

A trip to Mount Pellegrino

There is no direct motor service to the Sanctuary situated on the top of the Mount, but let us hope that the very good service existing

before the war may be resumed. When the tourist is arrived at Le Falde (Drill Ground General Cascino) he may begin the ascent. There are two routes: the so called Scala Vecchia for pe-

destrians only, which, at the beginning is fatiguing, and the carriage-road, called Via Pietro Bonanno, which, besides being more comfortable, offers the possibility to enjoy wonderful panoramas.

The interest of tourists is almost wholly reduced to the visit to the famous Grotto of St. Rosalia which is situated at the end of the two above mentioned routes, at 429 m. The grotto is about 25 m. long. Near the grotto there is a modest dwelling, a convent and some poor houses where, on demand, food can be obtained. They may have something to eat.

The grotto was discovered in 1624, 15th July, 1624, by a hunter, while a great plague afflicted the

On the 4th September of every year the people of Palermo honours the patroness-saint of the town with pilgrimages

is situated
he very
be resumed.
will-

ascent;
chia
is fa
two Bo
the

ced to
ch is
utes.
grotto
on

hunter
ster
a Si;
that
rus
fact

town. ~~The~~ hunter found in the grotto the bones of the virgin Rosalia Sinibaldi, who, some centuries before, had chosen this ^{lonely} place for her ^{hermitage,} prayers; ^{animated} the man, ^{down} pushed by a religious zeal, carried the bones to the town. About the fact of the discovery, ^{many legends have} arisen ~~also~~ over this discovery, very there are suggestive legends.

On the 4th ^{of} September of every year the people of Palermo honour ~~the patroness~~ ^{the} saint of the town with pilgrimages ^m and processions that begin ^{add} during the night and ^{note} give, during the day, a tone of popular festivity to the rugged mountain.

Almost in the ^{at half-way up the mountain} midway, some years ago, ^{an} enterprising Sicilian manufacturer ^{and} ^{built a} ~~has caused~~ hotel-restaurant to be built: it is called Utveglio. Though the tourists' interest is great, the initiative fell, but it deserves to be resumed.

On April of 1787 the grotto was visited by ^{famous} an exceptional traveller: Wolfgang Goethe. There is a memorial stone that records this event. The illustrious poet received an ^{indefinite} ineffaceable

impression by the mystic peaceful loneliness
of the grotto, ^{from} the sweet and still fresh
beauty of the spoils of the Saint Virgin, and
^{relics} recorded his feelings in a page that ^{even} still now
^{Varouses in us} disposes the soul to a religious meditation:

The outside of the Church has nothing promi-
sing and the door is opened without expectation
on the part of the visitor; but as soon as he

enters he is ^{filled with} seized by a great wonder. He is ^{finds}

himself within a gallery as large as the church itself,

and ^{this gallery} it opens opposite the nave. He sees the usual

basins for the holy water and some confessionals.

The nave is like ^{a long, open court -} an open and long yard: on the
^{shut off} right it is closed by the rugged rock of the

mountain, on the left by a continuation of the

gallery. The marble floor is slightly inclined

to let ^{the} rain-water flow out. In the ^{middle} ~~midst~~ of this
^{there} nave ~~is~~ a fountain.

The grotto of the saint has been changed into
a choir without any ~~attention~~ attempt to remove

It is approached by steps

its natural roughness. Some steps lead to it.

near

Close by is the pulpit with the missal; on both

There

sides, round about are some benches. *on both sides* The whole is

illuminated

(1)

Every thing

lighted by the sun entering from the atrium and

the nave. The High-Altar is situated at the bottom of the grotto.

already

in the grotto

has been

As I have ~~said there is nothing~~ *changed in*

~~the grotto~~. But as the rock always lets the water drop, there are lead gutters of an ugly green colour, therefore, at first sight one may believe that big cactus have grown on the rock. The water gathered by the gutters is shed in a large basin whence true believers take it because they are convinced it heals every kind of illness.

I turned round, and through the leaves of a big lamp wrought in brass, I saw something shining. I knelt before a gate finely wrought and I tried to look into the inside and at the calm light of some lamps I saw a beautiful lady.

