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*An Italian Baroness
in Hawai'i*



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The Travel Diary of
GINA SOBRERO
Bride of Robert Wilcox
1887



Translated by
EDGAR C. KNOWLTON

Introduction by
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Afterword by
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Honolulu, Hawai'i
March 1991

FOREWORD

THIS TRANSLATION into English of Gina Sobrero's diary brings to light material long out of public view.

The original work, *Espatriata: Da Torino ad Honolulu*, published in Italian in 1908, has been held for many years under the pseudonym "Mantea" in the libraries of the Bishop Museum and the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society. Because of her interest in Robert W. Wilcox, Nancy Morris, Head of Archives and Manuscripts, University of Hawaii Library, sought information about his first wife, Gina Sobrero. She applied literary detective skills to connect the homesick bride known to Hawai'i historians with the Gina Sobrero recognized in Italian literary circles as a graceful prose stylist. She arranged for a translator to determine if the journal had significance for late 19th century events. Indeed it does.

Morris's introduction brings into focus the life and times of Sobrero. Edgar Knowlton, Professor Emeritus of European Languages, University of Hawaii, has contributed a translation which preserves the accuracy, tone, and spirit of the original. Cristina Bacchilega, Associate Professor of English, University of Hawaii, has added an afterword that places the diary in historical and literary context.

This volume maintains the author's original orthography and adds accepted Hawaiian orthography to new material.

The Hawaiian Historical Society's publication of this diary of a remarkably adventurous and independent woman, takes its rightful place in Hawaiian history, in travel literature, and in women's studies.

HELEN G. CHAPIN

Editor

The Hawaiian Journal of History



Gina Sobrero (Courtesy E. E. Miller)

IN the fall of 1887, Robert William Wilcox (1855-1903) returned to his native Hawai'i after a five-year sojourn in Italy, bringing with him his aristocratic Italian bride. Later, Wilcox would become the hero of the Hawaiian people, but already a Hawaiian following acknowledged him as a leader and in flower-bedecked flotillas rowed out to the steamship *San Pablo* to welcome him home. Showering the couple with kisses and leis, the Hawaiians would have carried the young bride ashore in their arms, but she shrank back in embarrassment.

The bride was the baronessa Maria Carolina Isabella Luigia Sobrero, known informally as Gina Sobrero. She was born in Palermo on July 20, 1863 to Lorenzo Sobrero and Vittoria Colonna di Stigliano of Naples. Gina had married Wilcox in Turin on June 15, a few short months before their return to Hawai'i. Already she was pregnant. She had no special talents other than physical beauty, she said of herself, but she did have an expressive, unsentimental, and observant writing style, and as a catharsis for the disaster that her marriage and transplantation to Hawai'i were rapidly becoming, she set down an account of this eventful year in her life.

Years later the story was published as *Espatriata: Da Torino ad Honolulu*, or *The Expatriate: From Turin to Honolulu*, in an edition that retained the diary-like form of the original composition. Gina made light attempts to disguise the reality on which *Espatriata* was based. She wrote under the pseudonym Mantea and veiled the names of some of the participants—Wilcox, for example, becomes “William” in the book—but her confessions were for her Italian compatriots, and she could not have intended that her often critical view of Hawai'i would reach the attention of readers in Hawai'i.

Although more than a century has passed, controversies over the romantic, doomed Hawaiian court of the late 1880's remain, and the enigmatic character of Robert Wilcox continues to be debated. There are in Gina Sobrero's memories of her brief tour through the ruins of the Hawaiian kingdom new insights for historians and biographers. Edgar

Knowlton's translation of the original Italian now makes this previously little-known work available to a wider audience.

Undoubtedly, the modern reader first turns to *Espatriata* because of Gina's ties with Wilcox and because her story represents a fresh source of information on life in late 19th century Hawai'i. Quickly, however, Gina herself engages the reader's interest. Quite apart from its historical interest, *Espatriata* can rest on its merits as a well-written autobiography of a lively, surprisingly frank, if sometimes exasperating, woman.

Although the strands of Gina's life story are not fully developed and some of her self-revelations come about unconsciously, the essential questions to be asked of a valid biographical study, and more particularly of a woman's life, are all addressed and answered. These questions, say feminist historians, have to do with the accommodation of the subject into the society into which she was born, the relations between daughter-mother-father, the process as a young woman of coping with the realization that her value is determined by how attractive men find her, and the reasons for a successful or failed marriage. Since *Espatriata* closes with Gina's departure from Hawai'i, it does not deal with Gina's maturity; for those years we must turn to other sources.

A more disparate couple than Gina Sobrero and Robert Wilcox can scarcely be imagined. Their lives intersected in Turin, the ancient city founded as a Celtic capital, Taurasia, which became in succession a Roman post, capital of the kingdom of Sardinia, and, for a time, capital of the reorganized kingdom of Italy. Turin's history is closely tied to the House of Savoy, the French feudal family who ruled Turin intermittently from the 11th to the 18th centuries.

The fortunes of the Sobrero family were linked to those of the Savoy: Gina's paternal grandfather had been named baron in recognition of his service to the Savoys. Her father was a military officer and instructor at the Scuola d'Applicazione d'Artiglieria e Genio. Military men ran in the Sobrero family—Gina's brother Carlo also followed that profession—a tradition that can account in part for Gina's initial attraction to Wilcox. Although distinguished, the family was not wealthy; Gina recalls with

some pain a suitor who departed hastily when he learned of the family's financial circumstances. The happiness of an affectionate family group was broken in 1886 by the death of Gina's father, Lorenzo Carlo Giuseppe Sobrero, only months before her engagement to Wilcox. Gina speaks in *Espatriata* of the devastation of this loss and recognizes that her vulnerability at this time influenced her decision to marry.

Both Wilcox and Gina retained vivid memories of their first meeting at a social gathering in Turin. His first sight of Gina across a room, Wilcox recalled in later years, struck, in true Italian tradition, as a thunderbolt.† Gina's memoir confirms the circumstances of the meeting, though with a characteristic lighter touch. "The savage devours you with his eyes," teased her friends.

This "savage" was one of the some dozen or so young men, the best and the brightest of the Hawaiian kingdom, selected for King Kalākaua's visionary study abroad program. Determined to move his kingdom into the modern family of nations, Kalākaua, last of the Hawaiian kings, dreamed of a Hawai'i in charge of its own affairs, led by Hawaiians equipped with the best education the world had to offer. Kalākaua had his fill of the overbearing, Bible-thumping Yankee advisors to earlier Hawaiian monarchs and now looked to the Old World and to the East for models. A naturalized American citizen originally from Italy, Celso C. Moreno, termed statesman by his admirers, rogue-adventurer by his detractors, heavily influenced Kalākaua and the chain of events that brought Wilcox, along with two other Hawaiian young men, to Italy.

After a year of Italian-language study, Wilcox enrolled as a cadet in Turin's military academy (Scuola d'Applicazione d'Artiglieria e Genio), where he acquitted himself well and earned the right to wear the uniform of the Italian army officer. He wore it proudly. The theatrical gold braid and flowing fur-trimmed cape of the uniform suited Wilcox's good looks, an exotic blend of the features of his American father and

†Thomas K. Nakanaela, *Ka Buke Moolelo o Hon. Robert William Wilikoki* (Honolulu: Lake me Nakanaela, 1890) 20.

Hawaiian mother. His engaging Hawaiian smile won Gina's heart. Wilcox at this time was no youth, rather, a mature man who had served as an elected representative in the Hawaiian legislature and had begun to influence the course of Hawaiian political affairs with a passionate oratorical style in his native Hawaiian language. His English was serviceable, and his Italian, according to Gina, charming, though grammatically erratic.

Gina's account hurries through the courtship and engagement months but pauses in some detail on memories of the wedding day. Contemporary news accounts noted the grandeur of the ceremony, but in *Espatriata* Gina foregoes description of externals and writes instead of a bride's dazed, fragmented, internal conflicts as she passes through the wedding ritual. Her doubts that day as to the wisdom of her choice are evident and are intensified by half-heard remarks of wedding guests as they inspect the dark bridegroom. Foreshadowing of her Hawaiian experience comes when she meets the Hawaiian emissaries posted to the wedding by Kalākaua and perceives their manners as boorish. Her own religiosity surprises her, as, although unmoved by a preliminary civil ceremony, she finds that she surrenders her will to the commitment of the Catholic marriage ritual and realizes that the moment is irrevocable. Wilcox too, it seems, has his moments of doubt, and asks for her reassurance, Gina recalls, that she is "truly glad to be his bride." These and other similar candid reflections on the human experience elevate *Espatriata* above many works from the past that survive in local history collections chiefly as curiosities.

The honeymoon was in Switzerland, the wedding night in a villa on Lake Como, that "divine mirror, that seems to have been created on purpose to reflect the impressions of those solemn and unique hours of one's life." But these particular solemn and unique hours are recalled in horror and disgust. Gina was unprepared for Wilcox's "passionate frenzies," and he in turn was angered by her coldness. He told her with considerable cruelty that Italian women did not know how to love, that he should have married a Hawaiian woman (and, years later, he did so).

There followed a few months in a rented home in Turin, rather pleasant and tranquil days, Gina remembered, when the young couple began to bend and accommodate and to enjoy their little establishment, furnished with a profusion of pretty wedding gifts. Suddenly, Wilcox was recalled to Hawai'i. Gina knew little of affairs in Hawai'i, and Wilcox declined to discuss politics with his bride. Behind the recall, however, was an upheaval so sweeping that it has been termed the Hawaiian revolution of 1887.

A coalition of American missionary descendants and businessmen had long hurled criticism at Kalākaua's reign. They charged Kalākaua with corruption, saying he bought voters and drained the kingdom's treasury to pay for his extravagances. They found Kalākaua's dream of Hawai'i as the crown jewel of a Polynesian confederacy ludicrous. Kalākaua had not the taste nor the talent for effective confrontation on these matters, and stood by as a reform cabinet, loaded with his political enemies, was installed. The new constitution sharply limited the powers of the monarch. Among the economy measures proposed was the elimination of Kalākaua's study abroad program.

The journey of the newly-weds to Hawai'i was leisurely and rather luxurious. It included a tour of Paris and London, a Cunard line passage to New York, and a train ride across the American continent. The voyage can be read as a journey of self-discovery for Gina, one that culminated in the realization that her being was irrefutably Italian. Paris had its charms, but those English! They cooked their macaroni in milk, they drank tea or whiskey or water instead of wine, the women lacked style, the faces of the men were naked without a moustache. The milk-white Atlantic contrasted sadly with the blue Italian Mediterranean. Aboard the *Aurania* en route to New York, Gina listened in rage as American tourists voiced their ignorant opinions and judgments on Italy; her imperfect command of English kept her from springing to the defense of her beloved homeland.

With all the scorn for American culture of a Henry James, Gina described the United States of 1887, built by "merchants of pigs and of

grain” who, since they “had no past,” filled their “undistinguished” museums and homes with plundered European treasures. New York, Chicago, Omaha offended with their rawness. Only San Francisco pleased, and that because it so resembled Italy and was populated by many Italians. Leaving America behind as she prepared to sail for Hawai‘i, Gina attempted to remind herself that a wife takes on the nationality of her husband, but such a thought prompted her most revealing of outbursts. “My soul,” she wrote, “has remained and always will be Italian!”

Her dislike of Hawai‘i was instantaneous. “I am here, but I shan’t stay here!” she cried out to her diary. If America was unrefined, Hawai‘i could only be described as barbarous. Honolulu’s citizens, proud of their new telephones, electric lights, and music hall, would have disagreed, and it was true that in spite of Gina’s unhappiness she did find small oases of civilization in Hawaiian court and consular circles.

Woven into the travel narrative are recurring suggestions of an uneasy confrontation between Old World traveler and New World exoticism. The theme gives *Espatriata* an unexpected depth. Characterization of Wilcox early on in the narrative as “the savage” introduces the theme. As Gina and Wilcox prepare to leave Europe, at one point Gina wonders to herself if indeed she herself has “the soul of a pagan.” But as the couple travels across the American continent, leaving behind the bustling if vulgar American cities, the landscapes and customs became increasingly unsettling. The ragged degradation of ruined Indian tribes repel, as do the parched bones and strange animals of the western desert. At journey’s end Gina’s flirtation with The Other is at an end. The encounter with Hawai‘i and Hawaiians completes the alienation process.

Hawaiians will find Gina’s descriptions of the Hawaiian people offensive. To put it bluntly, Gina found the non-white peoples of the world inferior in appearance and probably in intelligence. A Polynesian whose blood had mingled with that of a Caucasian was perhaps an exception—after all, she had married just such a person—but she turned away in distaste from the pure-blooded Polynesian, as well as from

Hawai'i's Oriental population. One can only speculate as to her inner conflicts on the child she carried.

In Gina's world view, a queen was not to be discovered in her garden plucking a goose, as were the circumstances of Gina's encounter with Kapi'olani, Kalākaua's consort. As for Kalākaua, Gina termed him the "black king" and described his appearance as coarse and perhaps of negroid origin. Lili'uokalani, then a princess, later a queen, "dressed in European style . . . could pass without irreverence for a dressed up monkey of the sort which in my homeland performs in fairs. . . ." Here Gina must be charged not only with racism but with a lack of gratitude toward the princess, who, say others who have written of the relationship between the two women, treated Gina with great compassion and generosity.

Value judgments aside, Gina's account stands as a perceptive narrative of languorous island days when Hawaiians—those who had managed to escape the scourge of imported diseases—forgot the sermons of the missionaries and lived for leisure and pleasure. On hot nights the elite sat at *lu'au* and played kissing games in their gardens, and the commoners cooled themselves and played for long, guiltless hours in the sea. All was not well in the kingdom, however, and the defeat of Hawaiian sovereignty was in the air. Gina could summon little empathy for the lost cause of the Hawaiians, but her observations on the conflicts of the times are complete in outline if not in detail. She correctly summed up Kalākaua's weakness and predicted that it would be Lili'uokalani who would attempt to defy foreign usurpers. Her sense of justice compelled her to concede that "the Hawaiians have right on their side."

Little has been written on the "Dominis affair," as this overture to the later rebellions of 1889 and 1895 came to be known.† Gina's comments on this event are among the most significant of her *Espatriata* revelations. Hawaiian dean of history Ralph Kuykendall touches only lightly on

† This shadowy episode is called the "Dominis affair" by those who have interpreted it as an effort to put Lili'uokalani (Mrs. Dominis) on the throne.

these “various intrigues” of 1887. The most complete readily available notes on the Dominis affair are contained in the Blount Report, a summary prepared by the United States congressional committee commissioned to investigate American involvement in the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. Several who testified to the Blount commission reported on an 1887 plot to depose Kalākaua in favor of his sister. When the plot was discovered, a number of ringleaders were arrested, including Wilcox. The affair was hushed up in order to avoid further trouble. Wilcox was ordered to leave Hawai‘i or face imprisonment.

It is unfair to the reader’s sense of discovery to reveal here in detail Gina’s version of what went on behind the scenes during the Dominis affair. Suffice it to note that with this debacle Gina’s disillusionment with Wilcox was complete, not perhaps so much for what he intended to do, but rather, that he lacked the courage to carry out his intent.

Questions may be raised as to the veracity of this account. Writers of 19th-century travel literature, the literary genre into which *Espatriata* best fits, not uncommonly superimposed little plots onto their narratives. Some printings of *Espatriata* term the work a “romanzo,” a novel. The Dominis affair, however, was quite real, Wilcox’s banishment did occur in fact, and his action against Kalākaua, as Gina relates it, is quite consistent with that of an idealistic young man fresh from military school.

It does seem, on the other hand, that Gina fictionalized the plot strand in *Espatriata* involving her infatuation with the Italian doctor she called Mario De Lungo. No such name, nor indeed that of any other Italian traveler, appears on the passenger lists of the *Australia* (although she accurately names one of the ships which regularly carried west coast passengers to Hawai‘i). There is no record of the honors accorded De Lungo by Kalākaua as described by Gina. The official leper colony at that time, was, of course, on Moloka‘i, not Kaua‘i, as Gina has it. (Intriguingly however, there were a few lepers on Kaua‘i then, cared for by foreign doctors, not far from Hā‘ena, the place name Gina uses in this segment.) De Lungo is learned, worldly, compassionate, interested in Gina—and

above all, Italian. He possesses all the qualities Gina finds wanting in Wilcox. As a signal of her despair, she kills off her invention at a time when her real-life marriage is at its nadir.

Espatriata closes with the Dominis affair of early 1888. Wilcox and Gina lived together in San Francisco until the Spring of 1889. A daughter was born. Wilcox found employment as a surveyor while Gina taught French and Italian to the young ladies of San Francisco. In 1889, Wilcox returned to Hawai'i, according to some accounts, at the urging of Lili'uokalani, who wished to continue resistance against the reformers. Letters from Lili'uokalani linking her to revolution reportedly were found crumpled in Wilcox's pocket following Wilcox's arrest in connection with the 'Iolani Palace revolt of 1889. Obviously, Gina had no intention of returning to the islands she had so thoroughly disliked. With her infant daughter she retraced her journey back across the United States and sailed for Le Havre. There her daughter was overcome by a sudden illness and, within an hour after the first symptoms of distress, died.

Alone, impoverished, and heartsick, Gina returned to Turin. Taking stock of her assets, she took up journalism as a career. Her columns in the Turin magazine *La Donna*, written under the byline "Consigli di Mantea" (Advice from Mantea), were widely read and admired.

On her travels across the American continent she had once looked on in fascinated horror as a fellow traveler removed his sock in public to carve off a callus. As though to erase this and similar American crudities from her memory, she published her most well known book, *Le buone usanze*, a guide through the complicated labyrinth of Italian etiquette. The success of this work took it through several printings.

