*. Sono l'unica ospite nell'albergo, pensa.

—La stagione qui è finita. Ai primi di settembre i villeggianti partono tutti.

—Ma io non conto fermarmi che tre o quattro giorni.

—Ecco mia madre. Ed ecco Pina e Flora.

**D**URANTE la colazione e nelle due ore pomeridiane che trascorse in casa dei suoi parenti Guarena, Anna parlò molto, con la cordialità un poco eccessiva di chi si sente a disagio e vuole stordirsi per sfuggire all'avvilimento provocatogli dalla malcelata diffidenza de' suoi ospiti.

Ma il mutismo nemico delle due zittelle, la rassegnata bontà di Lorenzo e la fredda cortesia di donna Elisa, fi-

nirono per vincere l'inutile sforzo di Anna, che cedette a una malinconia greve di inesorabilità.

Guardando, oltre le ampie vetrate della veranda, la valle chiusa dalle incombenti montagne nere di pini, sbarbata in fondo dalla glaciale immensità del Monte Bianco, senti salirle nell'anima tutti i ricordi del passato lontano: di quando chiamava "mamma" la zia Elisa e Lorenzo le cresceva accanto nella grande villa di San Vito, fasciandola del suo amore morbido e tenace, assoluto di devozione, ligio di fedeltà, quasi femineo di tenerezza. Allora — prima del dissesto finanziario — i Guarena erano ricchissimi.

—Anna, io debbo andare.

—Dove, Lorenzo?

—A visitare i miei ammalati,

—E sco anch'io. M'accompagni prima all'albergo?

Uscirono insieme. Era una giornata di fine settembre, già fredda. Nella conca Verde, al di qua e al di là del fiume, il villaggio alpino si stendeva con l'irregolarità civettuola delle sue piccole case chiare dai tetti scuri d'ardesia.

Lorenzo disse subito:

—Ci devi scusare, Anna, se non ti abbiamo saputo accogliere con quella cordialità che ti aspettavi, forse. Non vediamo mai nessuno; ci siamo chiusi in noi stessi, come eremiti. Dopo la sciagura, la mamma non l'ho vista ridere più; Pina e Flora intristiscono in questo squallore di montagne. Ed io.....

—E tu perchè, Lorenzo, persisti nel voler rimanere quassù?

—Io mi sono affezionato a questo paese, a questa gente rozza e sincera che mi ha accolto con bontà quando la sciagura si è abbattuta sulla mia casa. Amo il mio lavoro; lo considero di più che un lavoro: una missione.

Anna trasse un sospiro e s'appoggiò al braccio di lui, stancamente:

—Qui l'inverno quanto dura? Da ottobre a giugno, immagino. Dev'essere terribile. Neve e neve.....

—La neve copre tutto, fascia tutto: un manto bianco, uguale di silenzio solenne.

—Dev'essere terribile.

—No! Il mese più terribile è questo:

il settembre. Ai primi di settembre, tutti gli alberghi si svuotano. La gente che in agosto affolla alberghi, ville, case, tuguri, e si accalca in tutte le strade, anima di vivaci colori i prati, si sperde in tutti i recessi più nascosti, la incontra ovunque, in montagna, a valle, rumorosa, festosa di voci, di musiche, di danze, di canti, di giochi, questa gente ai primi di settembre se ne va via tutta, quasi ossessionata da una paura: fuggire!

—Lorenzo! Senti, Lorenzo, io sono venuta apposta per indurti a tornare laggiù. — La voce le tremava di pena forse sincera. — Non ti ho dimenticato mai, Lorenzo. So di averti fatto del male. E vorrei tanto ripagarti, adesso... Bisogna che tu mi creda, bisogna che tu mi perdoni.

Egli fece un sorriso buono e mestissimo; ma non rispose. Continuò poco dopo, seguendo il suo pensiero:

—Ti dicevo dunque... che questo mese di settembre per me è terribile. Gli alberghi restano ancora aperti per il riordinamento e la pulizia. Ma che squallore! Eccone uno. Vedi? Un mese fa, codesto cortile era sempre gremito. Tante e tante fanciulle! Non ridi, vero, se ti confesso che io resisto a vivere quassù dieci mesi d'inverno per attendere quei due mesi di estate in cui il paese si trasforma e mi appare quasi avvivato da una meravigliosa fioritura di giovinezza? La giovinezza, Anna! Che dono! Io non vivo la vita degli alberghi, non faccio conoscenze coi forestieri. Io sono il medico del paese: io lavoro. Ma vedo, osservo, sento e godo. Ecco lì un *Tennis*. Un mese fa era continuamente animato di giovani donne in vesti chiare, che giocavano. Mi sono fermato spesso con le mani aggrappate a questa griglia a seguire i movimenti rapidi di quelle creature. Una ti somigliava: somigliava all'Anna di allora.

—Basta, basta, Lorenzo!

—Lasciami dire! Non ti deve offendere questa mia sincerità. Perchè? Io sono rimasto fermo, con l'anima, al punto in cui tu mi hai abbandonato. E non sono infelice come tu pensi. Ho imparato a godere, standone lontano,

lo spettacolo della giovinezza femminile come si gode la vista di un giardino fiorito di cui non si devono toccare i fiori per non sciuparli. Qui la giovinezza fiorisce solo due mesi all'anno. Ma in quei due mesi che meraviglia, che festa di colori, che ebbrezza di profumi! Vedi quel salone ora deserto? Lo ricordo pieno di fanciulle che ridono, danzano, vanno e vengono accaldate. E qui davanti l'Ufficio Postale, a fronte, tenendosi a braccetto, nell'ora della distribuzione, quante, quante! Ogni anno cambiano. Raramente rivedo le stesse facce. Oppure tornato, ma sposate, invecchiate, mutate; e allora non mi interessano più. Ogni anno che passa, manda la sua nuova fioritura. Esili spalle magre di giovinezza, bocche come petali rossi, occhi vivi di gioia spensierata, capelli fluenti su le spalle, piccoli seni in boccio, volti color della rosa carnicina o della rosa thea.

Ora il volto truccato di Anna s'era animato d'un'espressione cattiva; ai lati della sua bocca appassita, una rete di rughe sottili apparve più evidente nella contrazione del riso beffardo:

—Ah! Ah! E non hai saputo ancora scegliere uno di questi fiori e portartelo a casa, per la tua gioia?

—Per la mia gioia, avrei colto un magnifico fiore di magnolia dai pallidi petali carnosi, così profumato entro l'abisso buio del suo calice, da provarne le vertigini. Ma.....

—Ti è mancato il coraggio o non hai fatto in tempo.....

—Per fortuna! L'avrei sciupato anch'io..... troppo presto.

Ma tacque subito, stupito d'aver tanto osato. Quella povera vendetta di parole, doveva rimordergli l'anima, poi, per giorni e giorni interi, d'inverno.

Anna ripartì quella sera stessa, nemica. Lorenzo stette fermo in mezzo la strada a salutarla, finchè la macchina non scomparve alla sua vista. Ritornò a casa, che annottava. Nelle viuzze silenziose del villaggio, incontrò un vecchio curvo che lo salutò e gli disse:

—Buon riposo, dottore! Il cielo si è guastato. Domattina avremo la sorpresa della prima neve: le gambe non mi reggono più.

## DESTINO DI SCRITTORE

di Carlo Linati

Nella pagina dei libri del mese, il lettore troverà un'analisi critica delle opere di Carlo Linati. Qui basta dire che egli è nato a Como 55 anni fa e che oltre ad aver stampato una ventina di volumi di prose narrative egli è anche uno dei più costanti divulgatori della letteratura contemporanea Anglo-americana. Lo scritto che ripubblichiamo qui sotto fa parte dell'ultimo volume del Linati: "Le Pianelle del Signore." Italo Svevo di cui Linati rievoca la strana rivelazione letteraria, è oggi considerato uno dei più originali scrittori dell'Italia moderna. Dei suoi 4 libri ("Una Vita" "Senilità" "La Coscienza di Zeno" e "La Novella del Buon Vecchio") il terzo è stato, un paio d'anni fa, tradotto e pubblicato in inglese. Svevo è morto a 67 anni, nel 1928.