She lay as if absorbed in a kind of rapture her eyes were half closed and her head carelessly

leant on her right hand which was full of rings. I could not observe the statue well, but, seen in that way, it had a peculiar charm. Her dress was of a very thin golden plate that imitated very well a cloth richly set with gold. The head and the hands are of white marble, and if they produce a great effect of life, so that one almost expects she must move and breathe. A small angel is near her and it seems it wants to fan her with a lily.

Meanwhile the monks had entered the grotto, had taken seat on the benches and begun to sing vespers. I sat down on a bench opposite the altar and remained to listen to them for a while: then I went again to the altar and knelt down in the hope to observe distinctly the image of the saint Virgin. And I abandoned myself to the charm of that place and that image.

The song of the monks resounded in the grotto, the water drapped monotonously in the basins, while the rocks, jutting from the vestibule and

the strange shape of the nave narrowed more and more the scene. There was an extraordinary calm in this solitude, almost a dead calm, a great purity in a wild grotto, the tinsel of catholic liturgy and particularly of sicilian liturgy was of a beautiful natural simplicity and the illusion that the Saint might rise impressed even a middle aged calm man as I was. In a word I abandoned that place reluctantly and arrived at Palermo in the dead of night.

A trip to Mount Pellegrino.

There is ^{direct} ~~no motor~~-service to the Sanctuary situated on the top of the Mount, but let us hope that the very good service existing before the war may be resumed. When the tourist is arrived at Le Falde (Drill-Ground General Cascino) he may begin the ascent; there are two routes: the so called "Scala Vecchia" for pedestrians only, which, at the beginning is fatiguing, and the carriage-road, called Via Pietro Bonanno which, besides a greater easiness, offers the possibility to enjoy wonderful panoramas.

The interest of tourists is almost wholly reduced to the visit to the famous Grotto of St. Rosalia which is situated at the end of the ^{two} above mentioned routes, at ~~129~~ 29 m. The grotto is about 25 m. long. Near the grotto there is a convent and some poor houses where, on demand, one may have something to eat.

The grotto was discovered in 1624, 15th July, by a hunter while a great plague afflicted the town. This hunter found in the grotto the bones of the virgin Rosalia Simibaldi, who, some centuries before, had chosen that place for her prayers; the man, pushed by a religious zeal, carried the bones to the town. About the fact of the discovery there are suggestive legends.

On the 4th September of every year the people of Palermo honours the patroness-saint of the town with pilgrimages

rugged rock of the mountain, on the left by a continuation of the gallery. The marble floor is lightly inclined to let rain-water flow out. In the midst of this nave is a fountain.

The grotto of the saint has been changed into a choir without any attempt to remove its natural roughness. Some steps lead to it. Close by is the pulpit with the missal; on both sides, round about are some benches. ~~All the~~ The whole is lighted by the sun entering from the atrium and the nave. The High-Altar is situated at the bottom of the grotto.

As I have said there is nothing changed in the grotto. But as the rock always let the water drop there are lead gutters of an ugly green colour, therefore, at first sight one may believe that big cactuses have grown on the rock. The water gathered by the gutters is shed in a large basin where ~~the~~ true Believers take it because they ^{are convinced} ~~believe~~ it heals every kind of illness.

I had observed all this with a great attention, when a clergyman approached me and asked me whether I was a Genoese and whether I wanted masses to be bestowed ^{some} on. I answered I had come to Palermo with a Genoese who ~~had~~ preferred to visit the Sanctuary on the morrow as it was a holiday, and as one of us had to remain always in. I had come to visit the beauties of the church.

an procession that begin during the night and give, during the day, a tone of popular festivity to the rugged mountain.

Almost in the midway, some years ago, a bold Sicilian manufacturer has caused a hotel-restaurant to be built: it is called Utveggio. Though the touristic interest is great, the initiative fell, but it deserves to be resumed.

On April of 1787 the grotto was visited by an exceptional traveller: Wolfgang Goethe; there is a memorial stone that records this event. The illustrious poet received an ineffaceable impression by the mystic peaceful ~~and~~ loneliness of the grotto, by the sweet and still fresh beauty of the ~~aspects~~ of the Saint Virgin, and marked his feelings in a page that still now ~~disposes~~ the soul to a religious ~~meditation~~ meditation.