In view of the spectacular failure of her own marriage, there is irony and considerable bravado in her choice of topic for another book, *Gli sposi—la loro educazione, la loro salute* (practical advice on civil and religious marriage ceremonies). In *Lettere sparse: memorie di collegio* she looked back on her schoolgirl days. Several books on etiquette, *Le buone speranze*, *Il galateo delle signorine* (earlier issued under the title *Per Piacere . . . : La*

giornata della signorina), *Consigli pratici per persone di servizio*, and *Casi della vita*, established her reputation as the Miss Manners of her day.

Her Hawaiian experience became *Espatriata*. The whereabouts of *Il Ritorno*, an uncompleted manuscript planned as a sequel to *Espatriata*, remains an unsolved mystery. Her work appeared under the pseudonyms "Mantea" or, less commonly, "Miriam."

After her return to Italy, Gina instituted divorce proceedings against Wilcox. A papal decree was granted in 1895 on the grounds that Wilcox was not a Catholic at the time of the marriage. In civil proceedings that dragged on for two years, the court initially denied Gina's petition, but after an appeal, granted the divorce in 1900. Gina charged that Wilcox had misrepresented himself and that he had treated her cruelly. The Italian world of letters has chosen to perpetuate Gina's version of the marriage, and in the various Italian biographical directories preserving Gina's memory, Wilcox is portrayed as an obscure scoundrel. There is, of course, another side of the story, one that takes into account Wilcox's promising career prior to the Bayonet Constitution of 1887, as well as his considerable if controversial renown in later years as a revolutionist and statesman.

It is Gina's illuminations on the character of the young Robert Wilcox that gives *Espatriata* a special place in the literature of Hawaiiana. Many women will side with Gina when she complains that the chauvinistic Wilcox thought women lacked the intellectual capacity to understand political affairs. Wilcox carried this prejudice with him in later life and once spoke out against Lili'uokalani: "No woman ought to rule. They have no brains. They are generally weak."

He was to receive his come-uppance in later life with his marriage to Princess Theresa Owana Kaohelani, a strong-willed woman who marched at his side in election campaigns and edited *Home Rula Repubalika*, the newspaper founded to publicize the activities of his Home Rule party.

The most powerful impression of Wilcox emerging from *Espatriata*, however, is that of a man driven by a consuming passion to turn back the

tide of Hawaiian history. In Turin he had devoured the works of Machiavelli, finding applications therein to the problems of the Hawaiian monarchy. Italian patriots Garibaldi and Cavour became his heroes. With Gina in Paris he cared not a fig for French artistic treasures but was "moved to ecstasy," Gina said, by souvenirs of Napoleon's exploits. In Hawai'i, where Wilcox hoped to put into effect all that he had absorbed from European revolutionary history, Gina sat alone and neglected while Wilcox attended to the rifle practices and political rallies that set the stage for his subsequent armed revolts. In the years to come, many would criticize his means, but few would question, nor does Gina, his commitment to his country and to his people.

Some indication of the depth of Gina's enduring bitterness against Wilcox is evident in her reaction to news in 1900 that he had been elected as Hawai'i's first delegate to the United States Congress. In a letter to an American friend, reprinted in the American and Hawai'i press, Gina stormed: "I can never forgive the man who ruined my young life and who also deceived me into marrying him by wicked and false stories as to our future in Hawaii. The post of honor to which he aspires in the Congress of America shall never be his, if I can stop it, and for this reason I shall soon visit your country." (see, for example, the *Independent*, December 22, 1900.)

Wilcox's political enemies also filed a protest, charging that he was a bigamist, that he had committed treason by opposing American authority after annexation of Hawai'i, and finally, that the election for Hawai'i's congressional delegate was flawed. A congressional Committee on Elections examined the charges. Wilcox had indeed married his second wife before the Italian divorce proceedings were final, but the Committee found that Wilcox had misunderstood the timing of the Italian proceedings. The Committee dismissed other charges against Wilcox as lacking in validity.

Unlike Wilcox, Gina did not remarry, choosing to devote herself to her literary career. On March 27, 1912, in Rome, Gina was taken ill and died quite suddenly of "urecemia." At the time of her death she had

achieved a modest fame in Italy. The Italian writer Nino Caimi composed her obituary, commenting on her courage in rising above the blows life had dealt and the gentle power of her literary voice.

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Robert William Wilcox. Reproduced from *Ka Buke Mooleleo o Hon. Robert William Wilikoki*, by Thomas K. Nakanaela. Honolulu: Lake me Nakanaela, 1890. (Hawaiian Historical Society)



The Diary

Part One



Turin [August 1887]

I HAVE been a wife for two months. So often during this period have I thought of writing my diary as many people do; but two very different ideas have held me back from doing so; I hoped I would be happy, and therefore would have no story—I sincerely thought that the daily sharing of thoughts and impressions with my husband would provide a sufficient outlet for my exuberant effusiveness.

Unfortunately so brief a period of time has convinced me completely that the two arguments in my brain were mistaken: my happiness was a beautiful illusion, because my husband and I after two months know each other a bit less than we did before; there is the need, then, to find a safety valve for my perhaps somewhat restless spirit, for which, however, at present, this outlet of writing for a silent and safe friend seems sufficient. Oh! an extremely safe friend. For that I can count on William to be discreet. He is persuaded that women think, say, and write only nonsense, and so for nothing in the world would he take the trouble to turn these pages of mine; moreover, I hope I'll never have to write a single word for which I might blush not only in his presence, but in my own presence; I wish only to be sincere here, for once, occasionally; as if I were photographing my thoughts, thinking aloud in a solitary room without an echo; I wish to be able at least here to laugh and cry as my inner voice dictates, I wish to be myself again, while for some time I have not been able to recognize myself any more.

I went into marriage as if through an arch of triumph to which up to the present I have not found the corresponding building, one of those glorious motifs which Wagner suggests in his operas, motifs which are interrupted at the most beautiful moment, leaving the spectator curious, but not satisfied, rather irritated, almost aware of being cheated of a promised and rightfully expected enjoyment.

This handsome, polite, generous man who said he had loved me for so many years in silence, who in his ingenuous exotic language told me of his distant homeland so rich in flowers and legends, and promised me that he would make me its queen, was made to kindle the imagination of a girl with a mind even less romantic than mine. And I repaid him with a good measure

of affection, I cannot say love, because I have not yet formed for myself a clear idea of that sentiment for which I see so many follies are committed in the world.

When I was eighteen,—Goodness how far away it seems to me now!—I liked very much Captain Subaldi because he said sweet words to me, danced well, was blond and looked like a centaur on his horse; but if he had proposed to me that I should run away with him, for example, certainly I would have laughed him in the face. And when he, having come to realize my modest financial position, decreased the number of his visits and then no longer showed himself in the houses I was a frequent guest at, I did not cry, I did not lose my appetite, I did not try to kill myself. And so evidently it was not love on my part, or I am made differently from others and perhaps am fated never to love. Because, now that I think back on it, even during my engagement with William, I neither experienced great anxiety nor very intense joys, but rather, when he asked me to marry him on that Christmas Eve in front of the tree which Mrs. B. had decorated for a gathering of the English colony, I experienced a feeling somewhat like alarm; I was almost suffocated, I would have wanted to run away, and had to see tears in his beautiful and kind eyes to decide to say yes. Then gradually the idea became familiar to me, and to make it dear to me contributed somewhat my own and my family's arguments, perhaps in good measure the back-biting and envy awakened by my fortune, and certainly to a high degree the illusion of being deeply loved, of having found not only a husband, but a friend, a protector.

It is strange that notwithstanding my cheerful, carefree personality, I have always felt the necessity of leaning on someone stronger than I am, so that, when my poor father died, more than the grief of not seeing him any more, not hearing his dear voice, I experienced the sense of my great weakness; I became afraid, yes, afraid, of being left without defence, without protection. Mother is so good, and I worship her, but for this very reason she lets herself be overcome; she is not a shield that wards off blows, she is the soft caressing glove, and I am beginning to understand that "not by dint of caresses does one push forward the ship of life."

Unfortunately this saying was taught to me by my husband, and I find that

it is a bit early to have learned it from him; and, meanwhile, more than once, when I, who wish to "love him," draw near to him to say an affectionate word, or throw my arms around his neck in an impulse of affection, in a need to feel his heart beating next to mine, he pushes me away, saying that he must work, that he has no time for me.

He is worried, reads lengthy letters that he does not share with me. And yet I would like to share his troubles; it seems to me that I have the right and the duty to. On the other hand it is useless for me to seek to force myself into his confidence; perhaps that will come with time, when he understands that I am not a doll, but a woman now.

However I begin to understand that these orientals are different from us, they do not experience as we do the need for spiritual communion; at times he seems right on the point of telling me what is behind the sparkle of his large eyes with their corneas as blue as those of little children, and then one would say that speech is checked behind the barrier of his dazzling teeth, he smiles, that light is extinguished and the pupils do not even say anything any more. At bottom I think they still consider a woman as an inferior being incapable of associating with their ideas, having her own criteria, or reasoning. But I shall convince him that he is wrong, inasmuch as concerns us; once perhaps our women were as our poet says soft and forgetful, although I have my memory sufficiently fresh from studies as to be able to quote to him pages of ancient feminine names that have given an example of strength, firmness, of lofty moral and intellectual virtues; in any case, since then times have changed, and we, women of this century's end, have taken leave of placid flattery: we are not afraid of struggles; we feel capable of standing beside our husbands to share their problems, to comfort them, and, if necessary, to work with them.

Turin

YESTERDAY I interrupted my confidences "to my good friend" because William had returned from his School of training [Scuola d'Applicazione d'Artiglieria e Genio] where he is a student in the second course. How fine he looks in his artillery uniform! It is a shame he is not an officer on the active list of our army, for I would be more gratified by those yellow stripes already dear to me because worn by my father.

But it would be hard for Kalakaua, the king of the Sandwich Islands, to decide to renounce a subject as faithful and enthusiastic as William. He was sent, by the king himself, to study in Italy and has been here now for several years; he is fond of our country, but when he speaks of his islands his eyes gleam and his dream would be to take me there. I hope the reality of this dream is very distant; I love to travel, but to leave my country forever, to separate myself from those dear to me by so immense a distance of lands and seas, would be too painful for me! But I do not want to think about it; Lord in Heaven! a country where there is no telegraph, where it takes a month for letters to arrive? I confess I had to look for it in the atlas and it required a good deal of effort on my part to locate it in that ant-hill of islands in the Pacific! And I am not alone in my ignorance; did not an aunt of mine note with astonishment that in my trousseau there were no fur-coats? She thought it was in Siberia, that future kingdom of mine!

On the other hand, it seems truly to deserve its name "Pearl of the Pacific"; the Duke of Genoa, who went there on one of his trips [1873], informed me that it is an enchanting place worthy of the tales of a Thousand and One Nights! Here, however, many believe that it is inhabited by cannibals, and they pity me. I am not afraid of them; if they are all like William, I feel strong enough to defend myself; moreover, I am too thin to serve as food for cannibals, even though famished.

Actually I remember that when I met my husband, several months ago at a dinner in the home of R. (as a matter of fact it was just then that it seems his great torch for me was set aglow), and he eyed me more than young men of good breeding usually do here in Italy, and smiled with his dazzling white teeth that many beautiful women envy him for, I had a certain feeling of

alarm. Not that I read in his glance or in his smile the mark of my destiny; I have never heard those mysterious voices that predict the future, but since my companions told me, in jest, that the savage was devouring me with his eyes, foolishly I shuddered. Poor gentle savage! from that day he has always loved me and tried to learn Italian quickly so that I might understand him, and when he was studying in that gloomy military Academy on Via della Zecca, he would always face the direction of my house, where his sun was, he used to tell me, when we became engaged later. How imaginative and graceful these orientals are in their expressions! He used to call me "lehua flower, leilehua, pualehua," all terms of endearment that express flowers in his country, and I felt myself caressed by them, I flattered myself that it would always be like that!

I had indeed heard that men change after marriage, but so quickly . . . come now! I did not believe it for one minute.

I can't have become ugly in so short a time; my mirror tells me otherwise, the people passing by me on the street tell me so, now that I go out alone and . . . this pleases me; it is useless for me to conceal it: it consoles me for my husband's coldness. Well, coldness is not it; it would be fairer to call it fickleness, inconstancy of feelings, because he goes from complete indifference, from the greatest distance from me and from my concerns to true frenzies of passion, and because sometimes I rebel against these outbursts in which I detect no affection, but rather a whim, he becomes enraged and has reached the point of telling me that Italian women do not know how to love, that he ought to have married a Hawaiian woman. Perhaps he is not wrong, but nevertheless why should I be blamed if I prefer a gentle caress to a hug, if an affectionate word, a clasp of the hand, move me more than the vehement outburst, brutal with a voluptuousness that has not yet awakened in my senses which remain those of a girl?

Because of this I suffered a lot the first days of my marriage.

I had read perhaps more than young women do in our world; paintings and statues had showed me truths that disturbed my curious thoughts, but what really would be necessary to know, what is inevitable between man and wife, I did not know with a naivety that was perhaps ridiculous, because

William laughed about it at first, but then became irritated and finally declared that it was an affectation; because, he says, in his country girls at the age of fourteen have no mysteries concerning matters of love, for which all their existence prepares them. I am not capable of passing judgment on whether this theoretical initiation to this most solemn act of life is wise; I know that even in Greece there existed schools that trained young women in the art of making themselves pleasing to men; however, we, and in this regard we may perhaps be inferior to Hawaiian and Greek women, are taught history, geography, mathematics, physics, etc., at school, but no teacher takes on the responsibility of opening our eyes about what it is the jealously guarded glory of the husband to reveal to his beloved companion.

Certainly it is necessary for this teacher to arm himself with much prudence, with an extremely exquisite tact, with a deep knowledge not only of women in general, but of this woman of his; because it is not an empty phrase that says that every soul is a world, and the soul of a girl ought to be awakened with the gentle caress that the sun's ray has when it uncovers the rose, if the man does not wish the rose to wither before having exhaled into his heart all its fragrant benediction.

Unfortunately, I am afraid that in the Sandwich Islands there is no such school in "naughty" masculine delicacy (on the other hand, it seems those daughters of the Pacific have no need of it) because, otherwise, that first night—there on the poetic Lake Como, a divine mirror, that seems to have been created for the purpose of reflecting the impressions of those solemn and unique hours of one's life—would have been different.

Instead . . .

May God give me strength! I dare not think of it without disgust and shame, yes, shame, because I had then the most horrible disappointment, this being a proof of how great my expectation was, and—even if it is human and logical that the human soul, and above all the young soul, strains for pleasure with all its strength—I however should have been able to take myself away from my personal sensations and think that I was fulfilling a duty toward the man who had chosen me above all others, that I was willingly making a sacrifice he demanded in the name of love, that I was doing in short what all

women who get married do . . . but I have said it: I need to obliterate this episode from my memory!

And yet its mark has remained in my consciousness, and it would require a diplomacy which is certainly not to be found in my husband's resources to make visions of joy blossom over it. To arouse in my heart a feeling of jealousy that refused to come to life—as perhaps would happen to many of us, if before being put into the world our wandering souls were queried, William thought it useful to sketch out during our stay in Zurich a platonic little story with a rather attractive miss who sat in front of us at the round table in the hotel.

There were languid tender looks, pretty words with double meanings that brought a rosy glow to the rather pale cheeks of the unknown blonde, unrequested little favors received with affectation; I became aware at once of the little game which—though it did not move in me the green-eyed monster which it seems slumbers in the soul of those who love truly—did create an unpleasant pity for the man who resorted to so unworthy a means so as to awaken his Galatea. I fear nothing more than ridicule and, since I was convinced that this girl, cleverer than he, had guessed and was having fun with his naive misconduct, I told him as much with all the calmness which my role as an interested spectator allowed me; he became full of anger, oh! a dark anger, declaring that I was like all women: jealous, unhappy; and, no sooner said than done, decided that we should leave at once.

I asked for nothing better. In a few minutes I packed suitcases and trunks, at ten o'clock we left in the bus taking us to the station; after the tiny problems that accompany any departure were overcome, we found ourselves in one of the comfortable compartments of the Swiss trains, much pleasanter than ours, and sped to Lucerne, clean, elegant, saucy, that would be dear to my memory if it did not belong to the Confederacy.

It is incredible how much antipathy this country, so rich and wise, more cosmopolitan than Rome or Paris, has awakened in me.

It has the same effect on me as one of those kings in children's fairy tales who feed on the fattest and most ruddy subjects and sweat grease from all the pores of their gleaming skin.

People go to Switzerland like Muslims to Mecca; sick people go there

because it is understood that there one's health is restored; healthy people go in order to be able to say they have climbed the Jungfrau and have seen the sun rise from Mount Pilatus; the rich go because money is spent there even to have the right to breathe; the poor because there money is earned off people's snobbery. And then they say that Italians live off foreigners! I should say rather that we do not know how to take sufficient advantage of our treasures of artistic and natural beauties; in the federal Republic I always had the impression that the mountains had been created expressly to be climbed by funicular railways and the lakes had been carved out so as to have pretty steam-boats gliding over them; as for the Swiss themselves, I think the only genuine ones are those who serve as guards in the Vatican.

Enough! we too saw the Berne bears, strolled through Lausanne, visited Montreux, took carriage drives in haughty Geneva and, by way of Mont Cenis, returned to Turin where the rough Gianduvia dialect seemed to me almost harmonious after having had my ear tortured by so many Ostrogothic languages and the sleepy silence of the streets in Turin gave repose to my spirit after the noise, the activity of those cities where life is more intense in proportion to the brevity of time granted for enjoyment by the harshness of the climate.

I am not sorry that I did not take notes during my trip; since I had prepared myself with a guide-book, I can say that I was as well acquainted with Switzerland before the trip, as I am now. I discovered nothing new, I saw everything that was in our itinerary and that the Baedeker indicated for us to admire; it seems to me I fulfilled an arid duty and I derive from this all the arid satisfaction possible.

That is not how I had dreamed of my honeymoon trip!