NEGLI anni dal '26 al '28, che fu poi l'anno della sua morte tragica, Italo Svevo, durante le sue rade peregrinazioni per l'Europa, toccava qualche

volta anche Milano. Ci veniva, credo, per affari e spesso per svago insieme alla sua graziosa signora.

Non credo che la città gli piacesse

molto ma ci aveva un gruppetto di amici e di fedeli ammiratori coi quali si compiaceva di trascorrere qualche ora in arguta conversazione. Il luogo di ritrovo era di solito il "Convegno," il circolo intellettuale di via Borgospesso dove per la prima volta s'era fatto il suo nome in una piccola cerchia di scrittori lombardi, e ricercati con ansia i suoi libri.

Ricordo quel giorno. Giuseppe Prezolini che poco tempo prima aveva partecipato a Parigi ad un pranzo del *Pen Club*, ritrovandosi a discorrere con uno di quei magnati delle letterature europee, con James Joyce, che le conosce tutte e parla una diecina di lingue, questi lo aveva assicurato che noialtri

italiani possedevamo un vero, un grande scrittore e che forse non ce lo sapevamo neppure.

—E chi sarebbe?

—Italo Svevo.

—Difatti, mai sentito nominare, — soggiunse l'ex-direttore della *Voce*. E, con quella commendatizia, era piombato fra noi a rivelarci la mirabolante scoperta.

Furono frugati tutti gli scaffali della biblioteca del Circolo, ricca di parecchie migliaia di volumi moderni, furono battute in lungo e in largo tutte le librerie cittadine, ma nessuna opera e nessun cenno di Italo Svevo saltò fuori. Il caso cominciava a diventare interessante. Fu bandita una vera caccia all'Ignoto, e giovani scrittori, con quell'ardore fanatico che suol assumere tal genia di banditi quando si tratta di rintracciare uno sconosciuto raccomandato da un grande, si sguinzagliarono sulle pubbliche e private raccolte della città, frugarono, interrogarono, si disperarono: ma la battuta rimase senza risultato.

QUANDO un bel giorno capitò fra noi il poeta Eugenio Montale col volumetto di "Senilità" di Italo Svevo. Era la prima edizione di questo romanzo, pubblicato nel 1898 della libreria di Ettore Vram. Dove l'aveva pescato? Non ce lo volle dire. Anzi si accontentò di farcene vedere al di fuori la copertina e il frontespizio, e si tenne muto sul resto. Era evidente ch'egli voleva assumersi tutto per sé il vanto della mirabolante scoperta. Si mise in tasca il libricino e andò a scrivere il primo articolo italiano su Italo Svevo.

Fu soltanto qualche tempo dopo ch'io ebbi il piacere di conoscere Italo Svevo di persona. La sua figura mi fece una strana impressione. Com'era lontano dal tipo dei letterati italiani quell'ometto sessantenne, tarchiato, un pò panciutello, bonario, senza presunzione, e con una bella testa ampia, rapata e solida nella cui faccia vivevano due occhi che parevano la sede naturale dell'arguzia e dell'intelligenza. Parlava lento e preciso, con una voce calda, bassa, un pò come un tedesco che discorresse in italiano, ma una insolita ironia e finezza era spesso in ciò ch'egli diceva. Che fosse stato industriale, si sapeva: ci era stato riferito ch'egli si occupava di "pittura sottomarina," e cioè di un sistema brevettato per dipingere lo scafo delle navi anche quando stavano sott'acqua; ma non avendo ancora letto il suo primo romanzo "Una Vita," dove aveva ritratto la sua esistenza di quei tempi, non sapevamo quel che ci narrò poi ch'era figlio di padre buon patriota e irredento e ch'egli stesso aveva passato gli anni della sua giovinezza come piccolo impiegato alla Sede Triestina della Banca Union, e che i suoi studi li aveva fatti all'Istituto Superiore di Commercio. Da venticinque anni non scriveva più, scoraggiato dall'insuccesso del suo primo romanzo.

Del resto parlava poco di sé e con ironia scherzosa prendendosi in giro come un vecchio rudere che non servisse più a niente. Però in quell'epoca cominciava a sperare di esser letto. Articoli qua e là in Italia e in Francia e il nostro stesso fervore lo andavano

incoraggiando. Ma si sentiva ormai troppo vecchio per inebriarsi di quel caloroso riconoscimento che gli veniva troppo tardi, dopo averlo atteso tanto e invano. La letteratura è sempre novicia, — mi disse, — ma a 62 anni è addirittura pericolosa. — Tuttavia sembrava felice. E quante cose non mi raccontò quel giorno, seduti nelle poltrone del Circolo e poi, fuori, passeggiando per le strade di Milano verso sera! Italo Svevo era un amabile *causeur*. Aveva il discorso dell'uomo viaggiato e meditato sulla vita e sugli uomini, ed ha un frizzo per ogni cosa, ma alla fine così bonario: una natura avrei detto a tipo manzoniano. Parlammo a lungo di scrittori inglesi e di tendenze d'avanguardia. Aveva una grande adorazione soprattutto per James Joyce ch'era stato fino a qualche tempo prima il suo maestro d'inglese quando ancora viveva miseramente a Trieste, prima della pubblicazione dell'*Ulysses*. Di lui non la finiva più di raccontarmi la larga bontà dell'animo, l'integrità del carattere, l'intelligenza veramente mondiale.

E adesso, beato lui, vive in un grazioso appartamento in Parigi e belle donne lo vanno a visitare. Ma contrariamente a leggende, le dirò che Joyce è ottimo padre ed ottimo marito. Di più, sa che ha una bella voce di tenore e una memoria di ferro? Conosce a memoria delle pagine intere di "Senilità." Già, ma allora, a Trieste, era un povero maestrucolo d'inglese, che campava alla meglio.... Le voglio raccontare, — proseguì dopo un istante, — il buffo arrivo di Joyce a Trieste quando vi giunse la prima volta, tempo fa, dall'Inghilterra, da cui aveva dovuto partire in seguito alla soppressione di "Dubliners." Aveva con sé la moglie ed erano senza un soldo, cosicchè appena sbarcato, Joyce si affrettò a far un giro pei quartieri popolari per vedere di trovarvi un alloggetto di poca spesa ove impiantare i suoi miseri penati. Ma ecco che arrivato su un crocevia si imbatte in un crocchio di persone che gridano e gesticolano disputando fra loro. Joyce s'avvicina. Sono dei marinai inglesi che discutono vivacemente con dei gendarmi della polizia cittadina. Parola di qua, proteste di là, ma i due gruppi non s'intendono per nulla. Joyce allora si propone di farla da interprete e da paciere, e richiamandosi alla memoria quel poco d'italiano che aveva appreso di sui nostri classici, si avvanza e interloquisce i gendarmi con un terribile: — Messeri!... —Ma i gendarmi, credendosi insultati da quella parola che non capivano, agguantano Joyce, lo arrestano e lo portano in guardina e ci volle poi del bello e del buono a persuadere il viceconsole, che allora era un greco, delle oneste intenzioni dello scrittore, e a rilasciarlo.

Saputo ch'io son di Como, Svevo mi dice che vorrebbe stabilirsi per qualche tempo in quella vecchia e queta città per tradurvi la *Walpurgisnacht* dell'*Ulysses*.

—Che ne dice lei? — esclama volgendomi a me il viso a cui le arcate sopraccigliari fortemente rialzate danno nell'interrogazione l'aspetto di un viso di bonzo cinese.

Declino graziosamente l'offerta.

—Troppo difficile, Svevo. E poi, val la pena?