The outside of the Church has nothing promising and the door is opened without expectation on the part of the visitor; but as soon as he enters he is seized by a great wonder. He is within a gallery as large as the church itself, it opens opposite the nave. He sees the usual basins for the holy water and some confessionals. The nave is like an open and long yard: on the right it is closed by the

The clergyman replied I was at liberty to do what I liked best, to see all and to say my prayers as I thought convenient, and after having pointed out at a side altar as the most miraculous, he left me.

I turned round, and through the leaves of a big lamp wrought in brass I saw something shining. I knelt before a gate finely wrought and I tried to look into the inside and at the calm of light of some lamps I saw a beautiful lady.

She lay as if absorbed in a kind of rapture, her eyes were half closed and her head carelessly leant on her right hand ^{which was} full of rings. I could not observe the statue well, but, seen in that way, it had a peculiar charm. Her dress ~~of~~ was of a very thin golden plate that imitated very well a cloth richly set with gold. The head and the hands are of white marble, and if they are not of ~~a~~ high artistic perfection, yet they produce a great effect of ~~real~~ life, so that one ^{almost} expects she must move and breathe. A small angel is near her and it seems it wants to fan her with a lily.

Meanwhile the monks had entered the grotto, had taken seat on the benches and begun to sing vespers. I sat down on a bench opposite the altar and remained to listen to them for a while: then I went again to the altar and knelt down in the hope

to observe distinctly the image of the saint Virgin. (3)
And I abandoned myself to the charm of that
place and that image.

The song of the monks resounded in the grotto, the
water dropped monotonously in the basins, while the
rocks, jutting from the vestibule and the strange shape
of the nave narrowed more and more the scene. There
was an extraordinary calm in this solitude, almost
a dead calm: a great purity in a wild grotto, the
tinsel of catholic liturgy and particularly of sici-
lian liturgy was of a beautiful natural simplicity
and the illusion that the Saint might rise impressed
even a middle-aged ~~man~~ calm man as I was. In
a word I abandoned that place ~~with~~ reluctantly
and arrived at Palermo in the dead of night.

6.8
=====

Villa Belmonte now is the property of the
" Istituto della Previdenza Sociale, 8 Via Epicarmo, Palermo,
The Italian National Security Institution who may grant
permission to foreigners eager to visit it.

Many changes have been brought upon and only few corners
in it recall or testify the charm of the past.

Villa Igea Grand Hotel is situated in its very adjacent
neighborhood.

Ieri salimmo sul monte Pellegrino per rendere omaggio a S. Rosalia e per ringraziarla della varietà degli svaghi procuratici.

BRYDONE

Ritornando, è consigliabile visitare la Villa Belmonte, che si trova alle falde del Monte, lungo la via che conduce al cimitero dei Rotoli. William Agnew Paton ne era incantato. Così, fra l'altro, la ricorda: La nostra gita mattutina prediletta era a Villa Belmonte. Ad ogni lato di un largo viale serpeggiante dall'ingresso, traverso un boschetto di limoni, sono siepi di gerani, di fichi d'India, vainiglia e caprifoglio... Quando avevamo la buona ventura d'incontrarci nel giardiniere che aveva la custodia di questo paradiso, tornavamo a casa con una bracciata di fiori che egli coglieva per noi, dandoci intanto il permesso di coglierne altri. Quando poi non incontravamo il nostro bravo amico, salivamo alle alture, dietro la villa, e ci davamo a cogliere i fiori silvestri che crescevano a profusione, verso la campagna; e mentre ritornavamo a casa, nella luce del sole, coi nostri tesori, non ci volevamo quasi persuadere di averli trovati alla latitudine di Washington sì precocemente fioriti, in gennaio.

bas-reliefs

ITINERARY IV

Sibundino

St. Francis of Assisi, Oratory of St. Lawrence, Garibaldi Garden, Steri, St. Mary of the Catena, Villa Giulia, Botanical Garden, Abbatelli Palace, The Gancia, Fieravecchia, Aiutamicristo Palace, Magione.

we descend

and reaching

From the Quattro Canti go down towards the sea, after Via Roma turn to the right into Via Alessandro Paternostro as far as the Piazza St. Francis of Assisi. Here, in front of an ancient and famous ^{confectioner's stands} cake-shop, ^{13th} ^{originally} rises what remains of a church of the ~~XIII~~ century, dedicated to the Poverello of Assisi, after the tragical air-raids of 1943.