I thought I would carry away from it images of sweetness to be remembered throughout a lifetime; it seemed to me that I would return to it in my thoughts at moments of vexation as if to a flowering oasis to seek there, in the remembrance of savored joys, the strength to struggle, to have hope still in the future. Instead, it is best to confess it to myself, I was quite bored and experienced, getting off the train, a sort of feeling of liberation, of joy, and if we were to start over, I think I would have the courage to decline its fancied

joys, as well as its annoyances, its disappointments.

I do not mean that it should be like this for everybody but if one day I have a daughter I shall advise her to take the famous trip some months after the wedding when, through living together, she will have learned to know the tastes, the intimate habits of her husband; thus she will not have to add to the physical fatigue of moving from one place to the next, the not less serious one of learning to know the soul she selected as her companion.

Because one must have no illusion that engagements, as practiced in our countries especially, and even when they are of long duration, really serve to reveal the two young people to each other. I for example, though I feel I am even too honest, am sure that during those daily visits of William, which took place always under the watchful supervision of my mother, I always presented my best side, seeking to make prominent my tiny good qualities, and hiding the defects which I recognize in myself.

Nor because of this do I think I wished to deceive him, but I behaved that way since I felt it would be at the very least in bad taste to give way to some of my not infrequent attacks of bad humor with a person who basically was a stranger to me, whom I wanted to like me and who, not knowing me very well, would hardly be able to forgive me. Also unconsciously, since I would not accuse my husband of duplicity, he must have argued similarly and, only when that formidable yes inexorably bound us together, we both removed the masks of proprieties and behold! our honeymoon trip was spoiled, as before us so many have had theirs spoiled because instead of taking interest in the places they visit, they had to make use of the trip to learn to know each other.

Turin.

THE house we live in is a true nest of lovebirds; from my delightfully huge bed I can see the chestnuts on the avenue now all green and in full bloom, and from those red and yellowish bunches comes an exquisite and exciting perfume which makes me dream with my eyes open. Next to mine is William's room, austere, elegant, in fine contrast with mine,

charming and pretty in its profusion of white muslin which clads the walls, is draped about the windows, and surrounds the bed as if in a cloud.

I had to sustain a real struggle to succeed in this separation during the hours of sleep . . . I won and I take pleasure in the fact. It probably is a refinement of coquetry, I do not deny it, but it seems to me that there are moments in life in which it is necessary to be alone to preserve that tiny bit of mystery without which the most beautiful objects lose some of their value. I do not know who said: "that there is no great man for his valet." ("qu'il n'y a pas de grand homme pour son valet.") And does this phrase not confirm the reasonableness of my feeling? But to persuade William of it, I needed the patience of a saint; he said that if I really loved him I would never wish to leave him, even if it were for an instant.

This is nonsense. Rather, the better things are, the more they are to be taken in small doses.

We have besides a pretty studio, a parlor; the dining room opens onto a tiny garden, one could dance in the bath room, and everything is so beautiful, cheerful, in good taste, now that I have arranged my knick-knacks there, those pretty and beautiful objects which were given to me for my wedding!

Oh what a tiring, exciting and memorable day it was!

Indeed the night before I had, like great generals on the eve of their famous battles, slept the most placid of my slumbers.

Then began the long and complicated procedure of my toilette: a more artificial hair style than usual, the finest and most elegant linen of the trousseau, the white dress with a long train, the veil, the orange blossoms, etc., etc.

I let events take their course, something like a split had occurred in me, the image reflected in the mirror, somewhat pale, but rather attractive, did not seem to me to be of me. In fact, my soul was absent, it was roaming in the distance, it was reliving the serene, cheerful past amid my loving family and my dearest friends; it was inquiring into a mysterious, uncertain future alongside this man who had come from afar to interrupt my carefree existence, to bring to it a new throbbing of the heart, unknown joys, perhaps frightful pain!

And the errant little spirit recovered its stable equilibrium only in front of the comic majesty of the official in a tricolored sash, who was asking me solemnly if I consented to take as lawful husband William R. W.

I should say so!

Oh! wasn't I there for that purpose? Did not all those people joined together in the poorly ventilated hall to see me, to read on my face my impressions so as to gossip at afternoon receptions, know the answer already? And had they not already begun to gossip, while that poor employee of the city went through the articles of the marriage code which no wife, I wager, has listened to with undivided attention?

"The bride is lovely, but white does not become her!"

"D. R. made the gown for her."

"The trousseau came from Paris."

"They are going to America for the honeymoon."

"They say he is a prince."

"He is somewhat dark however!"

"He seems to be much in love; see how he looks at her!"

And so on . . .

I could hear all of this melange of lies and true statements and, deep inside, kept calm, and, notwithstanding the importance of the act I was accomplishing, I laughed with a somewhat malicious laugh which was reflected, it seems, on my face, because William who was instead fully aware and moved, asked me gently: "Is it true then that you are happy to be my wife?"

Happy?

I could not say; I continued to contemplate as a stranger that worldly, fashionable play which was being performed, and in which I was cast as leading lady. It seemed that I came to only when I understood that I was pledging myself for life with a word that I could no longer retract, during the religious ceremony celebrated by the Archbishop [Gaetano Alimonda (1818-1891), Cardinal and Archbishop of Turin] in person, in his private chapel.

What a difference between these two functions that join together two individuals for better and for worse, for happy days and those of misfortune, forever!

Unfortunately, my religious sentiment is not highly developed, but in that august place of prayer, before that venerable priest—pale and almost bloodless in the sacred vestments that seemed too heavy to be worn by the frail figure, who did not recite, as the Mayor did, a lesson learned by heart and repeated a thousand times, but truly spoke with God and implored from Him His blessing on my head—I was truly moved; I did not cry, because I do not easily come to tears, but my soul was good, it sincerely promised the dedication that was being asked of it, feeling that beyond that altar, above that priest, was a mysterious and powerful force which was accepting my vows, recording them and would watch over their observance. And when in the carriage where the two of us alone had taken our seat, William, caring little for proprieties, kissed me on the lips with passionate tenderness, I felt over all my limbs a new and extremely delicious chill, it seemed that I truly belonged to him; at that moment, if he had asked me for my life, I would have given it to him at once with unspeakable joy.

Oh! would there have lasted thus the impression of the Sacrament, the holy enthusiasm of that moment!

But perhaps because matrimony does not make use of the chrism the way the other sacraments do, the blessed emotion quickly vanished amid the happiness of the nuptial banquet, the confusion of the departure, and then came the rebelliousness of that terrible evening, there, in the splendid villa, on the shores of the lake which despite its gentle beauty suggesting kisses and caresses, was not able to induce me to accept serenely the situation of the moment.

Turin

I AM not feeling too well; it is useless for them to torture their brains to find out the cause, to torment me with doctors, drugs that upset me, advice that irritates me and which I do not heed; I am simply in that condition which is called interesting, perhaps because it deprives a woman of interest for a certain length of time, making her deformed, ugly, and capricious.

As if I did not remember what happened to my friends who got married before me!

I should like only that it not be spoken of, that my mother not look at me with those pitying eyes as if a misfortune were threatening me, that my friends should not all ask me the same question; oh! out of affectionate solicitude! I do not question this for a moment. first of all it may also not be true and remain just a hope.

Hope? And do I myself desire it deep down in my heart?

Among my childhood toys, of which I retain the memory, I see few dolls, for whom I never learned to sew a dress; they were my pupils, women whom I used to visit, or they completed the army which, formed by my younger sisters and me, fought, under the orders of my brother, at the time a gentle leader, who has become today a perfect scoundrel, the despair of the family and crucifixion of all the young women he meets on his path.

But because I did not learn how to make dresses for dolls and I did not have a good time rocking them back and forth with the graceful movements that I saw my playmates indulge in, must I deduce that I shall be a bad mother? Perhaps this maternal sentiment which lends itself so much to the creation of fine literary pages and artistic masterpieces is still latent in my heart and I feel that I am normal enough not to despair of its developing when it becomes necessary.

William naturally is very proud of this probable paternity of his; he looks at me with more loving eyes, surrounds me with tiny attentions that are moving in that colossus who with two fingers could knock me down. So now he is already better than me! and I who permitted myself to pass judgment on him!

Meanwhile, unfortunately, affairs are becoming complicated way off there in the small kingdom in the Pacific, the vicissitudes of which as a matter of fact I do not fully understand: William is often called by his consul and comes back from seeing him most upset. There is something he is unwilling to tell me yet, but which I feel fluttering about me like the harbinger of a storm.

But I don't wish to worry beforehand: what has to be must be, and I do

not wish to aggravate the situation with my bad humor.

I should prefer my husband to share his troubles with me; however, confidence in us cannot be imposed and, if he wishes to spare me premature anguish, I can only praise his delicate attention. I should prefer a bit more abandon, nor would the greater desire to reduce the distress of another person, if I remained silent, be able to stifle an outburst from my heart; but I am only a utilitarian little woman, as my mother sometimes puts it, and William is a man, and moreover he belongs to another race which I cannot claim to know after living together with a single individual for only four months, because certainly the brief interviews with two officials sent by the King as witnesses to my wedding did not enlighten me [Colonels James H. Boyd and Samuel Nowlein, or Nowlien]. Heaven above! if I had to judge on that basis, I should be right in building for myself very few illusions about my new compatriots.

I don't mean they lacked manners! They were dressed to perfection; I should say so! they came from London where they had been to obtain the gifts which their sovereign was sending to his future subject! they smoked excellent cigars, their table manners were fine, but they engaged in certain conversations that would have made a poppy grow red and, when they did not feel that they were being observed, they had certain flashes in their eyes which were terrifying and I deemed them untrustworthy, notwithstanding the fact that William strove with all his strength to convince me that I was wrong.

Anyway, I married one, not all of them, and I shall always be able to keep far away from those who do not inspire a liking in me.

Turin.

I SPENT some sad days, but now that everything is settled I am calm and am going to face the future with a strong and serene spirit: at least I want everybody to think so, because the grief of the one departing is less great than that of those who see someone dear to them go far off into the unknown, and I do not wish to make the desolation of my family worse than it is with my own tears.

We are leaving in a matter of days for the Sandwich Islands. The idea would seem amusing to me were it not that so many melancholy and even a bit frightening images surround it; when all is said and done I do not know where I am going, I don't know what my fate will be, I ask myself with anxious heart if I shall return one day and see again what has been dear to me up to now.

And to say that I had to sustain a real battle to have the right to give myself this cruel torment. Yes, that scum of a Hawaiian consul, [Michele Cerulli, Hawai'i's consul in Naples] who is also William's banker, had it that he should depart alone and leave me in Italy! That would have been the last straw! Poor little husband of mine! If I have to face adversity, I shall share it with him; it won't be pleasant, but I shall put into practice all my philosophy and make that horrible Englishman and my lord and master see that Italian women can meet adverse fortune courageously and adapt themselves to circumstances.

The thought of the very long trip does not frighten me; rather, to see new places, to become acquainted with customs different from ours are prospects that flatter my curiosity; I have in me a somewhat Bohemian spirit which has sometimes been reprimanded in me, but which in this case will be, I think, of great usefulness; I love the sea which in its shifting moods which has always given me the impression of accepting—with the intellect that such things have—our secrets, of being moved by them, of sympathizing with our sufferings and with our happiness. And since destiny condemns me to live on an island, I'll tell the good sea my anxieties, the sea my joys, if Heaven still be willing to grant me any.

Now that he has spoken, William is calmer; it made a good impression on him to see me accept with relative serenity the situation of the moment, a situation which in truth seems to be not at all clear and which I do not even try to clarify, contenting myself with ascertaining its consequences.

Moreover I shall have time to study it when I am there, it will serve to occupy my mind.

Meanwhile I am studying English indefatigably; I force this poor tongue of mine to pronounce words which seem like serpents' hisses, I force it to

aspirations which one would say were sighs of pain. Oh! I have pain and a burning one, but I hide it with a strength of which I should not have thought myself capable.

We are selling a great part of our household goods, furniture, carpets, plants and it seems to me that pieces of my heart are going away with those objects which I had such little enjoyment from, and which nonetheless I already loved most tenderly.

Today William attended the farewell dinner from his colleagues, this evening he put on for the last time his uniform, and large silent tears fell over his beautiful golden stripes that were his pride, a somewhat childish pride let us say, because in the last analysis the uniform was not for him, as it is for our officers, a revered and dear symbol, but he had taken a liking to it and I was grateful to him for this feeling, natural on the other hand to his good overgrown boy's heart. We shall leave in a few days; I have provided myself with several pretty dresses for the trip: a trip of almost a month! But it seems that on the Atlantic steamers one dresses up for dinner as if one had received an invitation, and I do not wish to be less formal for the occasion than the others.

A woman who feels well dressed and finds that she is attractive is halfway to good humor, and I need all the elements that can help me keep my morale high.

I wish these last days preceding our departure would fly past, for I seem to be witnessing a last death struggle; the inevitable visits of leavetaking from relatives and friends, words of sympathy and pity . . . it all moves me, fills my eyes with tears and I refuse to cry, I do not wish to awaken compassion; perhaps it is an excessive pride but other people's pity wounds me rather than comforting my distress.

And then I do not believe it.

What can it matter to these women who today seem to be interested in my fate, if I live here or elsewhere? I am not a useful person, I do not play, I do not sing, I do not possess in short those talents praised by ladies who receive visitors one fixed evening each week; on the contrary, I am young, I dance very well, I enjoy everything, I am perhaps a bit flirtatious and not stupid, and

therefore I prefer the conversation of men to that of women whom I often scandalize because I say what I think and I have the courage to laugh when I feel like it; and so, deep down, my leaving should rather bring joy than grief and, since I am persuaded of it and I find it appropriate, I would like to be spared this display of condolence which, rather than comforting me, irritates me and arouses my scorn.

Paris

EVERY so often I have to pinch my arms to make sure that it's really me, the little girl from the provinces, roaming enchantedly through these magnificent streets that seem like city squares, over these marvelous gardens; the one who stops in front of the display windows in each of which seems to be assembled the merchandise of a hundred cities and, if the pain of separation from those dear to me did not still gnaw at me too sharply, if I did not think too often that this stay is to be extremely brief and afterwards we shall pick up again the harsh road of exile, I should be in Paradise because I am in Paris.

The dramatists, the novelists are right to select this superb city as setting for their creations; here women are all comely, at least interesting: here one breathes in art, life, good taste, and there comes over one a desire to live, even to work, to enjoy things very intensely.

At certain moments I think I am intoxicated; it will be best for us to leave soon because I am losing my head! How many of those women called gay one sees and how beautiful, elegant they are! It is too bad not to be able to meet one of them! They must be so fascinating. . . .

I expressed this desire to William and terribly shocked him; he gave me a lecture that seemed to me to be quite ridiculous; how puritanical men are when it is to their advantage! I bet that, if he were alone, he would take at least two of them to the theater and would dine with them in all those restaurants with such extravagant names, and where he refuses to accompany me at any cost. I, however, look at them, those women, I admire their

splendid get-ups, I have a good time imagining their homes, their complicated and unusual lives. I very nearly envy them, because they are staying in Paris and I am leaving for the . . . Sandwiches!

Ugh! the ugly name which for the present awakens in me no other ideas than of ham, liver paste and buttered bread. So different from Paris with all its prestige and the exaltation which it arouses in me!

Unfortunately, to interrupt the fever which makes my pulse beat happily these days, there insistently returns the memory of the separation from my family. I am intensely moved by my emotions, whether of joy or of sorrow, and I suffered so much that my heart seemed to burst when the train moved under the Turin station and through the veil of tears I saw get smaller and smaller the tiny group of those dear figures who up to a short time previously had possession of my entire soul.

Oh! the weeping of that sainted little old lady who was a companion and teacher to me, and truly gave me all of her life: of my dear granny! The tears of the old! those tears that flow slowly among the wrinkles as if they were having difficulty in coming out, because their source has almost dried up after all the tears shed during their existence! those tears of my grandmother tore my soul apart and I shall never be able to forget them.

But enough, enough, of these sad thoughts that weaken me without purpose.

Walking through Monceau Park I met Signora Craze, now a teacher of the little duchess of A . . . and behold all my schoolgirl life revived by enchantment in my imagination. What an incomparable tomboy I was, during those years of such beautiful activity, of such marvelous thoughtlessness! I don't have remorse for having wasted a single hour of time, either that destined for study, or the remainder, alas too brief! that they left for us to enjoy ourselves.

If I knew how, I should like to tell the merry tale of that time and that good Signora Craze, with her somewhat bandy-legged gait and her hair so black and glossy that they called her Madame Peau Rouge [Red Skin], would reappear in it often, a peaceful victim of our inexhaustible good humor.

How mistaken people are not to let children play more! they become

naughty because, with the excuse of training them, one fetters all their movements, one cuts the wings of their imagination, then forces them to pretend when it would be so much simpler to let them live. But these are theories of mine that fortunately I adopted afterwards, for perhaps otherwise I should not have been that admirable pupil, even today praised by the good Signora. She asked me laughingly if I had acquired judgment.

But . . . not even I could say!

What is this so important thing that the mere word seems to fill the mouth of the person uttering it with solemnity? If judgment means to disapprove more or less openly of what others do, to hold a grudge against life and things, certainly I have not acquired it and I hope never to do so; but if it is sufficient to have formed for oneself a clear concept of evil and of good and to act in consequence of that, then I have and even in excess so that I feel that I am responsible for every one of my actions and I am sorry when I err because I feel I have erred in full consciousness, in perfect freedom.

But watch me speak seriously as if I wished to convince anyone who might still have doubts about me!

It has become late; William who tires more than I do of our vagabonding across the siren city, snores blissfully in his bed. Only a few minutes before he was reproving me for tiring my eyes scribbling, and now here he is already departed for the kingdom of dreams. Deep down I think he had some idea in his head, but . . . I pretended not to understand and he gave up. What an enviable personality!