Passeggiando più tardi per via Manzoni affollata di gente, tra il furore della strada e il chiasso delle botteghe illuminate, gli chiedo il perchè del poco successo ottenuto dai suoi romanzi in Italia. Non me lo sa dire, ma mi mette al corrente di tutte le sue disavventure editoriali. — Treves ha rifiutato di ristampare "Senilità" e Mondadori pure: l'editore Cappelli, per ristamparla, chiede cinquemila lire. Ah, amico mio, sono proprio un povero "epavee" Torno, torno al violino. — E qui mi narrò come da giovine, per rimettersi dall'ugioso lavoro d'ufficio, a Trieste o a Londra, non potendo dedicarsi al piacere dello scrivere perchè bastava un solo rigo per renderlo meno adatto al lavoro pratico a cui giornalmente doveva attendere, trovò modo di occupare quelle ore con lo studio del violino, e finì a scovare un posto di secondo violino in un quartetto di buoni dilettanti. Poi parlammo della lingua nei suoi romanzi.

—E' un pò rude, lo so, scabra, poco italiana, — mi confessò. — Ebbene, che vuol che le dica, io non posso scrivere che in una lingua che sento profondamente mia, e la lingua ch'io sento profondamente mia non è nè il tedesco nè l'italiano, è il triestino.

Adesso, a parecchi anni da quella confidenza, mi piacerebbe sapere quanto fosse di vero in quell'asserzione. Certo gli scrittori e gli artisti che vivono a Trieste, in quel punto di sutura tra la civiltà slava, la tedesca e l'italiana, hanno sempre risentito di un certo particolarismo stilistico, e la città, crogiolo assimilatore di elementi eterogenei, doveva offrire allo scrittore raffinato la seduzione di nuovi modi e di nuovi accenti. Eppure, anche così asciutta, la sua forma e così irta di locuzioni bisbetiche, così antiletteraria, bisogna convenirne, ha in sé una forza di chiarezza e una efficacia rappresentativa che spesso prose ad essa superiori per potenza espressiva non hanno. E ancor una volta in presenza di così felice risultato saremmo tentati di buttar a mare tutti i nostri paradimmi di bello scrivere, che poi spesso non conducono che a vacue eleganze.

DA allora il nome dello scrittore si propagò rapidamente. La pubblicazione di *Navire d'Argent* che dedicò tutto un intero numero all'opera e alla figura dello scrittore triestino, i sinceri elogi di Valery Larbaud e di Benjamin Cremieux e poi, dopo la sua morte, gli articoli, le discussioni e interi numeri di riviste italiane dedicate a lui, portarono ad una maggior comprensione della sua opera, suscitavano un vero entusiasmo fra i giovani.

Ma il suo destino di scrittore rimane pur sempre un tragico enigma. E come difficile e contesa gli era arrivata la fama durante gli ultimi anni quando oramai la stanchezza lo rendeva incapace di gustarla, così toccò alla morte di crearli intorno quella gloria a cui gli davano diritto il suo nobile ingegno e la grande, esemplare probità del suo lavoro.

# IL FIDANZATO IMMAGINARIO

Novella

di Carola Prospero

SICCOME questa storia che so e che voglio raccontare è una storia poetica sentimentale, tutti coloro i quali non credono alla timidezza degli uomini, nè alla fedeltà delle donne; tutti quelli che disprezzano le illusioni e non s'interessano ai sogni delle ragazze, facciano il piacere di non incominciare nemmeno. Perchè questa è soltanto la storia di una fanciulla. Una signorina di provincia. Una signorina delicata, dalle mani bianche, che portava sempre delle vesti molto lunghe e aveva una testolina chiara, con tanti capelli di seta che formavano come una nebbiolina d'oro sulla fronte, lasciando scoperte le tempie fini ricamate di piccole vene verdazzurre. Il resto del viso non so più bene come fosse, certo doveva essere grazioso e commovente come una pittura un pò svanita. Questa signorina si chiamava Romilda, stava nella strada provinciale del paese, in una casa che tutti chiamavano ancora la casa del notaio, quantunque il notaio, il nonno di Romilda, fosse morto da gran tempo. Anche il papà e anche la mamma erano morti, il fratello aveva preso moglie e si era stabilito in una gran città; nella casa del notaio, Romilda viveva con la sorella maggiore, che si chiamava Adelaide. Questa signorina Adelaide rassomigliava moltissimo a Romilda, soltanto che invece di avere sulla fronte una nebbiolina d'oro, l'aveva d'argento e le sue tempie invece di essere ricamate di vene verdazzurre erano rugose e incavate come petali di rosa avvizziti. Nonostante la differenza d'età, le due sorelle vestivano sempre egualmente, con lunghe gonne color violetto o marrone, andavano in chiesa due volte al giorno e il resto del tempo lo passavano nel salotto del pianterreno, davanti al loro tavolino da lavoro, accanto alla finestra. In quella stanza tappezzata di rosso scuro, con un pianoforte scordato che nessuno suonava più da tempo memorabile, con una raccolta di vecchi giornali di moda su di un tavolino d'angolo, e di ritratti di famiglia sul camino, nelle loro cornici di velluto, accanto al pendolo, la mamma e la nonna delle due signorine e forse molte altre donne ancora avevano passato tutti i monotoni giorni della loro lunga vita provinciale, sedute al tavolino da lavoro, alzando ogni tanto il capo a guardare la poca gente che passava per andare alla chiesa vicina o nella farmacia di faccia, e contemplando con viso smorto, nelle eterne giornate di pioggia, le macchie d'umido del muro di rimpetto. Adesso la signorina Adelaide e la signorina Romilda facevano le stesse cose. Però, loro, una distrazione l'avevano; tutte le sere il figlio del farmacista veniva a trovarle!.... Era un gran buon giovinotto quel figliuolo del farmacista, quieto, modesto, religioso, pieno di rispetto e di riguardi: sfregava mezz'ora le scarpe sulla stuoia prima d'entrare, dava con un garbo speciale il cappello e il soprabito alla servetta, poi si ag-

giustava le lenti sul naso e si avanzava nel salotto, tenendo in mano ora un pacchetto di caramelle d'orzo, ora una scatoletta di pastiglie per la tosse, sempre, insomma, qualche galanteria. E tutte le sere, tutte le sere.....

Già si sa che cosa vuol dire un'assiduità simile. In provincia poi!.... C'eran delle vecchie amiche che alla messa, dopo il Vangelo, mettendosi a sedere, rialzavano un poco la veletta e bisbigliavano all'orecchio della signorina Adelaide:

—Possiamo dunque rallegrarci?.....

Certo, egli era innamorato della signorina Romilda. Ma con tante buone qualità, aveva un difetto, enorme, date le circostanze, era timido, ma timido! timido fino a diventare ridicolo. Qualche volta la signorina Adelaide era uscita dal salotto con una scusa o con un'altra per lasciarlo solo con la sorella e provare se avrebbe approfittato di quel momento di libertà per spiattellare la sua brava dichiarazione, ma rientrando l'aveva sempre trovato seduto allo stesso posto a rispettosa distanza da Romilda, silenzioso, rosso, inquieto, guardando la porta con aria ansiosa, quasi invocando il suo ritorno. Altre volte era uscita Romilda, e la signorina Adelaide aveva tentato d'interrogarlo abilmente per incoraggiarlo a confidarsi in lei, ma allora egli si levava le lenti, cominciava a nettarle col fazzoletto, freneticamente, come se quella fosse l'occupazione più importante della sua vita e intanto i suoi occhi di miope, chiari e a fior di testa, giravano giravano disperatamente intorno come in cerca di una via d'uscita.

—No — disse una sera, andando a letto, la signorina Adelaide, mentre si abbottonava diligentemente il colletto della camicia da notte — no, quell'uomo non si deciderà mai a parlare e passerà la sua vita in casa nostra a sospirare, a guardarti quanto tu non lo guardi e a offrirci delle caramelle d'orzo. Eppure così non si può andare avanti!

ROMILDA, già coricata, con un braccio sotto il capo e gli occhi languidi di noia e di sogni, alzò le spalle.

—Per me! — ella disse — se non fosse per la gente.....