On the right is Via Immacolatella. At number 5 is the Oratorio di San Lorenzo of the ^{Society} Company of St. Francis of Assisi. It would be a great fortune for the tourist if he could avail himself of the learning of Prof. Philip Meli, one of the ^{best-} ~~most~~ known Italian students of ^{the} history of art, ^{who} ~~whose~~ ^{lives} abode is close by. The war has greatly damaged precious ~~artistic patrimony~~ of the Oratory ^{which} ^{on} consisting of splendid stucco decorations by Giacomo Serpotta who lavished ^{on} this work all his fresh and graceful artistic youth. In a frame of feasting amours and in an atmosphere of great and concentrated piety the art of Serpotta triumphs, art that has its confirmation especially in ten symbolic statues (among which Charity and Alms) and in eight small groups representing scenes of the life of St. Lawrence and St. Francis.

The painting ^{of} the altar ^{head} representing the Nativity with St. Lawrence and St. Francis (the first titular of the church and the second titular of the ^{Society} Company) is a very precious work by Michel Ange Caravaggio, who executed it in ~~the year~~ 1609, on his return from Malta. The benches made of valuable wood inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl are of the ^{18th} ~~XVIII~~ century. All the stuccoes on the wall flanking the street with the figurative composition of the ~~Mar~~ Martyrdom of St. Lawrence have been on February 15th 1943 awing to the effects of a bomb fallen at a short distance upon Mirto Palace.

Returning along the

NE continue

Coming back to Corso Vittorio Emanuele, go on as far as Piazza Marina ^{memorials}

This large square contains many remembrances of the history of the town and is ^{flanked} ~~enlivened~~ on one side with the Fountain of the Caraffo, surmounted with

ITINERARY IV

St. Francis of Assisi, Oratory of St. Lawrence - Garibaldi Garden - Steri - St. Mary of the Catena - Villa Giulia - Botanical Garden - Abbatelli Palace - The Gancia - Tieravecchia - Aintamieristo Palace - Magione.

From the Quattro Canti go down towards the sea. After Via Roma, turn to the right into Via Alessandro Paternostro as far as the Piazza St. Francis of Assisi. Here, in front of an ancient and famous cake-shop, rises what remains of a church of the XIII century dedicated to the Poverello of Assisi, after the tragical air-raids of 1943.

On the right is the Via Immacolatella. At number 5 the Oratory of the Company of St. Lawrence. It would be a great fortune for the tourist if he could avail himself of the learning of the Rev. Prof. Philip Meli, one of the most known cultivators of History of Art, who lives near by. The war has not destroyed the precious artistic patrimony of the Oratory consisting in splendid decorations in stucco by Giacomo Serpotta who lavished in his works all his fresh and graceful youth. In a frame of feasting amours and in an atmosphere of lively and

concentrated piety, the art of Scarpotta triumphs; it reaches ~~its~~ its highest perfection in ten symbolic statues (among which Charity and Alms) and eight more smaller ones, representing scenes of the life of St. Lawrence and of St. Francis. 3

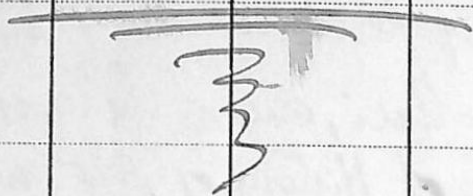
Coming back to Corso Vittorio Emanuele, go on as far as Piazza Marina: this large square contains many remembrances of the history of the town and is enlivened on one side with the Fountain of the Garafoglio surmounted with a Statue of Abundance, a work by Paul Amato, and on the other side with the Giardino Garibaldi (Garibaldi Garden). Very fine and rare specimens of figus magnolioides and of citrofolia hang over the gay plays of children and veil with shadows the heroes of the national regeneration that the patriotism of the Palermitans has gathered here: Rosolino Pilo, Giovanni Corrao, Raphael Di Benedetto, ~~with~~ the major Lewis Zukory....