Paris

A *DAY at Versailles, the weather somewhat cloudy, a milky, tepid atmosphere, perfumed by these last roses of the season that have all the poetic beauty of certain ladies in the sunset. What enchanting hours I spent there! I did not even mourn over the sun, the good sun my friend, because it seems to me that Versailles would lose a little of its mysterious allure*

in dazzling light. In fact, when the sun shines one sees no ghosts and I have seen them all, the ancient inhabitants of this Eden, roaming through streets where already autumn was resting its rich brush-strokes of gold; I saw them gliding fleetly over meadows enamelled with violet "Colchicum" plants presaging the winter; I saw them vanishing behind the walls of those little cottages that seem made in Nuremberg and transported here by a truly royal whim of fancy.

And the suggestion was so vivid that at certain moments I thought I actually heard the bursts of laughter of the shepherdess princesses, with shining hair as fine as velvet, intent on squeezing the milk from the tiny cows, as they pruned plants and gathered flowers with their tiny hands covered with gems. Poor shepherdesses changed so quickly into prisoners in the Bastille, poor human flowers whom the cold steel of the guillotine truncated from their stalks full of fervent life! While we were returning in the train that was taking us to Paris I was a bit sad, and William scolded me for dreaming too much, from being too easily distracted from real life. But I rejoice for this gift which permits me never to be bored, and to populate my hours of solitude with characters who really existed or are created in my mind, to live their lives, feel their joys and perhaps even sorrows. Who knows if this faculty will not become for me a strength in the strange existence which is unfolding before me.

I visited Notre Dame, the severe turreted church which makes one think of a prison created by the good God, rather than a refuge for souls that implore mercy. I kept expecting to see appear before me the deformed shade of poor Quasimodo, and I feel something stronger than fear for everything ugly.

Sometimes I think that I have in me the soul of a pagan because otherwise I could not possess this almost morbid sensitivity which makes me tremble with joy or with disgust depending on whether the images which present themselves to my eyes are beautiful or not.

The museum of the Louvre absolutely struck me dumb, but I do not claim to have seen it. It would require more time and an intelligent guide to get some clear vision of it, and William, poor little one, is not quite made for this artistic initiation. Rather he was moved to ecstasy under the truly solemn vaults of the Pantheon, in that museum of the Invalides where are gathered

the souvenirs of the Napoleonic saga. The emperor is one of his favorite heroes, he knows his history in the tiniest details and is astounded because it leaves me rather cold.

Emotions, however, do not obey commands and, not even to please him, could I pretend something I did not feel. We visited the preparations for the World Exposition. Goodness, how beautiful it will be! Oh, to be able to be there, to enjoy its marvels and celebrations, instead of going off wanderers to Honolulu.

Honolulu! Timbuktoo! Beelzebub!

They all seem to me to be synonyms of something I do not know, that I do not understand, that must be ugly and evil. But perhaps I am wrong and in any case it is best not to anticipate events, all the more so if they are to be sad and if one cannot prevent their course.

London

T*HIS journal is beginning to sound like a railway time schedule and I am just at the beginning of the trip. Within a few hours I could be back in my Italy; however, fate, like an inexorable enemy, pursues me, pushes me far into the unknown, into the storm. Although it was my first trial at sea, I proved to be a rather good sailor. Indeed I should not have suffered at all, crossing the Channel from Calais to Dover, if that confounded steward, in a excess of zeal, had not presented to me a small basin, no longer intact, to receive the overload from my stomach. Then more than by the rolling of the ship I was moved by nausea and . . . Crash, bang! Fortunately, it is a sickness which does not last and, aboard the train, I was better than before, so that I could seat myself at the table in the dining car, where I had lunch with an enviable appetite, as if I had taken the most efficacious of aperitifs!*

If I am not mistaken, the ancient Romans, who rivalled Gargantua at meals, had found useful this preventive unloading of the stomach, in order to be able to introduce therein the greatest possible amount of food. It would therefore be ridiculous for me to complain of something, perhaps inevitable,

when they did it for pleasure. I don't mean that it is polite, but if I begin to be amazed now to what lengths will I have to go before reaching my final destination?

But what wretched food! These English people eat badly! Both on the train and in this hotel I have not found a single tasty dish; the meat seems not even cooked, it is so bloody everywhere; the vegetables are seasoned by water; they have their macaroni cooked in milk; what barbarians! and they drink tea instead of wine, or water and whiskey. I thought perhaps it was only in novels, but it is an actual fact and I am not at all happy about it, regretting the delicate little dinners of the *Café Anglais*, of the *Maison dorée* and also of those characteristic and lively Parisian tavernes.

It is certainly true: anywhere at all one eats; only at Paris does one dine!

Ah Paris! Paris! garden and hall, temple and theater! I miss it all as if I had been born there or had been born to live there!

Whoever is reading me would be right to say that I am the most gluttonous woman in the world. So be it! without arriving at superlatives it is certain that I like good things; is it my fault if my taste is as developed as my sight and the other nobler senses?

We have no time to visit the city, which moreover attracts me but little, enveloped as I glimpse it in a dense, gray fog, which seems to be made of smoke from all the chimneys of the world and tightens the throat, dirties the wash! If we don't leave soon, I too shall be the victim of spleen, the country's sickness, which the natives come to cure in our beautiful Italian sun.

Oh truly these Londoners who traverse the immense streets of the city are not good looking! For example the men do not wear moustaches. Is it possible to imagine anything more horrible and distasteful? The kiss of a man with no moustache? I feel a shudder at the mere thought of it. But why do certain ideas cross my mind? If my husband should read them!

There is no fear of that; he is immersed in a map of the United Kingdom; I do not know what he wishes to discover. I know that, thanks to his research and shilly-shalling, we missed the boarding of the "*Champagne*," a magnificent French ship where I should at least have enjoyed myself a little, at Le Havre. What I gained instead is an idea of London; oh! a rather vague and certainly

not bright idea! But the women are perhaps more beautiful, though less attractive, than French women; I often find in them certain profiles of ancient statues which I have seen in Rome or in Florence.

In fact, did the Roman legions not reach these islands? And the conquered enslaved and brought to Rome, may not they have served as models for the artists of the Empire and of the Republic?

I have received long letters from home, full of melancholy; they are the last ones before setting sail for America, the last farewell to the exile. I have been unable to check my tears. My beloved ones! I feel very downhearted indeed, but I try to strengthen myself, I permit myself to be distracted by everything that surrounds me, so that in my words the echo of my grief will not reach you.

Dublin

W*E are staying only a few hours in this beautiful city which I have however barely caught sight of in the pale light of an autumn dawn and where we arrived after crossing the Irish Sea from Holyhead on the western English coast. The voyage of just one night, on a vessel so clean, comfortable, and elegant that I tried not to sleep so as to enjoy the rocking of the peaceful waves, the odd aspect of that great hall where, on small sofa beds of red velvet, men and women, used to this spectacle more than I was, rested from the labors of the day. And I had a good time looking, by the light of the lamps hanging from the ceiling, at the faces of those sleeping, so varied in features, in expression. But I don't have the time to describe them; we are leaving again in a short time by train to reach Queenstown, where we shall embark on the "Aurania," a Cunard Line steamer that will take us to New York.*

I am not a bit tired or else I don't realize it in this constant movement, this incessant change of scenes, of faces that pass before my eyes like figures of a Chinese lantern.

It is strange, but this long trip had been predicted to me by a young Englishman, a passionate fortune-teller, one evening a long time ago, when

I still did not know my husband, when nothing would lead anyone to suspect that I would have made this unusual marriage. In truth then I did not have any faith in the words of the handsome baronet who in fact made my heart beat a bit faster, but up to now everything he read in the lines of my slender, nervous hand—of which I am a tiny bit vain because it has won for me so many flattering praises—has come true.

Every day I become more and more convinced that I am a scatterbrain: here I am before an unknown future that would frighten anybody, hurled into full combat with events, without preparation, without the means essential to resist and triumph, and I, instead of thinking of the uncertain future, joke and laugh like a child, I am distracted by every shadow crossing my path, I take pleasure in every word that stimulates my self-esteem; indeed I keep on repeating these words to myself in moments of discomfort, because of the horror I have of all suffering, perhaps because of the awareness of my inability to endure suffering with dignity.

This credo is not very Christian, but it is human, and moreover I know of no law that imposes on us the duty of seeking out suffering.

Queenstown

CITY of the Queen! I do not know why they have given it so grandiloquent a name, and I have not the time to find out as to what sovereign gave birth to it, because in two hours we go on board; a steam launch will take us to the "Aurania" which I see floating in the distance on this sea as white as milk, melancholy and cold, over which large birds with huge white wings which must be herons are flying. A very sad spectacle which makes me regret our Mediterranean so blue, animated with sails, with songs, with picturesque sailors in their variegated rags.

Extremely beautiful the trip from Dublin to this tiny city, an advanced sentinel of the immense Ocean. The mild temperature coming to the island from the Gulf Stream delays the destructive work of the autumnal heat, and one crosses an enchanting country that seems truly cut in emerald; every shade

of green, from the dark one of cypresses to the delicate one of new-born leaves; and frequent, mysterious, suggestive of historical and legendary memories, are the castles of these land-owners, as rich as kings, amidst populations dying of hunger and of poverty.

"The Irish are the Italians of the United Kingdom," said to me a woman who was traveling with us in the train and from my glances, from the words I exchanged with William, had understood my admiration for her homeland.

And the conversation that had just been initiated by this woman with sweet beautiful eyes, with a fine mouth that smiled without disclosing those protruding teeth that seem to be the prerogative of English women who travel, was proof of the greater warmth, of the greater expansiveness of those souls, in comparison with the English.

In the whole time, fortunately brief, that we stayed in England, not one person male or female, addressed a word to me, because I had not been introduced. At certain times I quivered because keeping the tongue at rest for hours (William when he is absorbed in his thoughts forgets that I am near him) makes me frightfully nervous; but since I knew the habits of the place, I resigned myself, contenting myself with picking up the sentences that reached me often amid cheerful laughter, in which I should have willingly joined.

I am altogether a bit nervous: the sight of that great colossus which rocks there on the sea and on which I shall spend at least a week worries me. Not that I am exactly afraid, but something that is rather close to it.

But I do not wish it to be known.

I shall go up on the bridge serenely, and if I am destined to serve as a meal for some shark, never mind! After all, it would be a less banal end than the one which in general befalls people of my kind, in a bed a little disarranged from the convulsions of agony, among people who weep if they love you, or desire that you hasten the catastrophe that will permit their return to the peaceful customary life: in short, a long, monotonous, painful thing. Instead here no display: a gust of denser fog, an unexpected bump, a blaze, and it is all over: there is not even the time to think about it and, between the worms of the coffin under cold earth and the belly of a beautiful silver fish under the great sea which always renews itself, well then! I choose the sea, my friendly

sea. And since there is no other recourse, I do as the bird does hiding its little head under its wing so as not to see the hawk which threatens it.

One might say I have lugubrious ideas, but that would be a mistake, because rather, when I have told this faithful friend of mine something melancholy, what remains in my head is cheerful and serene; so it is with a courageous spirit that I say goodbye to Europe, old as one might say, but like so many old things rather beautiful and seductive for one who was born there, and knows how to appreciate its complicated perfumes, its unique and indestructible fascination.



The Diary

Part Two



On board the *Aurania*

I AM writing a bit worse than usual, lying down at full length on a long chair of reeds covered with cushions; a large gray veil entwirls about my otter beret and should defend my face from the bites of this sea air so delicious to the lungs, but fatal to delicate complexions.

Oh yes! the veil! now its mission is useless for me! When I got up after two days of rest on that wretched bed in the cabin which made me think that I was in a coffin, and I looked at myself in the mirror, I turned round frightened to see if the image reflected was really of me: a cooked crayfish, tree bark, an old rose apple burnt by the sun . . . that was my face! A true disaster!

But I was so comical in my long flannel shirt, with that red mask, that I burst out into a crazy laughter and, when William came to get me to take me to the bridge, he thought that I had become truly mad.

But I am fine, I too stroll over this moving public square, I go down to the dining room for meals, to the salon evenings when there is music; when the air is warm as it is this evening, I prefer to remain on the bridge looking at the starry night, the glistening sea, the white foam raised by the ship in its rapid course.

I also like to relish this sweet melancholy which comes to me from I know not what source, not from memories of the past, because even the painful loss of my distant pleasures has been more or less allayed in the awareness of its inevitability; not from forebodings of the future, because I dispel every vision of them, persuaded that what must be will be; nor certainly from the cheery milieu, varied enough even for a more fervent imagination than the one which it has been my lot to possess.

Probably my condition favors this languor of the spirit so unusual in me, and in which I take pleasure as if all my nerves were stretching out in a delightful drowsiness. The fact is, I am really beginning to get larger; fortunately the ample travelling cloak conceals my deformity.

I do not know why the Eternal Father has so cruelly punished woman, for a licit, honorable deed which He has blessed, sanctified, willed in fact, saying to our first father and mother, there, in that mysterious Eden: "grow and

multiply." But to make us so ugly for so long a time, to make us suffer so cruelly, it seems, and, often, risk our lives?

Only for the blame connected with that confounded apple? Heaven preserve us! for the pleasure that those ancestors of ours must have derived in it!

Had I been Eve in the earthly paradise, I do not know how Our Lord would have come out in it, but certainly the serpent would have been put royally to shame. Now, I, concerning matters of the Old Testament, understand little and have promised at my last confession not to think about it so as not to swear, as that good theologian Wunk, who heard my sins before marriage and who almost did not give me absolution, said.

I do not know what I would pay to possess a camera and preserve on negatives at least some of these types who pass before my gaze over and over again, with such insistency that sometimes it upsets me more than the motion of the ship.

They are almost all Americans who are returning from their prescribed trip to Europe; I catch on the wing certain conversations that are so funny, certain comments on things and life in European cities that amuse me vastly; actually, when I hear them pronounce opinions and judgments on Italy, which prove their bad faith, or at least their ignorance, the haughtiest answers come to my lips, but my broken English, or my scanty knowledge of English, closes my mouth in a scornful silence. How can one initiate a discussion when, in the moment of greatest heat in the discussion, one lacks the word to impress and persuade? But let the fine Yankees wait for a time and then they will see whether they will not find at least one Italian woman who is able to defend her country and explode so many prejudices!

We have very fine weather to the great astonishment of all because, it seems, on getting close to the equinox storms are frequent in the Atlantic. At certain moments it seems to me that I should find a small storm interesting; to see it when it is in a bad mood, this great sea which now lulls itself to sleep in a calm more befitting a lake; but I think that I presume too much of my strength because the other evening when the slight fog had become thicker and I heard for the first time in the darkness the unexpected howl of the foghorn,

I felt so great a fear that I almost lost consciousness, to the great hilarity of my travelling companions, accustomed more than I am to life on the ocean and not at all surprised by the great raucous voice that projected into the air something resembling the cry of a thousand desperate shipwrecked souls. Now, however, that I have already got accustomed to it, when I hear its voice in the silent night, I take consolation, because I feel that someone is watching over us.

I have made friends with the captain who has nothing of the old salt about him, is rather ugly, but very distinguished and speaks French extremely well: he was an officer in the Navy of the English Indies, is cultivated and polite.

He invited William and me to have tea in his cabin, but I believe that, to the fine English drink, he preferred whiskey and complicated cock-tails; actually the captain became a bit merry; I hope that taking delight in these beverages does not happen to him too often, for otherwise I should feel a bit uneasy.

Today was Sunday and there was a religious service on board.

I attended it, although the service was Protestant: after all, their God is ours, and that function celebrated as it was on high sea, where we are more than ever in God's hand, seemed to me very moving. In the first-class salon they had erected a very simple altar; a delightful young lady played the harmonium and the passengers, men and women, with a fervor that in truth I have rarely seen in our Catholic churches, responded in chorus to the stanzas of the hymns intoned with a beautiful sonorous voice by the young clergyman.

He is travelling with his wife and two extremely charming children; the idea of a priest travelling about the world with a legitimate mate and children is extraordinarily amusing! William to tease me says: "Your priests have their housekeepers, everybody knows that the cardinals had and have concubines in the great world; Rome, Italy, and every Latin country are full of priests' children!" I become angry because I feel the weakness of the arguments I might adduce in defence of the accused, but at least they are criticized by us, condemned, stricken off the list of respectable persons; whereas the clergyman does, legitimately, something that is repugnant to me: he, a priest, has the right to love his wife, to be proud of his progeny.

This evening the salon was peaceful: the ladies were reading or conversing with great solemnity; the men, I suppose, frightened by such sulkiness, had deserted the hall; the young women displayed melancholy little faces because they were denied their customary flirtations.

All in homage of the Lord's Day!

Miss Birdys, a tiny American woman as attractive as a Saxony porcelain who, to be courteous to me, makes use of the little French she has learned in a two months' stay in Paris, explained to me what this flirt is: oh! a very pleasant thing, which does not bind, which does not compromise, which serves to make time pass by and has nothing to do with love. To us this definition would seem almost a rebus, and yet they understand it perfectly, and, my statuette declared to me, they cannot do without it and they are bored especially in Italy, where men do not appreciate the gradations of the flirt, the advantages it presents, and, taking everything seriously, oblige them to become engaged or to cease a game which they think is cruel.

Truly I did not want to say that my people are wrong, but thinking it over, I think the young American woman is right: we think too much about love, or at least one speaks too much of it and a girl cannot talk ten minutes with a young man without she herself or others for her seeing in him a possible husband or at least a lover. And our men who, in general, flee from matrimony, stay away from our beautiful and good girls who unfortunately, to find an outlet to their activities in the exuberance of their sentiments, become impassioned by this feminism which is the most disagreeable, the most mistaken thing that can be imagined.

Mercy, how seriously I do speak! one would say I am on the point of giving a lecture. The saltiness of the sea makes me wise; yes, like the salt they put on the lips of a child at baptism. When I was really naughty, they told me that on my tongue they had put pepper, instead of salt.

I AM all upset, delightfully full of emotion, although I am just returning from a scene of jealousy my husband made before me, perhaps with some reason; but, precisely because I felt a little guilty, I rebelled and now we are at odds with each other.