Ma la signorina Adelaide non si preoccupava solo della gente. Nelle lunghe ore delle sue notti insonni ella pensava che un giorno, forse tardi, forse presto, sarebbe morta, e questo non era nulla, perchè ella aveva molta fede nell'indomani della morte, ma Romilda sarebbe rimasta sola nella casa del notaio, a vivere i monotoni giorni di una lunga vita, senza amore, senza figli e questo la turbava e la faceva piangere amare lacrime. Se il figliuolo del farmacista avesse avuto ancora la madre viva, tutto si sarebbe risolto facilmente, perchè tra donne, tra madri ci s'intende sempre, ma la poveretta era morta da un pezzo ed egli viveva soltanto col padre, un vecchio bisbetico

e brontolone e con una serva anziana e arcigna che non apriva mai bocca, neanche per parlar male dei padroni. Dunque bisognava pensare ad altro, rivolgersi altrove, confidarsi con qualcuno che non fosse la solita gente pettegola ed invidiosa.... Qui la signorina Adelaide si ricordò opportunamente della sua amica Candida e soffocò un grido di gioia. Bisogna sapere che l'amicizia di questa Candida era stata una gran luce nella giovinezza della signorina Adelaide. Candida era piena di poesia e di immaginazione, declamava a meraviglia, e scriveva in un modo straordinario. Per lungo tempo aveva detto che voleva studiare recitazione, per andare sulle scene e diventare una grande artista, poi aveva sentito irresistibile la vocazione della letteratura e aveva riempito parecchi quaderni di versi e di prose riuscendo perfino a far pubblicare un bozzetto su di un giornale illustrato. Dopo di che aveva sposato un fotografo, era andata con lui, da una città di provincia all'altra, ed ora era stabilita lontano, con una mezza dozzina di figliuoli, i capelli grigi, le rughe sulle tempie anche lei e addosso tutti i guai della sua lunga lotta per la vita. Ma era sempre Candida — lo si sentiva le poche volte che scriveva — sempre piena di poesia e d'immaginazione!

LA signorina Adelaide scrisse a lei, per chiederle consiglio e la risposta arrivò quasi subito, in un letterone con francobollo doppio — sempre grandiosa Candida! — che conteneva pure una fotografia. La fotografia era quella di un elegante sconosciuto, un bel volto regolare ed espressivo con la bocca amorosa e gli occhi sentimentali e portava sotto un nome romantico: Renato, in calligrafia slanciata. La lettera poi conteneva tutto un romanzo: bisognava fingere che Romilda era stata chiesta in matrimonio da un giovane signore che l'aveva vista una volta bambina e mai dimenticata, e domandare a lui, al figlio del farmacista, amico intimo della famiglia, consiglio sul da farsi. La paura di perderla, la figura del rivale, il pericolo imminente, la gelosia improvvisa, tutto ciò avrebbe combinato un tale insieme esplosivo da fulminare sull'istante la timidezza inopportuna dell'innamorato, dandogli invece un coraggio da leone. Mandava anche il ritratto. Candida l'aveva trovato in fondo ad un cassetto nello studio del marito. Chissà chi era il signore fotografato e dov'era!.... Ella lo aveva anche battezzato: Renato. Renato Delmare. Non era un bel nome?.... A leggere tutte queste bizzarrie Romilda rideva un poco nervosamente e la signorina Adelaide esclamava ammirata: — Sempre piena di fantasia quella Candida!

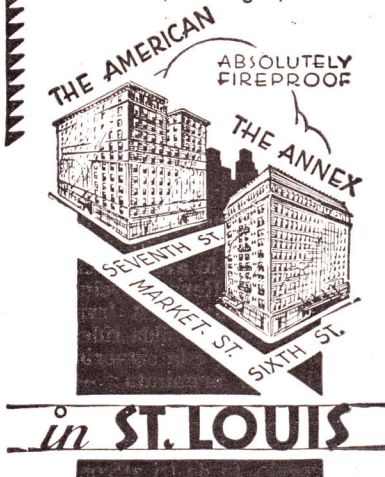
L'ingenuo figliuolo del farmacista che era certo lungi dall'aspettarsi un simile regalo, fu da lei affrontato quella stessa sera, mentre Romilda si era già pudicamente ritirata nella camera

da letto. Con grande sforzo, poichè la bugia le costava fatica anche detta a fin di bene, la povera signorina spifferò il suo romanzetto mescolandolo a molte pause e a parecchi sospiri significativi e interrogativi e poi aspettò a occhi bassi il risultato, lo scoppio della bomba. Il giovanotto turbatissimo, ascoltò in silenzio, arrossendo e impallidendo a volta a volta, tossì parecchie volte con la mano davanti alla bocca, levò le lenti, se le rimise, balbettò qualche parola: che lui proprio non era in grado di dare un consiglio..... che non avrebbe mai osato intromettersi..... che non sapeva..... e finì con l'alzarsi, dimostrando una gran fretta di scappare.



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—Credevo — disse la signorina Adelaide per vibrare l'ultimo colpo a quella sciagurata timidezza — credevo che l'avvenire di mia sorella l'interessasse un poco.....

Egli fece parecchi cenni col capo, diventò rosso come un tacchino e infilò la porta.

—Mi raccomando! — esclamò la signorina seguendolo fin nell'entrata — è un segreto..... Le ho confidato un segreto: non se ne dimentichi!

Il giovanotto si mise una mano sul petto, gravemente, e se ne andò, inceppicando.

LA signorina Adelaide rimase perplessa. Certo, la bomba non era scoppiata, ma avrebbe potuto scoppiare l'indomani tanto più che per tutta la notte — ella potè osservarlo — la finestra della sua stanza là dirimpetto rimase illuminata.

Ma la timidezza del figliuolo del farmacista era di una resistenza a tutta prova e niente poteva vincerla. Egli diradò le sue visite, mostrandosi ogni volta un pò più pallido, un pò più consumato da quell'interno logorio amoroso e Romilda, invece di sentirne pietà, provava quasi un'irritazione nuova contro di lui, un'ostilità sorda, un fastidio che la rendeva fredda e un pochino crudele. Ella aveva il ritratto di "Renato" a portata di mano, ella teneva nel cestino da lavoro le lettere d'amore che Candida le scriveva ricopiandole dai suoi vecchi quaderni di fanciulla, ella ne parlava qualche volta al giovanotto come se volesse farsene un confidente. E mentre Adelaide si faceva triste e scura, chinando la fronte sul lavoro, Romilda rideva del suo riso nervoso, e ad ogni proposito parlava di "Renato," osservava — Che cosa direbbe di questo Renato?

Il fidanzato immaginario era sempre lì, nel salotto, fra di loro, poi a poco a poco invase tutta la casa. Romilda finiva per scherzo di parlarne sempre, perfino quando si vestiva per uscire, domandando alla sorella:

—Ti pare che questo cappellino possa piacere a Renato?

Adelaide ci soffriva, tanto più che il figlio del farmacista non veniva quasi più, e in lunghe lettere si sfogava con l'amica lontana. Candida giudicò allora necessario mutare la situazione con una risoluzione energica: il fidanzato doveva morire e lasciare di nuovo il campo libero. Romilda alla notizia si mise a ridere più che mai e a battere le mani, ma Adelaide rimase tutta smarrita.

—Ah, le bugie non portano mai fortuna!..... — ella sospirò. — In fondo, non è stata una bella idea.....

—Che faccia da funerale fai!..... esclamava Romilda. — Proprio adatta alla circostanza..... Invece, vedrai come io reciterò bene! Sarà un divertimento.

Quella finzione ella si divertiva come una bimba. Si mise un lungo vestito nero, atteggiò il visino ad una grande mestizia e quando il giovanotto venne, dopo averla vista così ab-

brunata attraverso i vetri della finestra, essa gli diede la notizia, tutta compunta. Egli sospirò, diventò rosso, gonfiò il collo come se dovesse dire chissà che cosa, e, pensando che bisognava rispettare un così grande dolore, non trovò di meglio che balbettare:

—Le mie..... più vive..... condoglianze.....

E se ne andò in gran furia. Ah che divertimento per Romilda!..... Ella corse a buttarsi sul canapè, con la bocca sul cuscino, per soffocare le risse.

—Cara mia! — disse poi alla sorella.

—Quello non lo decide neanche il terremoto!.....

Ella prese il ritratto del fidanzato immaginario e lo guardò a lungo.