At the east corner of the square rises the Steri (Hosterium), a large building of the fourteenth century. Its name is related to the vicissitudes of the powerful family of Chiaramonte. Their history is coloured with blood and even with dreadful scenes. In 1396 Andrea di Chiaramonte was beheaded before the palace of his family, as he was ^{found} culprit of treachery. This palace was in succession the abode of the Spanish Viceroy,

- On the right is Via Immacolatella. At number 5 is the Oratorio di San Lorenzo of the Company of St. Francesco of Assisi. It would be a great fortune for the tourist if he could avail himself of the learning of Prof. Philip Meli, one of the most known ~~Italian~~ Italian Students of History of Art, whose abode is close by. The war has greatly damaged precious artistic patrimony of the Oratory consisting of splendid stucco-decoration by Giacomo Serpotta who lavished in this work all his fresh and graceful ~~of~~ artistic youth. In a frame of feasting amours and in an atmosphere of great and concentrated piety the art of Serpotta triumphs, art that has its confirmation especially in ten symbolic statues (among which Charity and Alms) and in eight small groups representing scenes of the life of St. Lawrence and St. Francis.

The painting of the altar representing the Nativity with St. Lawrence and St. Francis (the first titular of the church and the second titular of the Company) is a very precious work by Michel Ange Caravaggio, who executed it in the year 1609, on his return from Malta. The benches made of valuable wood inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl are of the XVIII century. All the stuccoes on the wall flanking the street with the figurative composition of the Martyrdom of St. Lawrence have been

on February 15th 1943 owing to the effects of a
bomb fallen at a short distance from Clinto Palace.



Un angolo pomposo della Villa Giulia

then of the Tribunal of the Holy Office. Here ~~4~~ ⁵ sat the rigid Inquisitors and here they pronounced their pitiless condemnations. From this gate solemnly came out the Holy Office, preceded by the terrible standard on which flamed the tremendous words: Iudicia Deus, causam tuam!

Now a motley crowd go and come across the large yard, through the stairs, the corridors, crowding the offices of the tribunal that have here their seat: they do not know that numberless human beings ~~were~~ ^{spent their miserable life in} were here tortured as torture was then a means of inquiry; they ~~could not~~ ^{spend their miserable life in} the horrid dammusi (underground prisons). The medieval lines of the building are still visible, among disfigurements, in the windows of the outside façade.

Coming back to the Corso, at a little distance there is, on the left, the Church of St. Mary della Catena (of the Chain) which owes its name to the chain by which the present Cala was closed. ~~It~~ ^{It} was probably built by Architect Matteo Carnalivari; its façade is picturesque. Three portals enriched with bas-reliefs by Vincenzo Gagini, give entrance ~~into~~ ^{to} the ~~church~~ ^{three-naved} church; the sanctuary is square. Near by are the Archives of the State now directed by Dr. Emanuele Librino, rich in greek, latin and

It is devastated by the bombs, but it still preserves in its central esplanade its four Pompeyan prospects, its lakelets, its statues, but, above all, that perfume and that elegance which are typical of the gardens of the eighteenth century, with well kept alleys, solitary corners and the play of colours.

During his stay in Palermo Wolfgang Goethe spent here delightful and tranquil hours: It is the most wonderful place in the world, he wrote. Though it is symmetrically cut, yet it seems to belong to an enchanted kingdom; though built since a short time, it transports us into antiquity. Small green beds surround fine exotic plants, large flower walls ~~flow~~ bend in the shape of a bow, high oleander many-flowered walls sweetly caress the eye. Some trees quite unknown to me, probably imported from warmer countries, spread their thin branches still without leaves. A bench situated in an open space offers the ~~best~~ ^{best} view of all this splendid vegetation. And from it one may see the large basin where a myriad of silver and golden fishes frisk gracefully: now ~~and then~~ they hide themselves into little ~~musky~~ little grottoes, now they ~~gathered~~ swarm on a level with the water, allured by a bit of bread. The plants have a green colour to which we are not accustomed to see, more yellow or blue than ours. But what gave now to all things:

5

Arabian parchments of the XI century. The most interesting document is the first document in paper known to be in existence in Europe, a greek-arabian diploma of concession of the norman Countess Adelasia (1109.)