But let us proceed in an orderly fashion. This morning while, notwithstanding a bit of rolling, I was writing a letter under the awning over the bridge, some words in Italian pronounced with a beautiful southern accent—that accent which Neapolitans of the better class acquire when they travel a lot or live abroad—and with a warm, limpid, melodious voice which gave me a real thrill of joy—reached my ear. I raise my eyes which must have been shining and meet those of the handsomest man I have ever seen: tall, a bit pale, his short chestnut beard scarcely grizzled; the hair cut in that likeable fashion made popular by our king Humbert [King Umberto I of Italy reigned 1878-1900]² and which gives one a mad desire to stroke it with one's hands; two dark eyes, soft, melancholy, an aristocratic and strong bearing which, I confess it, made a great impression on me.

That he saw me, looking at me, I was not aware of, rather I should not even have wished it, because, although I did not think any harm by it, I was moved and, unfortunately! one reads on my face the slightest impressions made: now, for nothing in the world would I have wished the likeable stranger to observe the effect he produced.

But I could rest easy; he continued to chat with his companion, not at all good-looking this one, and not at all interesting, and did not pay attention to me, more than of the last wave that had licked the sides of our ship. If I had listened to my desire I should have turned to him without ado and told him: "Dear sir, you must be Italian, hence there is no need of an introduction between us; I like you very much, doesn't it seem possible for us to spend some time with each other? to recreate here a corner of our distant country amid these foreigners who surround us?" And perhaps I should have said other things too! but there are conventions, that confounded upbringing which suffocates every impulse, that levels everybody to the same pattern, and I stayed where I was.

But I did not admit defeat; I swore that before night I would meet the two Italians, and this time too, what a woman wished, God willed.

After the five o'clock tea different games, chess, domino, whist, bezique matches, etc. are organized on the bridge or in the salon. Usually at that hour I am in my cabin resting, but today I had quicksilver on me, and I could not stay still. I go up to the bridge, see my two strangers sitting at a table with the captain shuffling Neapolitan cards and I hear the southerner exclaim!

"If there were a fourth person one could play the Italian card game known as 'scopa.'"

I could have hugged him because, without intending to, he was giving me the opportunity; I seized it as the shipwrecked person must grab the board which will bring him to safety and, with a diplomacy of which I should not have believed myself capable, induced William to offer himself for the game, to become acquainted with the two gentlemen, foreseeing that, naturally an introduction to me also would follow. So it happened in fact, and I spent with them an enchanting evening.

The other one is Piedmontese, a bit low class, but very amiable; it did not seem true to him to meet someone with whom to speak a bit of his dialect, and it amused me indeed to hear again the well known expressions, the sentences that recalled my childhood to me, the games, the dear persons. Even the rude dialect of Gianduia, when heard in the middle of the Atlantic amid a throng of Americans and English, takes on intonations of sweetness that reaches the heart, becomes musical, gives nostalgia for the distant homeland.

His name is Giorgio Megralli [Goffredo Galli] and he is our consul in Philadelphia. He told me that he and his companion, hearing me speak, thought I was a singer.

Splendid guessers, my fellow countrymen! I have never hit a note on pitch in my whole lifetime!

Would it were not so! How much I should have liked the adventurous life of an artist, its illusions, its triumphs, the applause. Instead alas! when I gave indication of these mad desires of mine at home everybody shuddered and looked at me with terror and astonishment. A woman of our family in the theater? How horrible! As if there were not decent women in every profession.

Enough of this, now it is useless to think of it. I am married, soon I shall be a mother, it is necessary to exercise judgment and leave to one side my fancies of art and of glory.

I spoke at greater length with Dr. Mario De Lungo, the other Italian; he is a scientist and is going to California for certain special studies of his, but he does not make a show of his knowledge. He has the simplicity characteristic of intelligent people, a frankness that is a bit discourteous and impresses me (it must not be pleasant to be found at fault by such a man!); at certain moments his eyes are veiled with melancholy as if the memory of a grief were crossing his soul. He was born in Naples, but speaks of it with not much enthusiasm.

In fact, this is the only note on which we have not been in agreement because, otherwise, I have never met a person more akin to me in tastes and in sentiments.

And I was happy, I forgot all my sad thoughts, I found again all my energy which had left me a bit these last days and William who saw me laugh as I had before, smoke again my cigarette with the pleasure that he himself taught me but which I had forgotten, took the opportunity to become enraged, saying to me impolite words to which I, who felt the sun in my heart did not make any response which naturally irritated him very much; but I won out by being left alone avoiding his caresses which, given the state of my soul, would have appeared intolerable to me.

And yet I swear to myself that I have not had a single unworthy thought, I only wished the evening never to end, I wished that sense of joy to last infinitely, the joy which had penetrated into me with the voice, with the glance of that man yesterday a stranger and in whom today I think I have found a friend.

Is my judgment too rash? Is my husband perhaps right?

I know nothing; I know that I feel in my heart a great wave of happiness, that I should have been able to speak of it to William inasmuch as it arose from a pure source and perhaps would be exhausted as it spread; instead he closed my lips with his mockery, and I shall now take good care of this tiny treasure of joy which does not come to me from him.

On the *Aurania*

THERE remains no more than one day of the voyage, tomorrow evening we shall disembark in New York; today we passed close to Newfoundland. We caught sight of its outlines through a tenuous fog which the sun tinged with pale violet, when we were scarcely leaving a squall which had forced us to abandon the comfortable seats on the bridge, where so many pleasant hours are spent.

How strange and unexpected are the changes in the atmosphere when navigating on the ocean!

There is nothing that renders better the image of human life than an abandoned ship alone, on the immense space of the Ocean: it goes rapidly, evenly, it seems that the wind is bearing it on invisible wings, and suddenly behold the black and threatening clouds, the lightning, the rain: and yet it continues its course; and then the sun smiles again, the blue returns to gladden its path! Now I am accustomed to these alternatives; I love this moveable hull which transports me in its sway towards the unknown, these faces which have become familiar and which perhaps I shall never see again, this life serene in its monotonous equality; I think that perhaps I shall not easily find again the placid hours, the gentle sensations of this extremely long trip.

We had a concert for the benefit of the families of the sailors; it is a kind custom on every crossing to dedicate one evening to these untiring workers, to these martyrs to duty to whom our lives are entrusted, our safety, our well being: and a tidy sum was gathered, since we passengers number about five hundred.

I cannot say I enjoyed myself, rather I was a bit distressed because among the numbers of the program were some Neapolitan songs, sung by two travellers in steerage in third class. Poor people! it did not seem true to them to earn some money to add to the slender nest-egg which must support them before they find work in America, this Eldorado of their dreams; but that Punch and that Sorrentina [Punch, or Pulcinella, and Judy: characters of the Italian commedia d'arte] who, without doing so on purpose, had selected the most tasteless productions in their repertory, and contorted themselves, twisted in monkey-like motions, arousing laughter or pity, moved me to

contempt, aroused my anger and shame. "You will see others," said Megralli and De Lungo, who were aware of how I suffered at the melancholy spectacle given by our fellow countrymen. "Be persuaded that, as a rule, Italians abroad are scorned and made fun of; you must be armed with courage if you do not wish at every second to feel offended in your national pride."

Poor Italy! Poor country!

Yesterday in the daytime there was a moment of excitement on board: in the distance on the ocean a large dark body floated in which fancy made us see the sketchy outlines of a shipwrecked ship.

Like a flash of lightning the news spread among the travellers, made avid for novelty by the inertia of life on board. There will be sick persons to treat . . . children to adopt . . . tears to dry . . . now each one selects his own mission, and almost jumps into the ocean to rush to the aid of the unfortunates in danger.

Then the captain, who from the height of the bridge of command, followed the scene and watched the sea, burst into a laugh and shrieked to us with his stentorian voice: "Calm! Calm! it is only a dead whale."

We all were a bit downcast, for it is so true that at the bottom of every act of generosity is the beginning of unconscious selfishness. We should have rejoiced because a misfortune had not happened; we were gnawed instead by the sorrow of having misdirected our compassion, of not being able to put into action our philanthropic projects.

Shortly afterwards, in fact, we could see with naked eye the great black mass, which the waves pushed southward, over which were concentrating their attention myriads of birds gloating over their unwonted, macabre banquet. Naturally laughter became general, and after dinner, because it was the last evening that we were spending on board, there was dancing until after midnight.

Unfortunately, I had to stay seated, but I was not bored; Dr. De Lungo kept me company and his somewhat biting wit which lacks malice, the likeable eclecticism which permits him to touch on any subject without pedantry made speed by the hours which otherwise would have seemed endless to me.

Is it my fault that William left me, preferring to stay on the bridge to walk with the captain?

Oh, I don't mean that I regretted his absence, but since I had not provoked it, the severest critic would not have been able to reproach me.

Who in fact is accusing me?

I alone take pleasure in analyzing my feelings, with the frequent risk of tormenting myself and creating in me remorse.

Now it is over; tomorrow we shall land; all of these travelling companions will continue their way and probably we shall never see one another again.

Perhaps it is better thus.

For now the matter is extremely simple: the uniformity of life on board of the ship, the community of language, habits, sentiments create good feeling; then one reaches the port, one leaves, and everything is over: we think of it no longer, because other images replace the one which has now become dear to us.

I write this, but my vision is a bit obfuscated.

I hope they are not tears . . . no, it must be the light!

New York Hotel Brunswick

[The *Aurania* arrived in New York September 18, 1887]

I*T seems ridiculous, but disembarking in New York, I felt grateful to that Christopher Columbus who had so tormented me in school with that tale of his different voyages, so complicated and difficult for the memory. When the Statue of Liberty revealed its gigantic figure, symbol of the spirit informing the immense country, on the rosy background of an almost southern sky, I was moved; it seemed impossible that I, I myself, should be about to touch America's soil.*

The city, which is flat, was naturally scarcely visible from the ocean, but one could see the millions of smoking gables that bespeak the feverish activity of this infernal Dantesque circle; one could see the Brooklyn Bridge which, described or photographed, seems to us, not used to the colossal, the creation

of a grotesque mind; and one could see the parks, the gardens that are intersected by the enormous buildings and throw a light of poetry amongst so much practical prose.

And while our ship was threading its way through a forest of other ships from every country, of every shape, from which were coming truly horrible utterances, harsh and hoarse cries, I did not know how to remove my gaze from that spectacle of variety and life, and I woke up only when, down on the ground, it was my turn to argue with the customs employees who were making havoc of my dresses, my underwear, and wanted to make us pay duty on them with the excuse that they were too numerous for just one person.

What is it, do American women go about shirtless? And is this their famous freedom? Enough, as God willed it, or better as a few dollars as a tip managed it, the matter was finished off and in a carriage for which we paid thirty-five franks, I mean thirty-five, for a fifteen minute ride, we arrived at this hotel where, after a good hot bath, I got between the sheets enjoying the luxury of a bed where the waves no longer rocked, the delight of silence after the incessant hubbub of the nights on the ocean.

This extremely fine room which overlooks the hotel's garden, all palms and oleanders in flower, is nonetheless on the fifth floor of the building, but here one has the opposite view from ours and the higher floors are more appreciated, airier and brighter; moreover, it matters little because one reaches the floors by elevator.

My fine courage vacillated, when I saw myself shut up in that tiny hole covered with velvet for sure, but suffocating, that climbed and kept on climbing with dizzying speed, and when they set me free and I went out into the open, I was reeling like a drunkard.

I am now already accustomed to it; with a coolness which would make those dear to me laugh, I ring the electric bell (for everything here runs on electricity), the little boy, a tiny black boy who is a love, appears, and I pronounce the tiny word which seems like a lightning flash "lift" and I go up, down, according to circumstances.

Oh! the descent I enjoy a tremendous amount, I feel that I am on a swing and if I close my eyes, I see the courtyard of our villa where I would swing up

and down with great joy during the sweet afternoons of autumn and at times one of the visitors would enjoy pushing me up so high as to make me be on a line with the topmost branches of the India chestnuts that ringed about the rotunda.

Oh! fair days of the distant past!

But this is not the place to be moved by recollections of the past.

I think that already a bit of the American spirit has entered my bones; I feel full of energy, I don't relax for a moment, I think I should be most willing to stay in this great city, where, however, as a matter of fact there is nothing to see, except its life which is a fever, which is a contagious and terrible delirium.

I visited the Metropolitan Museum where an Italian, Count Palma di Cesnola, [Luigi Rivarolo Canavese, Count Palma di Cesnola (1832-1904), an archeologist] has collected a number of statues excavated in Greece and on Cyprus; slanderous tongues, which it seems exist here too on this side of the Ocean, say that he had them made and sold them to the government as authentic; I do not know if it is true, and I confess that at bottom it makes no difference to me; rather I rejoice over the modern artists who have so well known how to imitate the masterpieces of ancient art, and those tiny Tanagra figurines, those attractive Venuses, those caustic and flirtatious Cupids, those terra cotta objects with their patina so perfect that it seems truly to date back to the olden times, transported me in thought to our beautiful galleries in Naples and Rome, made me take a breath of native air in this atmosphere saturated only with electricity and with carbon dioxide.

Central Park is like a marvelous oasis in this sea of buildings, generally ugly, but imposing and colossal.

Even the mansions of the famous millionaires: Astor, Vanderbilt [sic], Gould, etc. leave me rather cold; they lack that distinction which characterizes the aristocratic dwellings in Europe. It would seem the interior of those buildings is marvelous for convenience and wealth; no wonder! they come to Europe and plunder our palaces, our villas, and they are right to do so, because we cannot maintain them and preserve the treasures in them!

Which does not lessen the sorrow of noticing how these merchants of pigs

and of grain, made rich all of a sudden, become handsome, like the bird in the fable, donning our own peacock feathers.

The numerous statues that populate the leafy roads in the park amuse me; because Americans, notwithstanding the wealth under which they crush us, cannot buy for themselves a past and so they lack illustrious men to make eternal in marble, and, having quickly exhausted their list of true glories, they select subjects with a touching childishness: a falconer, with the high-flown gesture of an operatic tenor, looks at the east whence he awaits his prey; a lady in tournure and bonnet from Paris caresses two little black children, and so on, with such an evidence of effort in execution that the sketchers from among our minor artists would perforce smile at it.

Is there a little bias in my judgment?

No, I think that I am being fair. But precisely because I do admire so many works by these young and lively talents, I do not see why I should hold stubbornly to the quest for a beauty of which I positively do not feel, as it were, the need, distracted as I am by other qualities equally powerful and marvelous.

Moreover I wager that none of those who travel in America have in mind to collect during the trip impressions of art.

How could New York, with that triple net of railways that envelopes it, darkens its sky, makes it seem a huge, smoky station be artistic? And yet, if I think that the net in question provides communications for this population as numerous as that of a province of ours, I scarcely see the ugliness of it, I only have amazement for its awe-inspiring power of usefulness.

New York Hotel Brunswick

I SHOULD be rash in my judgments if I spoke of the population of New York after the few days I have spent there; I have seen Chinese with their queues, Japanese that look like marionettes, Indians formed from the earth, toasted by the sun, Italians rather ragged whom I have recognized by their eyes of black velvet, Turks, Greek, Portuguese, Spaniards, English,

French, Russians: all meet, cross one another's paths in these populous streets as if through a continuous fair, and at least in appearance, proceed in the best harmony.

I admired these beautiful young women, elegant like fashion figurines, or with skirts tucked up like young schoolgirls, who wander about alone and at ease as if they were in their own homes, climbing rapidly into those cars of the elevated railways which make a person dizzy, so rapid is their speed and, like flocks of warbling birds invade the theaters, the restaurants, giving out a note of exuberant gaiety, health, confidence in themselves, which is fun to witness. I do not know if they belong to good society, but I have seen young women alone or in groups come to dine in these restaurants at night, after the theater accompanied by very elegant men, but so young that they appear to be adolescents; and yet these young ladies have the aspect of enjoying themselves hugely and they joke, flirt so that it gives pleasure to see them.

Here women are always adorned with flowers, they wear them with a special charm, pressed over their breast with one arm, or between hands excessively bejewelled; they know how to arrange them with exquisite taste, so that the mere table of the restaurant assumes with their presence an air of intimacy, of familiar gaiety that is a delight.

I ate the little Blue-point oysters at the famous Delmonico restaurant, one for millionaires; I found it rather vulgar in its abundance of white and gold; what seemed quite extravagant to me is the price one pays for a very mediocre dinner; women go there with low-necked dresses and with hats on, men in tuxedo and white tie, notwithstanding which, I sought there in vain the chic quality of the cafés in Paris.

These women in general extremely beautiful, who strike me especially for the elasticity of their movements and the perfect line of their level shoulders, graceful as those of acrobats, these women are defective in their voices, almost always harsh, nasal, most displeasing.

I almost suffered from this the other evening at the Alhambra, a theater which is a jewel of elegance, in good taste, with a gallery in the form of a hanging garden where, having ice cream, I witnessed the show. But at the intermissions, when even those of the orchestra stalls rush pell-mell into the

garden to sip there the good complicated drinks for which they are so voracious, it seemed to me that I had fallen into a cloud of croaking little frogs, those green frogs so beautiful to see but with voices so lacking in harmony.

It was nevertheless, that one, one of the best evenings spent in New York, for, with a little effort of the mind, I could have believed myself to be in Italy; there were six of us Italians: our two travelling companions whom we found again and who often join us; Prince T. returning from a trip round the world and extremely interesting in his account of his impressions; Marquis S. C. resident here for several years, but always nostalgic for his distant homeland and happy to be able to chat with his countrymen, William, and me.

We indulged in unkind remarks without any remorse whatever, because, the Americans say so many things about us! . . .

I almost regret understanding English; I shall have to bear every day the remarks these people make about us.

No later than yesterday I almost had a fight to defend a poor little Italian, however much at the bottom of my heart I should have beat him willingly, aware as I was of how abject he was.