—Tu sei meglio, sai..... — gli disse, teneramente, con voce calda e velata e curvandosi lentamente baciò la bocca della bella immagine. Poi mise il ritratto in una cornice di velluto nero, l'appese alla parete, sotto una mensole ornata di fiori, in modo che ella poteva sempre vederlo ogni volta che alzava il capo dal lavoro. E l'alzava ogni momento e lo guardava a lungo, a lungo, fantasticando. Qualche volta leggeva anche le lettere d'amore che teneva nel panierino da lavoro e allora si faceva più pensosa e non rideva più e aveva sempre, senza rendersene conto, l'atteggiamento di una che non si consolerà mai.....

Chi si consolò fu il figlio del farmacista, che sposò dopo qualche anno una sua cugina robusta e danarosa e che invecchiando diventò tanto simile a suo padre che tutti lo scambiavano per lui. La povera signorina Adelaide morì di polmonite acuta un inverno più rigido del solito e Romilda rimase sola nella casa del notaio, sola tutti i monotoni giorni della sua vita, vicino alla solita finestra, alzando il viso smorto a contemplare nei giorni di pioggia le macchie d'umido del muro dirimpetto.

Finchè dopo lunghi anni morì anche lei, in un inverno rigido, quando la neve era alta sui campi, intorno al paese.

Di lei nella casa del notaio rimase un ritratto, un poco sbiadito, accanto a quello di Renato, il fidanzato immaginario. Le nipoti, già maritate e madri, quando venivano nella casa del notaio, raccontavano alle loro figliuole che la zia Romilda era stata lunghi anni fidanzata a quel bellissimo giovane e che lui morto era rimasta fedele alla sua memoria tutta la vita. Col tempo la fantastica storia era diventata realtà nella storia della famiglia; e le giovinette l'avrebbero alla loro volta raccontata alle loro figliuole, e per anni e anni di generazione in generazione, finchè la casa del notaio fosse rimasta in piedi, dalle due immagini sbiadite si sarebbe sprigionata verso gli occhi ingenui e i cuori amorosi delle fanciulle intente al racconto, la poesia di quell'amore che era stato soltanto un lungo sogno.



# Dalle Pagine della Letteratura Italiana

## DIAVOLERIE

Di Carlo Gozzi

Una notte della state, nella città di Spalato, otto o dieci di noi ci vestimmo due camicie, l'una per le maniche colle gambe, l'altra per le braccia, con un berrettone bianco in testa e una stanga nelle mani, e scerremmo la città come ombre uscite dall'altro mondo, picchiando agli usci, svegliando chi dormiva con urla, mettendo spavento nelle femmine e nei fanciulli. E perchè usano in quella città di tenere la notte, per il gran bollire, aperte le stalle dei cavalli per refrigerio di quelle bestie, sciogliamo dalle cavezze più di cinquanta cavalli e crosciando con le nostre stanghe li facemmo correre per tutta la città. Il rumore era infernale. Le genti saltavano dai loro tetti, temendo forse una scorreria di Turchi, e gridavano dalle finestre: — Che diavolo è questo? che è là, chi va là? — Gridavano ai sordi: seguivamo il nostro crosciare e il nostro correre. La mattina gli abitanti sbalorditi si narravano l'un l'altro il caso, come un prodigio,

e avevano una briga a rinvenire i loro animali.

(Dalle "Memorie Inutili.")

## AMORE DI MICHELANGELO

Di Ascanio Condivi

In particolare egli amò grandemente la Marchesana di Pescara, del cui divino spirito era innamorato: essendo all'incontro da lei amato svisceratamente; della quale ancor tiene molte lettere d'onesto e dolcissimo amore ripiene, e quali di tal petto uscir solivano; avendo egli altresì scritto a lei più e più sonetti, pieni d'ingegno e dolce desiderio. Ella più volte si mosse di Viterbio ed altri luoghi, dove fosse andata per diporto, e per passare la state, ed a Roma se ne venne, non mossa da altra cagione se non di veder Michelagnolo; ed egli all'incontro tanto amore le portava, che mi ricordo d'averlo sentito dire, che d'altro non si doleva, se non che quando l'andò a vedere nel passare di questa vita, non così le baciò la fronte o la faccia, come baciò la mano.

(Dalla "Vita di Michelangelo.")

## TEMPO PERDUTO

Tra sbadigli studiando il suo latino,  
Chiedeva un signorino:  
— Qual tempo è questo? — al precet-  
tor canuto.

Rispose il precettor: tempo perduto.

Gerardo De Rossi.

## LA CASA DEL PETRARCA

Non è parola che valga a rendere le tinte, con sì delicata e sì ricca varietà digradanti, dell'azzurro e del verde, il color delle nubi e la forma dei colli, che o soli, o appaggiati l'uno all'altro fraternamente, s'abbelliscono con la mutua bellezza; le rapide chine; i dolci declivi; le cime o salenti quasi gradini d'altare magnifico, o ratto levantisi come un pensiero ispirato; i grandi alberi che da lontano appaiono come macchie, da vicino ondeggiano come mare fremente per vento, la pianura che lieta per breve spazio si distende come viandante che posa per ripigliare la via, e le vallette remote che paiono, quasi un angusto sentiero, correre sinuose tra' monti.

La casa del Petrarca volge le spalle a tramontana; ha da mezzogiorno un prospetto assai ampio di piano leggermente ondeggiante, con di fronte un colle non alto, che s'innalza soletto, e par che renda immagine della poesia petrarchesca, solinga e gentilmente pensosa. Laddove l'epopea dell'Alighieri è catena di montagne, l'una sull'altra sorgenti, con ghiacci e verde, nebbia e sereno, ruscelli e torrenti, fiori e foresta; ardue cime e caverne cupamente echeggianti. Da manca a levante, altre case tolgono la vista de' colli, che forse un tempo era libera: e certo, quelli dall'ora erano men poveri e meno ineleganti edifizii; dacchè tuttavia ci rimangono frammenti di stile archiacuto, siccome altrove pe' colli rincontransi tuttavia lapidi e macerie romane. Da ponente a diritta, i poggi sono più presso alla casa, e la allegrano delle lor forme belle; a ponente è l'orto, che avrà allora avuto certamente un più vago disordine che i giardini moderni, e altre piante che i giuggiofi e i fichi d'adesso. A ponente era lo stanzino dello studio, dove il vecchio, inchinando il capo a preghiera, o a meditazione non dissimile dalla preghiera, morì. Grato all'anime meste l'aspetto del sole cadente; grata quell'ora di riposo sereno e stanco, ch'è come augurio di morte placida, consolata da luminose speranze.

Niccolo Tommaseo.

## SUICIDIO

Di Giovanni Papini

Se mi cadrà, un giorno o l'altro, di suicidarmi non voglio dar tante noie a chi mi sta intorno. Andrò colle mie gambe al camposanto, mi farò da me una buca, piuttosto lunga; salterò dentro da me e quando sarò ben in fondo, disteso e accomodato griderò al becchino: Pronto! Butta giù la terra e alla svelta!

(da "Giorni di Festa")

## TRE FAVOLE

### L'USIGNUOLO E IL CUCULO

Già, di zefiro al giocondo  
Susurrare, erasi desta  
Primaver; ed il crin biondo  
S'acconciava, e l'aurea vesta.  
L'aer tepido e sereno,  
De la terra il lieto aspetto  
Già destava a tutti in seno  
Nuovo brio, nuovo diletto.  
Sopra l'erbe e i fior novelli  
Saltellavano gli armenti;  
Ed il bosco, de gli augelli  
Risonava ai bei concenti.  
Con insolita armonia  
Entro il vago stuol canoro  
L'usignuol cantar s'udiva  
Quasi principe del coro  
Le leggiere agili note  
Si soave or lega or parte,  
Che dimostra quanto puote  
La natura sopra l'arte  
Ora lento e placidissimo  
Il bel canto in giù discende;  
Or con volo rapidissimo,  
Gorgheggiando, in alto ascende.  
Tra le frondi ei canta solo;  
Stanno gli altri a udirlo intenti;  
Ed avean sospeso il volo  
Fin l'aurette riverenti.  
Sol s'udia di quando in quando  
In noioso e rauco tuono  
Un cuculo andar tambando  
Il soave amabil suono.  
E lo stridulo romore  
Importun divenne tanto,  
Che del bosco il bel cantore  
A la fin sospese il canto.  
L'importuno augel noioso  
Dispiegando allor le penne,  
Al cantore armonioso  
A posarsi accanto venne  
E con ciglia allor di grave  
Compiacenza e orgoglio piene,  
Disse al musico soave:  
— Quanto mai cantiamo bene! —

L'ignorante ed impudente  
D'accoppiarsi al saggio ha l'arte  
E con lui tenta sovente  
De la gloria essere a parte.