Opposite is the Piazza S. Spirito which boasts a fountain by Marabitti. Close by is Porta Felice (from donna Felice Orsini, wife to Viceroy of the Marquis Antonio Colonna) which looks into the sea. The wide esplanade known to-day under the name of Forum Humbert (before Forum Borbonico) is one of the most charming things Palermo may boast. It is no more crowded with patrician carriages as in the ~~seventeenth~~ eighteenth century, it is no more the mighty resort of the best society accompanied by rigid servants ^{holding lighted torches} but it has lost nothing of its charm as a natural promenade place. Behind Baucina Palace is the characteristic Piazza of the Kalsa (from the arabian el Khalisa = the pure) a queer quarter where dialect, architecture, (observe the zig-zag stairs on the outside fronts of the houses) traditions, customs contrast with those of the rest of the city and make us think of the survival of a strange technic islet strongly withstanding, since centuries, all attempts of assimilation. At the end of the promenade is Villa Giulia (after the name of the wife of the viceroy of that time).

7
a peculiar charm was a thick fog that spread everywhere with the same thickness; all things, even those a few steps distant, assumed a light-blue hue.

All distant objects, as for instance ships and promontories, such a fog gives them a very strange aspect, and a painter who would like to reproduce one of these effects, had to pay ^{a great} ~~very~~ attention to distances. The impression of that enchanted garden is indescribable. The dark waves towards the North horizon, their breaking against the sinuosities of the bay, that peculiar odour of the sea charged with vapours, all makes me think of the blessed island of the Feaci. I hastened to buy Homer, to read every canto with a great devotion and to improvise a translation to Kniep who deserved, with a glass of wine before him, a pleasant rest for his daily labour.

Close by is the Botanical Garden, founded in 1789, rightly renowned for the richness and the variety of its plants. In the central alley there are palm-trees, cycas, aloes. In the open space of ~~the~~ ^{of} grove papyri, ~~off~~ ^{of} waterlilies, nenuphars, nelumbi, in a frame of bamboo-groves. Moreover the garden possesses rare and interesting specimens of Ficus rubiginosa, which is characteristic for its aerial roots dropping from the branches. A ficus covers a surface of 800 square

8
meters. Mighty baobabs contribute to give the garden a tropical aspect. Annexed to the Botanical Garden is the Colonial Garden, where sisal and agaves, castor-oil trees and sugar-canes are cultivated.

In front of the Botanical Garden is Via Torremuzza. going along it you will see on the left the Pieta which has a great Baroque front. It makes an angle with Via Alloro which is connected with the Garibaldi history of Palermo, because from the Gancia (a church of the XV century with a monastery annexed), that rises in this street, broke on April 4th 1860 the flaming cry of the revolt of the palermitan cry which found in Francesco Riso, a fountain-maker, its initiator and herald. A brief and unequal fight took place before the entrance of the church: the soldiers of the Bourbons had the best of it: they rushed into the holy place, struck the innocent monks and dragged out Francis Riso dying. They thought to have suffocated the revolt.

Two men succeeded in escaping: they hid themselves in the church and succeeded in going out through a narrow passage that was afterwards called the Buca della Salvezza (The Hole of Safety) which looks on the Via Alloro. They were helped by some generous persons of the people.

In Via Alloro two other patrician palaces are remarkable.

Abbatelli Palace, a gothic building with threefold windows, embattled towers and a very original portal; and Bonagia Palace whose attraction is constituted by a splendid baroque main stair in red marble, in the yard. From Via Alessandro Paternostro we reach the Gieravecchia (Piazza Della Rivoluzione = Revolution Square) the centre of all revolutionary enterprises, now devastated by the bombs that have spoilt the austerity that time had conferred it. In the middle is a fountain with a statue: the Genius of Palermo. Here the revolution of 1848 broke out, the famous revolution announced by the people to the tyrant with a written challenge at a fixed date; here the patriot Niccolò Garzilli was shot. Turn into Via Garibaldi: on the left, at number 37 is the entrance of Antonicristo Palace, a creation of Matteo Carnalivari like Abbatelli Palace, and of the same epoch (end of the XV century). Here Charles V sojourned.

Going along Via Garibaldi, on the left is Via della Magione that leads to the Chiesa della Magione (Trinità) whose origin is traced up to 1161.

Between Via Garibaldi, the Gieravecchia, the Via Alloro the most important episodes of the Sicilian Resurrection took place.

~~The student of these patriotic things will find larger particulars in the appendix of this Guide, in Palermo garibaldina by Prof. Gaetano Galzone.~~