We were strolling down one of these streets with a barbaric name, which all look identical, with their cottages all in line and alike, down to the tiny garden where more or less the same flowers grow for the most part in systematic order with no attention to art; William and I were strolling, chatting about so many things sad and happy, when the sound of a small organ reached our ears. While two coxcombs were passing by close to us, here they are called dandies, and with the most mocking manner they exclaim: "one of those dirty Italians!" I fly into a rage like a spring and, only a formidable pressure on my arm exerted by William, suffocated in my throat one of those undiplomatic sentences which would have well expressed my confounded scorn.

I am very happy to be a woman, but I confess that at certain moments I would give my eyes which are the best thing I possess to be able to talk in this world where, despite all vaunted feminism, we must always keep silent. But I did what I could. I fulminated with my glances at the two impudent men and, approaching the poor devil, who was after all a fellow countryman and moreover born in that humid and ugly Pavia which, except for the Certosa

monastery, has no other glory than having given me birth, as I always say jokingly, and under the shocked looks of the two loafers, I emptied into his rough hands, which at that moment appeared to me to be of a brother indeed, all the coins in my purse.

They were few, but I should have given them just the same if they had been a thousand.

Those discourteous louts looked at me askance; they probably at least understood that Italians are not all dirty and that at least they show solidarity.

But the case of the strolling organ grinder is repeated too often.

All Italians whom I have met these days practice the humblest trades: fishermen, fishmongers, fruit vendors; they live in a separate neighborhood where certainly the greatest affluence does not reign, nor does a fragrance of iris and lavender come from their homes; but I cannot tolerate their being insulted so coldly and, in whatever measure I can, I shall always be ready to defend us against whoever attacks us.

We are leaving tomorrow.

Chicago Pacific Hotel

I HAVE seen nothing and nothing do I wish to see of this ugly city where, fortunately, we shall stay just one day; William had proposed taking me to the famous factories of ham, of cans of preserved meat, but the invitation had no appeal; it seems to me that I have seen them already, so many are the descriptions that I have read of them in every magazine, so great is their advertising displayed.

Ah, this matter of advertising is truly something that bewilders me in America, because up to now, in Italy we are almost unaware of it; rather any product whatever seems to us all the more inferior the more its merits are trumpeted abroad.

I had observed it already in England, but here there is not a telegraph pole, wall of a house, branch of a tree that does not vaunt a soap, a cleaner, any machine at all.

In fact, concerning the Chicago factories there is an advertisement which at first appeared charming to me, but I got fed up with it because I saw it repeated perhaps a million times along the railway between here and New York, and I suppose it will pursue me to the Pacific: lined up like soldiers in a manoeuver, is a series of pigs standing on their hind legs, almost like trained dogs; they wear uniforms from all possible armies, going from colossal pig to the tiniest toy piglet, and the expressions on these humanized snouts under different headgear is so ludicrous, varied and lifelike that one must burst into laughter.

But it makes one's stomach sick of swine flesh without having eaten any; in fact, my stomach under the power of suggestion, I think, became upset in an almost alarming manner; in truth the fault is to be attributed to a certain melon, of which I, who am greedy, ate more than half.

These melons are different from ours and have a soft, delicate, very fragrant edible pulp that is eaten with a spoon; but evidently Italian stomachs are, in size, smaller than American ones, and that explains the disaster.

In short, my memories of Chicago will be few in number and not at all poetic.

But no, even Chicago will have for me the poetry of a fond memory; here we received a telegram from Giorgio Megralli and Mario De Lungo; I derived from it a great joy.

Omaha. Paxton Hotel

I WAGER that four fifths of Italians are unaware of the existence of this city; for my part up to yesterday, if they had told me that it was on the moon, I should have believed it. In fact, however, of it at present there exists only the bare beginning, but it already has the municipal palace, several churches, hotels, a theater, etc.; that is the way Americans construct a city; first they organize shall we say public life and then they attract inhabitants to it, and Omaha, which barely shows the outlines of its grandiose streets, its

squares, its gardens, will contain in a few years who knows how many thousand souls.

This knowledge was communicated to me by a woman who was next to me at the table d'hote during the dinner.

It is strange how these people who are so reserved and silent during the two morning meals that they seem to be attending a religious ceremony, become animated at dinner, become communicative, amiable, almost expansive. But there is an explanation: here one finds almost no idlers; everybody works, even the millionaires; now business, the serious matters of life absorb them during the day, but at the dinner hour, with the society clothes that they all put on, either at home, or in the dining rooms of the hotels, they reassume the life of well-to-do people, they become again sociable, they temper again, as it were, in a bath of mundaneness their spirits which were restricted in their harsh daily struggles, they find again the elasticity which will permit them on the next day to fight even more doggedly.

The Central Union Pacific Line, the line we have selected that is, I do not know why, to take us to San Francisco, up to now has shown me only one beautiful thing, the crossing of the Mississippi by ferry boat: the whole train crosses on a ship which takes it to the other shore and one can get out of the compartment, walk on the ample deck and admire in all its immensity this magnificent river which flows as ample as an ocean, between two banks with a green that is so green and dazzling, that it is a pleasure to the eye.

However, the joy lasts but a short time, and very soon one takes up one's place in the train which begins its mad flight, its roar of a snorting monster.

But now I have grown accustomed to it; I sleep magnificently in these beds which are made up by blacks adept and in the service of each car, with the ability of perfect maids; I eat with the best appetite in the dining car; I read, I walk, I write as if I were in my own room; I make William shudder with my comments on these travellers who would merit sometimes descriptions in color. Have I not seen with my own eyes one who, taking off his socks and shoes, proceeded with the aplomb with which one would have smoked a cigarette to remove a callus? At home they would at least have driven him away, but instead nobody seemed to notice; but . . . one must lose the habit

of making comparisons, always odious, and at this moment capable of saddening me, while it is advisable for me to consider only the best side of things to derive from them reason for pleasure.

San Francisco [September 1887]

FINALLY I am here, and after a week of relative confinement in that crate that moved, but in an awkward motion that does not rock or make drowsy like the ocean's, but irritates the sensibility to the point of becoming painful, after a week I have arrived; but not yet have I regained my equilibrium, and only this evening has there been rekindled in me the desire to begin again my note-taking.

When the spirit is really moved words do not serve to express it, and I have experienced moments of the most intense rapture before the sights which presented themselves to my eyes; unfortunately with the fleeting nature of a dream, but even in a dream do we not cry, and become intoxicated by the intensity of the emotion?

After the young and already very prosperous civilization of Omaha, the wild and endless spaces of Nebraska where thousands and thousands of kilometers go by without one's seeing even the shadow of a village or a cabin; only the prairie-dogs, small animals between a rat and a dog in size, erect their short front paws from the little mounds of earth that they use as homes and impart a note of liveliness to that solemn desert which the sun burns with its flame.

And the night without shadows on the plain, the carcasses of animals whitening in the dark like frightful ghosts; then again the sun over the landscape of Utah which transports you in your imagination to distant Syria, with its natural fortresses echeloned by time along the flanks of the mountains, while you expect at every moment to see outline itself the gigantic shadow of some camel, with its human burden heading for an invisible and fascinating Mecca!

Behold the Rocky Mountains which seem to cleave the sky and raise up

their lofty and snowy peaks from the forests of pines, green pedestals, emeralds rising to a triumph of whiteness.

We stopped a few hours at Salt Lake City, the city of the Mormons which may be much less interesting, now that the government has prohibited there legal polygamy.

It seems to me to be a bit ingenuous on the part of people as crafty as the Americans!

As if all men, almost, did not have more than one woman; at least these do not abandon them after having enjoyed them and having made them produce children for them! On exactly that day the city was upset because of the flight of a Mormon elder—the grandson of Brigham Young—whose arrest was ordered. Of the sheriffs who came to take him, he had requested to be able to take leave of one of his wives still ill because of a recent childbirth, and he had vanished without any further trace.

Well, I accompanied with my most fervent best wishes the fugitive, and I hope that, bearding the law, he will find a more hospitable country where his various wives will be able to join him and he will continue to be the guide of his children who perhaps without him would turn to evil.

I am beginning to think that even American freedom is only a vain word; up to now the proofs of this transatlantic superiority I have had are the right on the part of the young women to wander alone through the streets of the city, to travel and frequent public places without being chaperoned by someone senior in age or authoritative by position; on the part of men, in a greater facility to court girls and, in appearance at least, in showing themselves less well brought up and less polite than our men.

But William is right, I have the bad habit of judging things and people from the first impression.

Moreover, I cannot speak of the freedom of studies, of the press, of labor, of associations, because certainly I have not visited the schools, I read the newspapers but little, and the other matters do not concern me and I have little interest in them.

San Francisco enchants me; not the city with its buildings of a very questionable taste, the sidewalks in many places still of wood, the streets

immense, but lacking in harmony, without elegance of any sort.

Instead I am in love with its position which makes it appear truly a siren stretching out on the sand, bathing its feet in the blue sea and resting its head on the mountains tinted with rose and violet from which blows in the morning a cool, vibrant air which tempers the nerves and infuses in its people the energy which in a few decades has given it a position among the first capitals in the world.

Its suburbs enrapture me: San Rafael, Sausalito, San José, Alameda, etc., etc., where one would say all the roses in the world bloom, and vanillas grow that are like trees, and nasturtiums wrap the houses in cloaks of purple and gold.

I am entertained by this so varied and active a population, but less harsh in the struggle than that of the east; I am comforted by this sense of ease and of happiness which one breathes in the air and comes from the sky, from the sea, from its soil fruitful in every bounty from God.

The Italians are right to emigrate here en masse; I do not think that any other part of the vast continent which I have crossed corresponds better to our nature through climate, the nature of the soil, the almost complete absence of any Anglo-Saxon rigidity.

In fact, our colony is one of the most prosperous ones; here we have doctors, pharmacists, bankers, businessmen, journalists; but even those who practice more humble trades, the farmers scattered through the whole thriving county, enjoy a discreet ease, are respected, one would not blush to be call them brothers, as I did in other cities I have gone through.

And I am happy to be among them, I enter their stores, I take interest in their circumstances; I ask them questions, I receive their confidences; I comfort them in their nostalgia for our distant homeland, from which it seems I am bearing to them fresh a gratifying salutation. If I remained here I think I could live happily, but it is useless to think of it: onwards, onwards! says my star; better thus than to dissipate my energy in vain desires.

For example, if the whole colony should come to imitate the courtesy of their head, Consul Laghi [Francesco Lambertenghi], there would be little to rejoice about. What an ugly hateful man! He is disliked by everybody and deserves it.

I do not know if these representatives of the government have an exact concept of their mission which they should consider as a ministry, rather than as a simple profession more lucrative than some other one. They are not only governmental officials, but represent an idea, [and] because they impersonate the homeland, what there is dearest to the heart, and their imposing work of sacrifices, a task of charity and of intelligence, should only be entrusted to elect, generous souls, superior to base calculations of money. This old invalid, egotistical and haughty, is certainly not made to maintain high the prestige of the country that honors him with its faith, of the nation which entrusts to him the guardianship of its distant children.

But after all I do not know why I get so impassioned, "The wife takes on the nationality of the husband," therefore, there is nothing to say other than that I am a Hawaiian.

Nonsense! my soul has remained and always will be Italian.

San Francisco

THIS Palace Hotel where we are stopping indeed has a right to its name; more than a thousand rooms furnished, if not with much taste, certainly with the greatest convenience; sixteen elevators, on every floor reading and reception rooms; a hall as large as a city square where extremely good concerts take place, perhaps too often; a telegraph, telephone, post office, in short a true city; my windows look over Market Street, which is the principal artery of Frisco (the Californians so denominate their beautiful capital) and I would not have to go out to enjoy myself the whole day.

Towards five o'clock the promenade begins, and there file by under my eyes the costumes of every nation in the world; it is almost the same cosmopolitanism of New York, but, since the setting in which these figures move is so different and so much more beautiful, they stand out more, and it is extremely interesting to imagine their intimate life so far from ours, even when they live next to us.

The Chinese live in a special zone of the city, called in fact China-town;

they are not very well liked although they prove to be excellent, active workers, and they attend, together with the blacks, to service in homes and hotels. But I had a hard time getting accustomed to their little queues, to their eyes like slits, their pale, long, almost feminine hands, which must be moist and cold; they have a special odor perhaps produced by the opium which they all smoke, more or less, notwithstanding laws and decrees.

I should like to visit one of these houses where the opium smokers gather but William opposes my curious whims; moreover, it seems that women do not have access to them. This too is comical; must women then travel like trunks?

I obtained as a favor a stroll in China-town and had a wonderful time.

We were escorted by two guards of public security because it was evening and Europeans there run the risk of disturbing adventures. Large and very tiny stores are brightened by those famous lanterns which in Italy illuminate the garden festivals and which Venice has the privilege of owning in special abundance. They hang from the vaults of the narrow little rooms and, arranged with festoons, decorate the terraces that run along the houses, crossing the streets to which they give an aspect of festivity, of continuous ceremony.

Every imaginable odor is mixed with admirable harmony in those lanes teeming with tiny Chinese as grotesque as bazaar dolls; opium and lye, salt fish and bad tobacco form an essence which so penetrates nostrils and throat, so impregnates dresses and hats, that you do not succeed in freeing yourself from it.

The women who can be guessed through the curtains of colored little pearls, of painted and threaded bamboo canes, are not numerous and, if there are some, I do not think they dedicate themselves exactly to housework, to the tiny industries which represent the wealth of these yellow emigrants; in fact, it is the men who launder and press, sew by machine, work as tailors, serve as cooks, barbers, nursemaids. They have their own theaters, cafés, churches; they live separately, but even though they are useful to the rest of the population they are not loved too much, precisely because their diligent and economical activity, the small payments with which they are satisfied, com-

pared with other workers, constitute for the others a danger or at least an imposing and threatening rivalry.

The Chinese, sober, without needs of luxury and of convenience, do not spend here the money that they earn; their thoughts are always directed to the homeland where they have left almost all the family, they desire only to return there and take there the comfort acquired by dint of labor and of humiliating resignation.

San Francisco

A *SUNNY day, a true bath of light, of air perfumed with flowers, of those emanations from the open sea which intoxicate like the foam of the good amber-colored wine in France! We had lunch at Golden Gate Park, in a restaurant built on a height from which one dominates the Pacific and which is surrounded by a vegetation of a wild and marvelous luxuriance.*

Fortunately, civilization has not yet invaded all this portion of earthly paradise, and one still walks there for hours and hours in unspoiled nature, under trees that must be centuries old, in the midst of plains where there grow flowers gaudy with colors, small moulds born perhaps from the sea so close.

While we were eating the good fragrant strawberries, which in this delightful climate ripen almost the whole year round, the domes of Lick-House—the Lick observatory erected by the munificence of one of these millionaires and equipped by him himself with the largest telescope in the world—were delineated on the blue of the sky, and in the sea, at a few hundred meters from the shore, on rocks called as a matter of fact Seal-Islands, thousands of seals who because of the distance looked like big children were playing and their voices which arrived deadened by the waves, were almost laughs or words of a strange and cheerful language. They get up on the rocks to nurse their cubs, they fondle them lovingly; perhaps for this reason the inhabitants deem them sacred and they multiply there and live in merry freedom from care. These maternal seals of the Pacific seemed to me much

more interesting than those horrible Indians met during the crossing of the United States. They are men because they speak, think, learn, wear clothing, but I cannot imagine anything more repugnant than their terra cotta faces, their bristling dark hair, their rags, the base and evil expression on their faces, their supplicating and fearful gestures.

Poor creatures, doubtless they are not at fault; perhaps they were handsome and strong, but they have been fought against, persecuted, conquered, and have in their blood the pitiful and indelible brand of an oppression lasting centuries.

We went back in cable-car, electric cars that run throughout the city like threads of a very intricate net, when the sun was already diving into the ocean and was coloring the gulf, the mountains, the houses with a violet rose and the extremely pure air allowed us to distinguish the most minute details of the enchanting landscape.

Since it was Saturday, the roads were swarming with people; the holiday begins already on the afternoon of this day: with banks, schools, offices closed, the population, dressed in their finest clothes, goes out to enjoy the deserved rest, to shop for the necessities for Sunday. Tomorrow will be truly the Lord's Day; only the divine offices will bring out of their homes those who do not abandon the city to go to one of the alluring places in the country which are a crown to the city.

These short trips by rail are here very rapid and cost such a small amount that even the less wealthy take advantage of them, deriving from them relief and comfort from the intense life of their labor during the week.

I finally got to go down the famous Dupont Street which is, I shall say, the city of the "signorine allegra" in the capital.

Apparently nothing wrong; thus I was disappointed because I promised myself some exhilarating spectacle, finding myself in the heart of a dubious world; but in America, I have by now noticed, perhaps more than in the Latin countries, appearances play a great role in social life. There are numerous temperance societies; in fact in the restaurants almost everybody seems to be abstemious, and yet I have never seen so many bars, beer-rooms, stores selling wines and liquors; women do not smoke, but tobacconists have such an

infinite number of brands of certain delightful, perfumed, most elegant cigarettes that are certainly not made for masculine lips who in general, it seems to me, prefer the good pipe, among us dear only to poor people.

In New York two evenings after our arrival, William received an invitation on a golden invitation card from a lady, Elsa Rosenthal, to have "a cup of tea;" nothing more proper, but the Signora Elsa was in fact one of quelle signore "those women," who had taken from the list of the passengers on the "Aurania," the name of my lawful husband and invited him with the best of manners to commit the charming sin. Poor dear! it cost her a stamp and it provided me with a moment of good humor, because my husband, believing I might be offended, brought to me in compensation a beautiful bouquet of their American Beauty roses which are superb.

The cottages on Dupont [Street] lined up in the customary order, have truly nothing to goad the curiosity; decent women do not pass by, but whoever did not know it would not be able to imagine being in the heart of Gomorrah; but I who did know observed and saw on the doors shining letters in gold, unusual and suggestive female names; I saw through the closed Venetian blinds delicate or vulgar profiles, painted eyes, mouths that seemed to be marked with blood, ungirdled dresses and bosoms in see-through material, blond, black, reddish hair, soft and kinky, because in these gynaeceums live without distinction Saxons and Latins, Africans and Mongolians; the population is so cosmopolitan and the tastes of men are so varied!