Lorenzo Pignotti.

### LA TARTARUGA

Una terrestre Tartaruga un dì  
Si alzò di buon mattino  
Per finir certi affari d'importanza  
A un miglio di distanza;  
E postasi in cammino,  
Com'è suo stil, si lentamente andò,  
Tante volte per via si soffermò,  
Che in quindici ore, o più  
Avea cinquanta passi appena fatto;  
Quando accortasi a un tratto,  
Non senza meraviglia,  
Che la notte frattanto era già sorta:  
— Oh! come, disse, la giornata è corta!

Clemente Bondi.

### L'ASINO IN MASCHERA

Disse un asino: — Dal mondo  
Voglio anch'io stima e rispetto;  
Ben so come; — e, così detto,  
In gran manto si serrò.  
Indi a' pascoli comparve  
Con tal passo maestoso,  
Che all'incognito vistoso  
Ogni bestia s'inchinò.  
Lasciò i prati, corse al fonte  
E a specchiarsi si trattenne;  
Ma, sventura non contiene  
Il suo giubilo, e ragliò.  
Fu scoperto, e sino al chiuso  
Fu tra' fischi accompagnato,  
E il somaro mascherato  
In proverbio a noi passò.  
Tu, che base del tuo merto  
Veste splendida sol fai,  
Taci ognor; se no, scoperto  
Come l'asino sarai.

Aurelio Bertola.

# Libri Italiani del Mese

**Carlo Linati - "Le pianelle del Signore."** Racconti e paesi. Lanciano: Giuseppe Carabba..... Lire 9.00

**Carlo Linati - "Scrittori Anglo-americani d'oggi."** Milano: Corticelli  
Lire ..... 10.00

In queste *Pianelle del Signore* ritroviamo il Linati che ci è ormai caro da tempo: la sua scioltezza di novellatore e la sua arte squisita di paesista, — nella quale seconda, a parer mio, egli si mostra nella sua vera e più fine vena — sono confermate da questo volume in cui un "paesaggio" s'alterna con un "racconto," dando una impronta originale a tutto il libro. Nel quale egli si mantiene quello scrittore cordiale ch'è sempre stato, intendendo per cordialità in letteratura quel tono puro di lingua, polito, con esatto peso e non meno esatta collocazione del vocabolo, castigatezza di verbo, e tuttavia aperto e franco, senza nulla della scrittura letteraria azzimata, e pertanto con franchezza accogliente al punto che subito ti afferra e ti conquista, senza che te ne accorga. Virtù propria di pochissimi scrittori nostri, i quali solitamente passano da un tono sciatto e corrente ad uno di pura letteratura, in cui scorgi palese lo sforzo della ricerca del vocabolo, della costruzione del periodo, della frase per la frase. Passi, insomma, dal volgare importuno al non meno importante aristocraticismo, ostentato e ammanierato. Nulla di tutto questo in Linati: lo stile è puro, solo qua e là con un appoggio forse eccessivo su certi arcaismi in sè pittoreschi, ma spesso troppo lontani ormai dalla nostra sensibilità; il periodo solido, ben costruito, con spontanea grazia nativa, limpido, senza anfratti oscuri o precipitazioni sconcertanti e inattese. Stile e lingua da signore, insomma, la cui signorilità è insita nella castigatezza spontanea e nell'amore di esser chiaro, perchè chiunque con lui s'intrattenga lo comprenda e non senta distacco alcuno di condizione o di valore.

Debbo pur dire, però, che se l'opera sua di creazione mi avvince e vi sono in questi "paesi" delle *Pianelle del Signore* pagine che stanno degnamente a fianco di quelle belle calde e fascinate che compongono *Sulle orme di Renzo*, una particolare simpatia ho sempre nutrito per la fatica sua di divulgatore della letteratura inglese in Italia, estrinsecata attraverso parecchie eleganti e belle traduzioni, che non v'è persona colta che ignori, e con saggi su scrittori anglo-americani, ch'è peccato restassero dispersi per giornali e periodici. Bene ha dunque fatto il Linati a riunirne un buon numero in volume in questi *Scrittori Anglo-Americani d'oggi*, offrendo così la possibilità non soltanto d'aver questi suoi saggi a portata di mano, ma di meglio apprezzarne anche le qualità critiche, tutt'altro che trascurabili.

Gerolamo Lazzari.

**Mariz Revelli - "Il Barbaro e il Santo"**  
Romanzo storico Milano: T. T. T.  
Lire ..... 15.00

In un precedente romanzo della signora Revelli, *Il canto della montagna*, c'era il felice motivo di questo canto che echeggiava dal principio alla fine e dava risonanza grave all'intera vicenda: un'aura quasi religiosa alitava per esso di pagina in pagina. Nel suo nuovo romanzo c'è invece lo scalpito d'una cavalcata che scande il tempo, ritma gli episodi e intorno ai personaggi e alle loro sorti diffonde così non so qual vaga suggestione epica.

Per tante donne che oggimai scrivono, ritraendo senz'alcuna novità, nemmeno d'impostazione, non che d'accenti, temi vecchissimi, logori, ecco Mariz Revelli che con virile animo si getta a rievocare il gran tempo delle invasioni barbariche, quando i popoli del settentrione e dell'oriente come marosi d'inaudita tempesta percolavano ai confini dell'impero romano e questo vibrava a lungo, paurosamente, sui cardini, nel punto ormai di sfasciarsi, confondendo in un nembro di polvere, tra rossi bagliori, i vincitori ed i vinti. Drammaticissimo tempo, d'urto e di transazioni, di violenze e di viltà senza uguali, che ogni cosa travolgerebbero del mondo se non albergasse ormai sul mondo sconvolto la luce incomparabile di Cristo e della sua Chiesa: farò che porta a salvezza.

A dominare siffatta materia, e non solo a dominarla ma ad atteggiarla in forme d'arte occorreva, oltre che animo risoluto, vigore grande e costanza. Non si può certo dire che tali virtù siano mancante all'autrice, che d'altronde aveva già offerto ottime prove di sè in parecchi pregiati volumi.

Questo romanzo storico, lavoro, cioè d'un genere in Italia disusato, oramai, sebbene sia abbastanza recente l'invito a riprenderlo di Angelo Gatti, si presenta proporzionatamente suddiviso in tre parti: *La terra; Gli uomini; Il cielo*; tre vasti affreschi dove sono a volta a volta evocati i Goti in moltitudine procellosa di là dai termini di Roma e pronti a muovere all'assalto e alla distruzione dell'impero; il periodo estremo della resistenza romana che di fronte alle orde calanti bramose e tumultuose esprime il suo ultimo gagliardo campione in Tullo Anicio; e infine da segreti sussulti, nella civiltà nuova e superiore del Cristianesimo.

Quasi sempre una viva sostanza lirica invigorisce le descrizioni e insapora la complessa rappresentazione. Solo in alcuni rari punti ho notato un affievolirsi e stemperarsi di questa nelle retoriche astrattezze del ragionamento. Difetto spiegabile e scusabile, dopo tutto. La coscienziosa scrittrice, che ha speso più di due anni attivissimi nel prepararsi a quest'opera, aveva accumulato dentro di sè tanta materia storica e dottrinale, soprattutto in relazione alle idee politiche, morali e religiose dibattute e ora prevalenti ora sommerse in quell'epoca, che tale materia reclama in qualche guisa un po'

di posto, un po' di respiro — e non era del tutto possibile negarglielo — nelle pause o suture dell'ampio racconto. Il decoro della forma, che nella Revelli mantiene sempre una ben moderata musicalità, è per altro conservato ognora eccellentemente, e a lettura finita rimane, oltre la commozione, nel cuore, per tante e tante pietose vicende umane, anche un chiaro concetto, nella mente, di quei remotissimi, convulsi tempi e dei vari contraddittori costumi che vi regnarono. Le difficoltà tutt'altro che lievi dell'opera erano appunto nel dover riprodurre artisticamente un'età rimescolata cotanto addentro e lacerata — come un cielo di nubi da sanguigne folgori — da cozzi così veementi e da vitali contrasti.

Arrigo Fugassa

**Michele Barbi - "Dante. Vita opere e fortuna. Con due saggi su Francesca e Farinata."** Firenze: Sansoni  
Lire ..... 10.00

L'illustre dantista offre agli studiosi una vita di Dante che è fra le più brevi, ma fra le più significative, perchè insieme con le condizioni politiche, sociali e culturali del tempo, il poeta è tratteggiato mediante un continuo richiamo alla sua più vera e più profonda attività: quella di studioso e di artista. Alla sintetica biografia segue uno scritto su la fama e lo studio di Dante, studio compendioso del vastissimo tema, e due saggi che illustrano rispettivamente il canto di Francesca e quello di Farinata. Questi studi, già apparsi su periodici, raccolti in volume servono ottimamente come guida ed introduzione necessaria allo studio delle opere del Poeta e massimamente della "Divina Commedia."

**B. Giuliano - "Elementi di cultura fascista."** Bologna: Zanichelli  
Lire ..... 10.00

Veramente, un "aureo" volumetto: soprattutto per i giovani e per le persone colte in generale. Non soltanto perchè espone con grande chiarezza e semplicità gli elementi di ogni cultura politica, e le fasi principali della formazione storica della coscienza nazionale italiana; e non soltanto perchè riassume efficacemente i motivi che han portato il Fascismo al governo e le grandi opere da esso compiute in così breve tempo; ma più ancora per la passione da cui tutto il volumetto è pervaso: passione di uomo di superiore cultura, venuto dal nazionalismo, che si pone "il problema" del Fascismo, se ne fa un problema di pensiero, oltretutto di sentimento. "Bisogna confessare (dice l'autore sin dalla prima pagina) che non è sempre facile orientarsi nell'atmosfera ideale creata dalla Rivoluzione Fascista." A tale orientamento vuol portare un contributo il presente volumetto, al quale il giudizio del pubblico si è già dimostrato favorevole esauendo la precedente edizione.

A. Carlini

# Avvenimenti e Discussioni del Mese in Italia

**ROOSEVELT AL POTERE.** Diamo due impressioni della stampa italiana sul nuovo Presidente. "Le prime settimane di regime Roosevelt, hanno portato gli Stati Uniti a contatto del secolo fascista e hanno avuto l'effetto di un miracoloso tonico morale. Il paese sembra uscito da un incubo. La grande prova è venuta nel momento stesso in cui Franklin Delano Roosevelt prendeva possesso del governo dopo quattro mesi di paralizzante interregno. Era appena entrato nella Casa Bianca, e Roosevelt veniva acclamato dittatore del dollaro, fra le scosse di un pauroso cataclisma finanziario. Sospese tutte le banche in una vacanza generale dei pagamenti egli iniziava subito l'opera di ricostruzione con una serie di decreti eccezionali che restituivano al paese il senso di essere fortemente governato. Il Governo assumeva il controllo di tutte le banche per una generale riorganizzazione e selezione. Il paese rispondeva con un coro di plausi, e offriva uno spettacolo impressionante di forza e di disciplina. Tutti sono rimasti sorpresi della flemma e dal buon umore con cui gli americani si sono ingegnati a sbarcare il lunario per una settimana senza l'ombra di un quattrino. In quella settimana si ristabiliva il senso delle proporzioni e della realtà. Non era finita l'America, ma era fatalmente crollata una piramide aritmetica di valori contabili, che da lungo tempo oscillava rovesciato sul vertice."

(B. De Ritis — Nuova Antologia.)

"A Franklin Roosevelt può spettare l'onore e la gloria di conferire agli Stati Uniti d'America quei caratteri di assoluta maturità che li renderanno finalmente consapevoli della loro efficienza nazionale in rapporto anche al ruolo mondiale, che sempre deve assolvere uno Stato, e con maggiore responsabilità quando sia dotato dalla Provvidenza, come l'America, di tanta ricchezza."

(Franco Ciarlantini — Augustea.)

**BELFAGOR** di E. L. Morselli è stato per la prima volta rappresentato in Italia, (19 aprile al *Valle di Roma*.) Alberto Cecchi, nell'illustrazione Italiana, mette in rilievo le qualità di questo ultimo dramma del Morselli (morto a trentanove anni nel 1920) ponendolo in rapporto con i due lavori precedenti dello stesso autore. "Attraverso *Orione* e *Glauco* correva un gran vento traforante, silvestre e salso, quello stesso che spazzava le tolde dei vascelli che Morselli calcò agli inizi della sua giovinezza, quando come Rimbaud e Stevenson cercava di ritrovare l'assenza di se medesimo nel vagabondaggio avventuroso. *Glauco* soprattutto è un'opera aperta, che si svolge lungo ripe marine e palagi ricamati dalla magia, in fantastiche contrade. Il ritorno in patria dell'eroe coincide all'atto pratico con il suo fallimento. In *Belfagor* invece — sebbene Baldo sia un personaggio che figura soltanto nell'epilogo — la moralità è più consolante, più

familiare: è il felice ritorno dell'uomo prodigo, che riconosce la santità dello stare, del consistere fra le quattro mura della sua casa paterna, presso la fida sposa: è l'anima che si salva dal fallimento tornando al suo punto di partenza."

**GUIDO DEL POPOLO** di Igino Robbiani rappresentato alla *Scala* lo scorso mese è il secondo "quadro" di un vasto trittico che dovrebbe, secondo gli ideali del musicista, portare sulle scene del teatro musicale l'anima del popolo italiano espressa in tre "tempi": Il Romano; Il Medioevo; Il Risorgimento. Questo "Guido del Popolo" è appunto il secondo "tempo." Leggiamo in *Musica d'oggi* un sincero giudizio di G. M. Ciampelli: "Densa è la materia decorativa cui porgono occasione i versi che Rossato preparò col suo naturale ardore: Il Robbiani ne è approfittato, con una musicazione altrettanto densa e composita. E nel dir questo, io non so rifiutarmi di chinare la fronte pensosa, davanti alla innegabile nobiltà del tentativo ed alla altezza del fine. Percorrendo lo spartito, questo alternarsi di episodi di colore vario si nota subito."

**LA PIU' BELLA UNIVERSITA' DEL MONDO** sorgerà fra breve a Roma. L'appellativo è del Duce il quale la defeni profetandola tale alcune settimane fa visitando i modelli e cantieri della nascente università romana, secondo quando ci racconta Eugenio Giovannetti nella *Rivista del Popolo d'Italia*. "Si tratta infatti," l'articolista continua, "di dodici edifici formanti, su di un'area di circa 210.000 mq., il più vasto ed il più monumentale insieme che alcun popolo abbia mai dedicato agli studi. Concepita come un centro urbano classico, come un Foro o come un'Agòra, lieta d'alberati spazi e di giardini, coronata d'opere festanti come teatro, campo sportivo, palestra, casa dello studente, l'opera architettonica, ch'è sempre equilibrata negli edifici minori tra impulso ascensionale ed agio, ascende con spontanea austerità nell'edificio del Rettorato in cui raggiunge l'altezza sovrana di cinquantatquattro metri."

**I CINQUE NUOVI ACCADEMICI,** nominati con Decreto Reale su designazione di S. E. il Capo del Governo il 19 Aprile scorso hanno riscosso il plauso incondizionato dei giornali italiani. *La Stampa* di Torino così li presenta ai suoi lettori:

"**Pietro Gasparri:** Una fede intrepida e totale, dosata di quel tanto di prudente scetticismo che permette di considerare uomini e cose nella loro schietta realtà ad di là dei diaframmi del sentimentalismo e della retorica: una dedizione franca, generosa, volontaria all'istituto al cui servizio è stata consacrata la vita senza per questo considerarlo chiuso alle evoluzioni e agli

sviluppi necessitati della storia.