I don't believe, however, that any law forces these unfortunate women to live exclusively on Dupont Street because, strolling in the evening through the other streets in the city, I had seen hanging from the lintels of several doors, certain rather mysterious red lanterns, and I finally learned that they indicate houses of joy, a joy perhaps costly, but no less compassionate.

The theaters in San Francisco don't seem to me to have much that is interesting from the point of view of performances; perhaps this is too subjective an evaluation, because I see that the public goes there in crowds, applauds, becomes enthusiastic.

The minstrels are odd: black singers, dressed with affected elegance who mime and sing, accompanying themselves with the strangest instruments,

humorous scenes that send the spectators into raptures.

I noticed at the Baldwin, at the Eldorado, at the California theater, a great elegance of costumes and scenery, a religious respect on the part of the audience, but on the whole little amusement and rather inferior artistic impressions.

But now we are at the end of our wandering; the departure for the islands is urgent, we have already indulged ourselves too much; this consul has given bad news to William, and he takes advantage of it to be in a ferocious mood; poor fellow, he is right, but I, as long as I do not understand the true situation of matters, do not find it necessary to afflict myself and I should desire to infuse in him a little of this fortunate serenity of mine.

Will there be a revolution?

Well, it will be amusing to attend one, I probably have never attended such a party.

Will they dethrone this King?—They will create another one.

And the coronation festivities, the receptions, the dances, the reviews, etc.! I am already thinking about ordering my toilettes to hold my position worthily!

Will they annex the islands to America? Nothing better!

I should prefer to become an American subject than to have to bow to this barbarous monarch.

I should like to persuade my husband that everything is for the best in this tiny world, that I now am half-acquainted with, but I succeed only in irritating him.

It is a matter of races!

On board the *San Pablo* [September 30, 1887]

ONCE again between heaven and earth, in a floating house, among other people that seem to me to be more relaxed than those on the Atlantic. Those seemed to be going to a party; on the faces of almost all these travellers is a serious expression, as if collected; and yet the sky here

is of a marvelous blue, and the great wave of the Pacific rocks our ship with a slow, serious motion, without jerks, which permits dreams and should soothe the fiercest passions.

But perhaps these people love precisely the struggle and ill adapt themselves to the Nirvana of the ocean.

The "San Pablo" which is taking us to Honolulu belongs to a Chinese company and does mail and passenger service between San Francisco and Hong Kong; the captain only is American, the sailors and all the personnel on board are Chinese. Its keel white, its bridges clean as mirrors, the "San Pablo" speeds along beautifully; it carries but few first-class travellers and a hundred or so Chinese who are going back to their native country after having perhaps scraped together cent by cent the amount necessary for their comfort. They are not to be seen; from the day of the departure, when gathered together on deck to salute once again their friends, they covered the sea with myriads of little pieces of colored paper to assure a fortunate outcome to their trip, I have not again met them. That day I thought I found myself in the middle of a myriad of chattering mice, with all those queues oiled and gleaming in the glorious brightness of the sun. But fortunately they all disappeared at the raising of the anchor, and few of us remained to contemplate the enchanting panorama which sank into the distance, circumfused by the golden color which has as a matter of fact given the name to the delightful gulf.

Our departure was not without the sadness which accompanies the beginning of every long voyage; some Italians whom we had met during our stay in California accompanied us on board: Attorney Canessa who directs a newspaper, which, if it does not have literary merits, has, however, the very great one of being written in Italian and of making known the interests of the colony.

There are two Italian newspapers in San Francisco and, it seems impossible, they are at war with each other. It is horrible that there exist among us these factional struggles, but that they should still last far from the homeland, where the sharing of nostalgic sorrow should make brothers of the hearts most different among them, seems to be completely monstrous.

But I think indeed that politics is the most tenacious of passions among the

Latin people, and has it not, in fact, divided throughout time brothers themselves?

Canessa, Dr. Ollani, and the others had filled my cabin with flowers; but I was very sad, and true, hot tears flowed down my cheeks while my heart was becoming small as it does when it is afraid. In fact, I felt so lonely in my suffering! because William, who after this last stage will reach again his homeland, was joyous and could not share the anguish which was strongly weighing on me, while I was trembling in an infinitely cruel spasm.

Now it has passed, I have become as serene as this sapphire sky, I try to interest myself in the tiny events of life on board: but the number of miles gone by, the probabilities of good or bad weather, the more or less pleasant mood of the passengers, the toilettes of the young women, the little whims of children, the Anglo-Chinese pidgin of these servants, the manoeuvres of the sailors, are meager distractions from the dull calm of these hours of navigating.

We could have embarked on one of the steamers going to Australia, stopping at Honolulu, but it would have been necessary for us to stay longer in San Francisco, which was not within the plans of my husband in whom the news of disturbing events in the Kingdom sharpened the desire to arrive quickly.

Before my departure I sent a telegram to Italy, because from the islands there is not yet a telegraphic cable to communicate with the rest of the world. That is the idea which makes me bitterly sad these days: to be separated from everybody without even the comfort of a recent letter, of a laconic telegram to tell the thought of the preceding hour!



Actually I do not have a completely favorable opinion of the Pacific, but I ought to remember how scarcely 25 years ago, it took 35 days to go the distance of these 3000 kilometers which we shall have accomplished in one week, that sailboats then made the crossing only once a month, that the life of those sailors was difficult, uncomfortable, dangerous, and still the whites went to the islands in hundreds and thousands, because they knew they would find there a marvelous climate, an enchanting scenery, a sojourn of delight; I ought to remember all of this and, thankful for the present conditions, feel happy and privileged . . . but . . . other people's bad fortune has never decreased my

*sorrows and for now the Pearl of the Pacific attracts me a good deal less than
the most modest pebble caressed and warmed by Italy's sun.*



The Diary

Part Three



Honolulu [October 1887]

I AM here, but I shan't stay! May God not will that this sentence fall under my husband's eyes. But I wanted to see it written, to give a material shape to the intense desire which occupies my heart, to the intimate decision which is the only thing which can help me to see and judge these matters calmly.

I do not know why those who travel have either to magnify or to denigrate the images which have struck their retinas, remaining always far from the truth! That vanity, an extremely common quality among the microbes infesting the human race, should find one especially favorable climate for its culture in the dust raised by the hooves of the horses, camels, elephants, in the nauseating and oily smoke of the railways, of the steamships, in the folds of the sails, even in the ether split by the areostatic balloons?

I shall not tell lies, not even in the daily accounts of this sojourn, accounts in which I seek relief for my natural melancholy.

The "San Pablo" arrived in view of Oahu, the island on which the capital is built, the morning of the ninth day of voyage [October 8, 1887] a sad morning, in which a fearful voice, whispering at first, spread afterwards on deck with the unexpected rapidity of lightning: smallpox had broken out among the Chinese in steerage.

Well, I who wanted exciting adventure might have been satisfied, but it was too much for my aspirations, for I should have been satisfied with a small shipwreck from which we all would escape, even these poor ugly Chinese who now were suffering in the horrors of the third class hammocks.

Enough, now I laugh, but that day I had an ignoble and invincible fear of the horrible disease which, when it does not kill, disfigures and causes revulsion in others and, for the first time, I desired to land finally on this island, the outlines of which were being delineated on the very pure horizon.

But would they let us get off or would they condemn us to the annoyance, to the inconvenience of a long quarantine?

Fortunately we two were the only ones destined for Honolulu, and since the disease is so common among Chinese, it did not impress too much the Board of Health who came on board; they granted us our freedom, leaving

the ship offshore and, after the necessary disinfections, permitted us to get into a steam launch with which we entered into port.

I should have wished to observe, to admire the noble beauty with which Honolulu extends over the island, completely green on this side, with a vegetation not imposing, but thick and varied; with the domes of its churches emerging from blotches of palms, tamarinds, gigantic ferns, the large structures resembling those of America. I was attracted toward Diamond Head which recalls in its profile Mount Vesuvius, the hills of Waianae which form the skeleton of the island to the left of those arriving.

But William's arrival had already been made known in town, and our launch was surrounded, laid siege to by innumerable little boats laden with kanaka men and women, with their heads and waists begirdled by leis, garlands of flowers, who came to greet their friend, their companion made dearer by his long absence, covered with glory for the studies he completed, the knowledge acquired, the mystery of being far away in the most intense period of one's life. The bride, too—this foreigner who had become mistress of the heart of one of them, among the most esteemed and highly regarded—excited their curiosity, their facile enthusiasm, and when I was on land, they kissed my hands, bedecked my neck and body with their fragrant leis, offered me fruits the names of which I do not know, bewildered me with their aloha, with chattering incomprehensible to me, but which sounded sweet to me, lacking as it is in consonants; they would have carried me in triumph, if William pitying my embarrassment had not had me get in the carriage of those relatives of his of whom we are to be guests for a few days.

In vain I invoke my best optimism; up to now I cannot say that I am satisfied with my stay in Honolulu, although from what I have seen, the city appears pleasant and interesting because of the contrast between the most modern civilization and the most striking primitiveness.

My misfortune is that I have arrived, I think, among the most primitive of kanaka families, without the means of leaving and without perhaps that special disposition of spirit which makes us laugh at the tiny upsets in life.

I think if we had gone to the Royal Hotel, to that charming villa with various pavilions which rises amid a true oasis of greenery, where there are

excellent cooks, beautiful airy rooms, white guests, and all the conveniences to which I am accustomed, perhaps I could now appreciate the picturesque side of things that surround me, the strangeness of this existence, this combination of barbarism and refinement.

Instead . . .

I did not know the value of money at all: as a girl I saw only pin-money more than sufficient for my modest whims; married, I spent without calculating, and my husband supplied lavishly the needs of our small establishment; during the trip I saw him always generous, not only with me, but with the servants, in purchases, and I confess that I never advised him to be economical: I enjoy too much the good and beautiful things obtained by wealth, and since on my part I did not contribute at all toward our estate, I did not feel the right, that moreover he would have refused to me, to censure his conduct. I was grateful to him for the well-being which he obtained for me, and I never worried about the future which seemed assured to me.

Unfortunately, when unhappy at my stay with the Nowliens, [Samuel and Lucy Nowlein] I asked him to take me somewhere else, he had to let me know the truth: the King, embarrassed in his own affairs, can no longer furnish him the liberal pension that made him live as a great lord in Italy, and he can obtain nothing from his family who had been opposed to our marriage and in favor of whom, moreover, he had renounced all his wealth.

Now I ask, who, finding herself about ten thousand miles from her own country, without financial resources and in my physiological condition, would still have the heart to augur well of life and not rather give up?

I recall to my comfort an impression related to the peaceful years of my life at school: when school opened I regularly felt mortified before the huge volumes the contents of which were destined to be absorbed by my brain, but after the first wonder was over, I used to think: not in one hour, not in one day, not even in one month will the enormous decanting be achieved, but every hour, every day, every month will have its portion of work, and finally, without my being aware of it, I shall arrive at my goal.

At this very moment I am suffering from all the inconveniences together of my situation; all my human strength could not at a moment's notice remove

them from my path, but if I with patience, wit, energy, set about overcoming them, a little at a time, finally I shall triumph, I shall succeed in leaving this country which for the present I abhor, and I shall see again those dear to me, my country, which I yearn for with every fiber of my being.

Behold meanwhile that never more shall I suffer in the same way, from the same misfortunes, because will it or not, my body and my spirit will get accustomed to them in the long run. For example: the face of Mrs. Nowlien which the first day was really repulsive to me, today is tolerable to me, actually, at certain moments, when she speaks of her daughter³ who is in Italy to study painting, I succeed even in finding her pleasant.

She is the daughter of a Chinese man and a Hawaiian woman; now, if these kanakas crossed with whites produce really fine-looking champions, like my husband; Iaukea, the King's chamberlain [Curtis Piehu 'Iaukea],⁴ and others whom I have met, they become positively ugly, when they join with Mongolians; one would say that this race which is perhaps stronger, stamps its features more distinctively. And this hostess of mine, with her little nose, her thick lips a bit curled over her dark gums, the eyes like slits, the yellow and tapered hands, seemed rather a monkey than a human being.

Now I am almost able to be polite to her.

The naked children rolling on the sand and in the grass at first upset my conceptions about modesty and also on esthetics, because they are not all good looking and have huge bellies perhaps because of the type of nutrition; but I have become accustomed to them, and now I find them more grotesque with clothes on when they are going to school or accompany their mothers to town.

Even the women go about the house barefoot, they wear neither corset nor chemise, and the olaku [holoku], a type of loose dressing-gown made of varied materials, permit glimpses of their unattractive and not at all seductive flabby and pendulous breasts.

The indolent and vicious life, the debilitating climate, ages them before their time, and it excites wonder to see them ride horseback like true Amazons with a man's saddle, svelte, fleet, spirited, under the garlands of flowers which they do not give up even when they grow white-haired.

Now I have got used to having my bath in the open air, by starlight; but

the first evening when, having expressed the modest wish to bathe, there was indicated to me the wooden wash-tub in the middle of the yard, without any other protection than that of the dark, and I saw myself nude, under the vault of heaven, I felt an unspeakable sense of humiliation and I thought of Eve in paradise who had sinned.

But what sin was mine, that it should make me be ashamed of myself?

And did my husband, so jealous as to glower because of an admiring glance, or a smile, find it strange that I should suffer from this display of what I thought was precious to him?

He can be satisfied; the hour of the bath is at this moment the most pleasant one in my days, and I take delight in the caress of that cool water in a bathroom that a queen would envy me for, in the warmth of these nights perfumed with jasmynes, roses, acacias, of a thousand flowers that I am not acquainted with, but that breathe on my dewy skin their extremely sweet effluvia! And I loiter in mystery, I hear the voices that things possess in the silences late at night, I have dreams I am not telling him . . . after all it is his doing!

Where I really do not know how to keep myself away from reality is at meals. Heavens! the torture of these hours! I swear that for a good meal I would give this kingdom which had been promised to me, but that I am beginning to believe is extremely hypothetical.

I am literally dying of hunger.

Any of my readers who knows that here live thousands of whites, that there are hotels, restaurants, shops full of every sort of delicacy, would say that I exaggerate; and yet it is so because I lack the means of providing for myself what I need, and I live in a kanaka house. Imagine! They eat raw fish prepared with seaweed and drugs which pollute the air; small bits of pork cooked I know not how, but very poorly; rice boiled in water, no bread and instead poi which is a type of polenta made of taro, a root similar to the potato which the Chinese pound in large mortars and which is left to ferment in calabashes, types of bowls carved from coconuts of which some are engraved with very fine art.

Poi has an acidulous taste, many call it refreshing and very hygienic in this

climate; I find it odious and prefer to have the same fate as Count Ugolino⁵ rather than ingesting that cold and viscid slime. Kanakas eat it using the second and third fingers of the right hand like a fork; even for other food, moreover, they use the hands; they do not drink wine, they are unfamiliar with soup, and the very fruit that is quite abundant on the island has no place on the family table.

I ask, can a European stomach grow accustomed to such a diet. . . ?

"When in Rome do as the Romans do." Famous is the knowledge found in proverbs! Now if there is truth in the legend according to which the Hawaiians were cannibals, should I, had I arrived among them in that era, have had to feed on human cutlets and steaks? No, no, it is necessary to take measures, because I want to live, because life is beautiful and I want to enjoy it wholly still; and do I not have also my duty towards that child that is to be born, whose existence I am beginning to feel, who perhaps already aspires in actuality to everything that is beautiful and good under the heavens?

This house, like all of them, with very rare exceptions, is made of planks, of a single story, because of the frequency of earthquakes; a verandah, a covered terrace, runs along it where almost constantly the dwellers, who in general seem to be very much addicted to sweet idleness, live: even the women smoke large pipes which they pass one to another with loathsome pleasure; they weave leis, they put together bunches of flowers with dazzling charm, good taste, harmony of colors, and they play the mandolin, the guitar, the banjo with real talent; their sing-songs have a moving sweetness and the women have such sweet and limpid voices that if you did not see them you would think of choirs of angels.

But try to enjoy there these harmonies amid the clouds of mosquitos that envelop you, assault you, bite you, suck you, devour you without mercy, without a truce! They give you fever, delirium, madness, and the clearer and healthier your blood is, the briefer your stay in the islands—weakening and enfeebling the limbs—has been, the more persistent they are.

The insects!

This is the lofty cross which in an un-Christian manner I cannot get accustomed to enduring: cockroaches the size of one's hand, spiders whose

distended legs draw a circumference of half a meter, with furry bodies, staring eyes, long and thick centipedes as one sees in museums, enormous caterpillars, and then so many others that to recognize them my knowledge of natural history is insufficient; and you don't find them in the fields, in the meadows, in the shade of the trees, but they invade the houses, they climb the walls, introduce themselves under the mosquito-nets on the beds and disturb my sleep, take away from me peace of mind, will make me a nervous wreck.

To console me they say that they do not bite and are not at all poisonous: thanks a lot! but they nauseate, repel, terrorize me. It seems however that in the other parts of the island they are less abundant.

God grant that soon we will leave this Nuuanu valley where I feel buried alive!

I remain, in fact, almost always alone; this extremely ugly hostess of mine is also, it seems, of very loose morals so that the white women will not come to visit me while I remain under her roof; my husband is always away, and when he comes home he is preoccupied, melancholy, barely looks at me, one would say that he fears reading in my eyes reproof; and yet I think I control myself sufficiently and when he finds again his beautiful smile, when he speaks to me in that special Italian of his, extremely sweet in pronunciation albeit imperfect grammatically, I become happy, forgetting the insects, my hunger, I feel I have returned to the beloved days of our engagement when he showed that he loved me so much and everything smiled at me in the future.