"**Federico Patetta:** Federico Patetta, laureatosi in legge presso la nostra Università nel 1887 di appena vent'anni, esordì nella carriera scientifica con un lavoro rimasto classico. Difatti, al suo primo libro: *Le Ordalie. Studio di Storia del Diritto e Scienza del Diritto comparato* ove sono studiate la origine e l'evoluzione di questo istituto di carattere essenzialmente germanico, toccò questo insigne onore, che il Brunner, professore di Storia del Diritto nell'Università di Berlino, vi apponeva questa nota, che il lavoro del Patetta era quanto di meglio la letteratura di qualunque lingua possedesse sull'importante argomento.

"**Raffaele Pettazoni:** Raffaele Pettazoni è una delle più singolari figure di studioso che abbia l'Italia. Nato a Persiceto (Bologna) nel 1883, intelletto fervido, temperamento di autodidatta, egli si volse giovanissimo allo studio appassionato e sistematico di una materia che in Italia non aveva cultori di valore universale: la storia delle religioni. Le sue opere, di cui alcune divenute classiche, si leggono con alto godimento non solo dagli studiosi specialisti ma da tutti gli uomini di cultura perchè la profondità dell'erudizione e la vastità delle informazioni si accompagnano a un senso caldo e vivo di umanità.

"**Felice Carena:** L'ora di Felice Carena, che ha oggi il premio di un'opera tenace, tutta in profondità, diremo, tutta incessante scavo di sensazioni, scoccò nel 1926, quando alla quindicesima Biennale di Venezia espose ben cinquanta opere. Scriveva allora Antonio Marinoni che del Carena fu sempre sostenitore, entusiasta: "Nell'ora che volge per l'arte nostra, tutta tesa nel desiderio di rifarsi alle fonti schiette della nostra tradizione, io non so chi più di lui meriti d'essere stimato un maestro;" e gli faceva eco Lionello Venturi dichiarando quella dell'artista "una natura raffinata nel dolore e nel tormento, ove arte e vita morale si sono sempre confuse."

"**Ferruccio Ferrazzi:** Figlio di uno scultore, Ferruccio Ferrazzi trattò egli stesso anche la scultura (vedi la Pietà della collezione Signorelli, in Roma), e il gusto della plastica, dei forti rilievi, della forma vista più in funzione di linea e di contorno che di colore, rimase in lui quando passò decisamente alla pittura. Nato a Roma, il 15 marzo 1891, entrò a vent'anni con il Focolare, ancora segantiniano, nella Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Roma. Nel 1925 fu nominato Accademico di San Luca, l'anno dopo vinse il primo premio internazionale di pittura, del "Carnegie Institute" a Pittsburgh, e nel 1929 ebbe la cattedra di decorazione nell'Accademia romana di Belle Arti."

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## TOPICS OF THE MONTH

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(Continued from Page 52)

where is to be found in our public men the same fervor in the fight for a holy cause, the same ardor in the prosecution of a crusade against all evils, the same devotion to the purity of an ideal.

"The earth is full of blood! God has been forsaken even by His ministers. The altar has become a money-counter. I tell you that this chain of corruption must be smashed, for the Church of Christ must be resurrected in its true spirit". These were words of fire, uttered by the soul of man unafraid, words which moved the hearts of good men. They fit perfectly into the scheme of things as we find them today.

The best judgment of Savonara that I know was given by Enrico Nencioni long ago, but it is always appropriate to repeat it:

"He was in Italy the greatest moral conscience of the 15th Century, as Dante had been of the 14th. His faith created his enthusiasm, his enthusiasm created his strength. No one has ever become a martyr for an opinion: it is faith alone which creates martyrs. You may call him a fanatic. He was a fanatic, yes, but like Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, like Arnaldo, like Dante. Was he a sick man? Perhaps. Every creative act produces a disorder, a sort of derangement. If the heroes and the martyrs are deranged people, let us be thankful: for there have never been so many healthy people in the world as we have today."

\* \* \*

### MOTHER: "THE HOLIEST THING ALIVE"

IT was Coleridge who wrote: "a mother is a mother still, the holiest thing alive." Yet, he might have added that she is the holiest thing even beyond the turmoil of this dim spot which men call earth. I remember one night not long ago listening to John McCormack sing a beautiful song over the radio in

which occurred the following lines: "Mother, though my footsteps falter—my love for you will never alter": words that thrill and touch, lingering in one's memory as long as life is long and vibrating in one's heart until its beating shall cease.

These thoughts came to my mind as I read a pretty composition on Mother's Day written by a fourteen-year-old girl and published recently in *The New York Times*.

The author is Esther Elwofsky and her piece was given first prize in a nation-wide contest in which more than 600 school children took part. I think the little child's fine tribute could not possibly be improved and, therefore, I am going to reproduce it here as my small contribution to the beautiful significance of Mother's Day:

#### *Mother's Day*

One day in the year set aside for mothers—how strange a custom! Like setting one day aside to grasp the beauty of the sun, the moon, the stars—all the lovely, natural things that bring warmth, light, comfort.

Many times I have longed to set my thoughts down upon paper. Not in the flowery language of greeting-cards, but in the simple language of love. I write the words, "Dear Mother"—lovely tender words—and grow silent beneath the weight of thoughts and memories that, lying buried like precious jewels beneath the dust of years, arise clear and growing in my mind.

Impossible to describe the homely beauty of these thoughts: warm kitchen filled with the scent of bread, sunlight dappling a clean white cloth, touching the rosy apples in their copper bowl; tender memories of loving acts and dreary tasks done smilingly while the sun shone and the years marched swiftly past, and youth, perhaps secretly mourned, passed with it.

How describe the broad, deep-bosomed earth, symbol of maternity—awakening in the spring of the year, lying fruitful beneath the summer sun, resting from its labors in the autumn and dreaming peacefully wrapt in snowy mantle? Dwelling upon these thoughts we hear borne strong on the wind the galloping hoofs of Time astride the ceaseless cycles of the years, drawing nearer and nearer. Then caught by a vague fear, we say or we think or we write, "Dear Mother".

### MRS. BUCK: "JUST A CHRISTIAN"

WHEN Mrs. Pearl S. Buck handed in her "resignation" not long ago as a Presbyterian Missionary in China, following the well-known charges of heresy against her, there was but one dissenting voice: that of Dr. Gresham Machen, the great Fundamentalist leader and pious Christian gentleman, who insisted that she should have been fired, instead of being permitted to resign.

Doubtless, the good Doctor's crusading determination was prompted by the sad realization that we no longer burn heretics at the stake. Yet, if we can't burn them, we should at least dismiss them disgracefully, not ask them to resign quietly. Such logic seems to have a special appeal for Dr. Machen. But thoughtful people will pause—and smile.

What is Mrs. Buck's "heresy"? She has expressed sincere doubts of the divinity of Christ; but she has done it in the following words: "If there existed mind or minds, dreams, hopes, imaginations, sensitive enough to the human soul and all its needs, perceptive enough to receive such heavenly imprint on the spirit as to be able to conceive a personality like Christ's and portray Him for us with such matchless simplicity as He is portrayed, then Christ lived and lives, whether He was once one body and one soul, or whether He is the essence of men's highest dreams."

This may sound heretical to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions; this may sound blasphemous to Dr. Machen, but for thinking and truly religious people Mrs. Buck's words possess a remarkable content of that deep sense of the infinite which forms the essence of all religion.

After her "resignation" Mrs. Buck is reported to have said: "I don't go in for creeds. I'm just a Christian". What more can one say? So many creeds, so many faiths, so many dogmas—what do they all mean? The chief thing, in the words of Henry Ward Beecher, is to struggle manfully to live a Christian life.

Which reminds me of Lincoln's definition of religion: "When I do good, I feel good. When I do bad, I feel bad. That's my religion." But I am very much afraid that the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions doesn't quite agree with Beecher's dictum and Lincoln's definition.

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