Honolulu

WITHOUT regrets, rather with all the joy of a most ungrateful heart, I have left Mrs. Nowlien, her house, her hospitality and for three weeks approximately we have been in this boarding-house, which is after all a hotel, in a large house built in the middle of a garden where gigantic trees grow: tamarinds, palms, Chinese oranges with little golden bitterish fruit, pomegranates, lemons, cedars, arboreal ferns—and roses of every color climb; the jasmines of Spain, white, fleshy, have the scent of

gardenias, vanilla grows on trees; the mimosa plants there are covered with myriads of little stars and give forth an odor like a precious warm furpiece.

We occupy a beautiful bedroom with three windows; from the one at the east I see the sea in the distance which usually fascinates me with its lights, its colors, and of which at times I hear the insistent, threatening voice.

We are here because William, impressed by my growing visibly thin, by my desperate weeping fits, spoke to the King and obtained some financial help. The King, in fact, pays our pension for now and I feel much better; there are here distinguished and very amiable people; women, families of American navy officers belonging to the warships which are anchored in the harbor, Americans and English who have come to winter in this warm climate so beneficial to those delicate of chest.

I feel reborn surrounded by faces like mine, hearing a language that I now understand almost perfectly and speak rather well, sitting down at a table adorned with glassware and fine linen, beside people who eat regularly regular food, well cooked, pleasing to the taste. I can only deplore my lack of stoicism faced with the material sufferings encountered in that house, but I do not claim to have in me the stuff of an explorer and still less of a martyr.

No longer forced to live in contact with the kanakas, some of whose habits jar against me, I can appreciate instead their good qualities, their sweetness of character, their gentleness of customs, and that almost childlike innocence which makes them love above all else flowers, music, and love.

Love, especially.

I do not think they understand it exactly as we do because, some questions addressed to me by kanaka women found me unable to reply and made me blush, I do not know whether because of my ignorance of the things to which they alluded, or because of their enormity; and while they are extremely jealous, I am told that in some places the men offer the guest the wife together with the pipe, meals, and bed; but they are always speaking about love, and they have to signify it such gentle expressions, images of a suavity, of a tenderness that is moving; their songs, their legends are full of it. And besides one breathes it in, inhales it in the softness of the climate, the warm intoxicating fragrance of these flowers; it comes from the sky of an incom-

parable blue, from the sea which has transparencies, sparkles of liquid silver and designs torrents of caressing or gloomy light, according as one sees the sun mirrored there or the moon laughing on high, refulgent in this land as I have never seen it heretofore.

In the nights of full moon one does not sleep in the islands; one might say that the genius of music invades the inhabitants and makes their instruments vibrate, putting songs on everybody's lips. The band [the Royal Hawaiian Band] plays in Queen Emma Park, near the streets of colossal palms, which sway in the breeze with a rustling which is a melody of itself.

The kanakas with their women garlanded with flowers ride there on horseback; often they accompany in chorus the instruments and these white figures, idealized by the moonlight, these voices which are wafted most sweetly through the pure air, form a spectacle which certainly our theaters are not acquainted with, which impresses and moves. And indeed rightfully is this called the land of flowers, of song, of loves.

Even the charming, elegant American women, the English women always a bit rigid but more distinguished, attend these nightly festivals, some on horse, others in their buggy, a name given to tiny two-wheeled carriages that they all drive, or still seated in the cafés scattered through the park, eating the famous ice cream for which the island is famed—and which is prepared on the basis of bananas, strawberries, guavas, mangoes, and others of these most delicious fruits—and flirting as these women are accustomed to do in every latitude.

At times, after the music, boat parties are organized, suppers on the sea, and all night the beach at Waikiki, with sand so fine it seems to be of velvet, echoes with national and foreign songs, festive or sad, which are interrupted only by the dawn when it tinges with rose the enchanting scene.

Incomparable swimmers, the kanakas bathe in the sea only on moonlit nights, for then they do not fear the sharks which often approach to shore. It seems that these baths degenerate frequently into true orgies in which even the portly Kalakaua does not disdain to take part; certainly those nude and bronzed bodies which the water in the beams of the moonlight seems to cover with sparkling gems, make one think of engravings by Gustave Doré that

illustrate the Divine Comedy and when their somewhat guttural songs accompanied by guitars, mandolas, mandolins, banjos, etc., join in, not too much glowing fancy is needed to believe that one is in the middle of a storybook kingdom.

At this moment I am undergoing my own fifteen minutes of celebrity; I am a bit like a rare animal, a new object in the museum, a circus phenomenon: everybody wants to see me, to know me well; I receive a quantity of visits, my desk is flooded with invitations to garden-parties, ice-cream-parties, dances, dinners; if I took advantage of it all, I should not have a single day of rest.

That flatters me, but I cannot claim this glory to myself: beyond a little pity for this poor woman displaced here from the antipodes and in unhappy conditions, it is natural for me to arouse a little curiosity for my at least original circumstances. The islands are full of English, American, Spanish, Portuguese women, but of Italian women, married to a native, they have met none before me and want to see me, speak to me; they make me tell about Italy which exerts an undeniable fascination on the less cultured minds and, since they see me active, courageous, and I declare that I do not know how to sing, nor play the piano, nor any other instrument, I explode, without even trying to, the legends that are still current about the women of our country.

Even King Kalakaua has expressed the desire to meet me, and since here affairs of the court are hastily attended to, he immediately invited me to lunch, with William, it is understood. I made myself as beautiful as possible; it is probably my vanity, but I feel that at this moment I am not only just some person or other, and it seems to me that every praise, every censure which is addressed to me, through me reflects on all Italian women, and all my efforts are calculated to deserve well from these people.

My heart was beating a little when I reached the inner part of the royal palace and those soldiers in their white uniforms presented arms at our passage, so that I think, having arrived in view of his august Majesty in his library where he receives only intimates, I had the embarrassed air of a country wife whom the lord of the place admits to his presence the day of the wedding for the customary compliments.

But the large Monarch gave no sign of realizing this, and in a short time

my shyness disappeared and I think I behaved myself as I should.

Rather I must have had a certain effect on the royal host who, during lunch, did not stop addressing to me the most gallant expressions, which thought by him in Hawaiian and translated into English, sounded to me clumsily pompous and ridiculous. My husband smiled happily and I felt a bit like hitting him because I recalled other rather less flattering phrases which had made him in fact frown and had obtained reproofs, petulance, and absurd scenes of jealousy for me.

All in all the King showed himself most polite and a perfect man of the world; he spoke to me of Europe, of Italy especially which he visited and of which he declares himself an enthusiast, of our history which he knows something about, of our rulers to whom, rising with a goblet full of champagne, he made a fervent toast which deeply moved me, all the more since, be it courtesy or chance, at that moment the palace band played the first measures of our royal march.

It is necessary to have heard it abroad, this hymn which is not musically beautiful, but which we have learned to distinguish together with the voice of our father, we, daughters of military men; that is associated with every happy or direful event of our national life; it is necessary to have heard it among foreigners thousands of miles away from the homeland to understand its poetry, eloquence, ineffable suggestive power.

In a tiny grove in the royal garden I caught sight of a huge kanaka woman with a biped (it seemed to me to be a goose) in her hands, of which she was plucking the feathers with great aplomb, and William whom I asked said that she was the Queen!

Queen?

That is, the wife [Kapi'olani (1834-1899), the granddaughter of Kaumuali'i, king of Kaua'i] of that fine man who now occupies the palace built for sovereigns, but who does not govern and rules only in official ceremonies when he puts on the feather cloak which holds the position held by ermine for the European sovereigns.

He married Kapiolani, an uncultured and ignorant kanaka, when he was not King and perhaps did not even think he would become one; he could have

divorced her, since the laws of the country admit the wise measure and reason of state would have seemed sufficient to dissolve the knot, but since he is basically a good man, he refused to separate himself from the companion of less happy days and he kept her with him. But Kapiolani was never crowned;⁶ she keeps to herself, surrounded by her indigenous ladies, she does not speak English, and only at great official ceremonies does she appear in public beside the King; courtesy and, more than anything else, her very insignificance, win for her the title of Queen which she wears with as much aplomb as I could see with my own eyes.

Moreover, Kalakaua himself boasts few quarters of nobility; his enemies actually say that he is of black origin, nor do I have difficulty in believing it, judging him from the coarse and rounded lines of his countenance, from his dull and kinky hair, characteristics which are not those of the Hawaiians. Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the little regard in which he is held by many of the natives themselves and of the best ones who, though having elected him, consider him of a race inferior to theirs.

When Kamehameha V [Kamehameha V reigned 1863-1872]—from the true line of kings, a descendant of the Great Chief of the same name who had united under his command all the tribes of the different islands—died, the Protestant missionaries, or at least their children, having become now the real masters of the kingdom of which they owned the greater part, refused to recognize the authority of Lunalilo [Lunalilo reigned 1873-1874], the true heir to the throne and, too astute to take over the power directly, wanted a sovereign easily governable to their desire; therefore, they proposed Kalakaua, weak and ambitious, sufficiently civilized that they could hold him in their sway pandering to his vices; promising then in his name responsibilities and privileges, they rendered him acceptable even to those faithful to the old dynasty.

But I have written as much as St. Augustine this evening and I am tired; the sounds of taps, in the barracks which are near the royal palace, reach me in the serene and silent night; they are the same sounds that mark our soldiers' rest and they fill my soul with a great melancholy.

Who will cure me of this nostalgia against which I struggle in vain, with

all the strength of my spirit? this illness which revives because of happy and sad vicissitudes, which feeds on the perfume of a flower, the song of a bird, of a musical phrase, of the caress of a child, and does not fear the laughter of the refulgent day, the persuasive calm of the starry night?

Honolulu

THIS morning a cannon shot fired from the harbor announced that the ship from America bringing the mail was in sight. I dressed in a flash and half an hour later I could see distinctly from the shore the large ship which was majestically advancing, hurling into the wind its cloud of smoke which was getting thicker and blacker in measure as the colossus slowed its course drawing near and making my heart beat with a warm emotion.

The arrival of the mail has in every country and for the most fortunate mortals the power to quicken or stop the circulation.

What does the heavy black leather bag of the messenger, unconscious minister of joy and sorrow, hide for us? What mysteries are enclosed in the huge hull of the ship coming from such distances to us, lost in this small spot of the immense Ocean? And we all are going to greet it, in trepidation toward a messenger who will tell us of beings whom we love and whom we have left. For a moment all the cares of this existence disappear confronted by the sad or happy, but always dear, mystery awaiting us.

This day which is renewed regularly at least twice a month marks an epoch in our lives; the city takes for a few hours an unwonted aspect, it becomes deserted, silent; letters and newspapers absorb the attention; for a few hours we live beyond the sea, in our homes, next to friendly faces, under our skies which we have all more or less left sorrowfully, for distance makes people and places more alluring, even if down here fortune has smiled on some.

The letters from my folks are not joyous, my fate is obscure to them, and, however happy I may force myself to seem, I do not succeed in deceiving them; even my grandmother, my good old and oh so loving grandmother, traced as always a few lines with her trembling hand and the few words of comfort, of

advice, gave me joy and torment. Friends and relatives tell me about what has happened in their lives: daughters who are getting married, children being born, old people whom I left lively and vigorous and who now are resting in the cemetery. In a few months a completely new life. Perhaps when I return they will not know me any more, I shall be a stranger to them.

And yet this excessive attachment of us Latins to home and family is weakminded; the English and Americans are so much happier since they, not loving any less than we do their parents and that ensemble of things and persons that comprise our sentimental universe, go far off from them serene and courageous and know in a short time how to acclimatize themselves anywhere without suffering; they form for themselves another homeland where they can set up their tents and therefore make good colonizers.

In the Italian newspapers I see unhappy news from Africa, where our brave soldiers fight for a cause which lacks any ideal [the Ethiopian Venture 1887-89]. I should like to know why we went to disturb these poor Abyssinians who were living peacefully without doing any harm in their blazing and wild climes, who had never felt the need of civilization, this horrible civilization in the name of which are committed so many infamies, shedding every day so much innocent blood?

Among the letters in this mail there is one from my brother, that extremely fine-looking rogue capable only of holding a sword in hand. He, not he, has no feeling for the family to whom he gives constant worries and he writes me from Arkiko [A port of Ethiopia (Abyssinia), usually spelled in Italian Archico] where he found himself at the explosion of the powder-magazine, distinguishing himself, however, for his courage so much that, I know it only from the papers, they have conferred on him the military medal of valor. He speaks to me about his dark lady, about his sable monkey, and about some weapons that he has taken from conquered enemies, but not one word about those poor women of our family whom he and I have abandoned and who desolately weep for us.

We have, it is true, soldiers of fortune among our ancestors, but it would have been much better if he had not to our misfortune embodied again that type.

But after all he is not to blame for it, and perhaps he will be luckier than we are.

Doctor [Mario] De Lungo also wrote to me; I do not think he is satisfied with his stay in California where he found his position already taken, for the studies to which he is devoting himself, and the petty hatreds, the divisive cliques there appall him. He is shy, he says, and he hates to hurt others when he is only seeking to shed light on his field of specialization.

Moreover, he does not practice his profession for money; of independent means, he works because he loves his career, he is a scientist, a technician, as they say in their jargon; but these are exactly the bugbears created by the opportunists against whom men of his type set themselves through their independence, through the serenity which grants them indifference with regard to compensation, the true altruism which informs their actions.

Perhaps he will push on to Honolulu: the study of leprosy, the dreadful disease which is decimating these people, for which up to the present a remedy is not known and which under other names is latent in Europe too, tempts him.

A fearful word truly which the natives here pronounce only turning pale, as Indians do when they mention the tiger; for which they have special exorcisms, which they hide as much as is possible, because the law does not come to terms with this and, no sooner is the individual convinced he has the disease, he stops existing; the authorities take possession of him and a leper-ship transports him to Kauai,⁷ the beautiful and hideous island, from which he will not return, because up to now no pitying genius has yet succeeded in overcoming this horrible scourge. Those who have visited it say that Kauai is perhaps the most wonderful of these islands, with its rocky coasts cut vertically, the dark crests of its mountains which are reflected in a bottomless sea and girdle a vast plain of enchanting vegetation, amid which rise in fact the homes, the villages of those cursed by fate and who by the very nature of the soil live in eternal imprisonment.

Kamehameha the Great was the one who decreed this exile for the lepers in order to free the country of them [segregation officially began during the reign of Kamehameha V, in 1865, with "An Act to Prevent the Spread of

Leprosy”], but old kanaka women narrate today in tears what was at the beginning the desperation of those unfortunates segregated from the rest of the world.

The arrival of the Catholic missionaries who came here, not to get wealthy at the expense of the natives, but to practice the true spirit of evangelical charity, changed the aspect of the place; now there rise up hospitals, churches, schools, houses clean and well ventilated for the less infirm who, besides cultivating the land, practice the different trades necessary for the needs of that population, unfortunately very numerous and amid whom the white hood of the sisters of St. Francis exercises comforting and beneficial work. The natives insist that the illness came after the arrival of the whites; certainly they are not immune to it, and several Europeans and a good number of Americans today pay for the imprudent kiss of a fair kanaka with perpetual exile in the beautiful island, to whom the words which our Dante places at the entrance of Hell are well suited. [“Through me you enter the woeful city, / through me you enter eternal grief, / through me you enter among the lost.”]

Doubtless the thought of bringing comfort to so many unfortunates, to succeed where so many have failed, must tempt a noble and generous soul like that of the likeable young Italian who stays in my memory.

But is it not perhaps only the selfish desire to see him again, to hear again his dear voice, to experience again the emotions which have made my heart beat sweetly over there on the Atlantic, which today filled me again with joy as I read his letter? Is it not that same desire that will hold back my hand when I should write to him: “Change your plan, give up glory, if life is dear to you; here death insidiously awaits you, without pity for your sacrifice, perhaps rather to avenge itself for your generous work!”

With a Jesuitism for which I blush, I showed William the letter and asked him if I ought to discourage De Lungo from his purpose; but he with rare appropriateness answered me tartly that it is none of my business; that I have no right to meddle in things that do not concern me and since this time at least, my husband’s command agrees with my wishes, I shall keep silent; I shall have, perhaps, time later to dissuade my friend from his dire project.

I do not say now that my conscience is easy, but I force it to be silent in order

to let myself be caressed by a vague, indefinite hope. So my letter of reply is a masterpiece of diplomacy; but William did not read it.

Today I had a small pleasant surprise; the coachman who took us to see the Nuuanu Pali is Italian, that is, Milanese, with the name of Michele. [Probably Michele Mauri who was married to Carolina Dias in Honolulu April 20, 1886 and worked as a coachman.]

A good man! For pure human respect I did not hug him and he, too, was moved; he did not wish to accept our money (and in my heart I could only wish for it, because our affairs are not showing signs of improvement), but we could not refuse to visit his clean, charming little house, of a kind which he perhaps never had in Italy. His wife, a small Portuguese from the Azores islands, almost as brown as a Hawaiian, but slender, nervous, full of spirit, received us politely; they have a tiny daughter of a few years of age who speaks in her fashion every language, but prefers her father's dialect.

Michele, as a good bagolon [storyteller], would not stop talking and told us his story: he came to the islands in the service of a rich Milanese woman who had left her husband to follow here her lover, a certain Marchesi whom I met and who they say is a priest who has broken with the Vatican; certainly a sinister person, because meanwhile he denies he is Italian, does not speak our language, and is shunned by everybody. The woman, quickly tired of her stay and perhaps more so than her lover, after a short time left the country where her servant, placed in moderately comfortable circumstances by her generosity, continued his own trade in service of the public. He is doing well and declares that he is the happiest man on earth.

And in fact, his is one of the most profitable trades in this country where nobody walks, although the streets are comfortable and clean; the horses are abundant, they cost very little and the grass which the humidity keeps eternally green, renders their keep easy.

With Michele as guide, we went to the Pali which is a large valley, the only one which puts into communication the two semicircles into which the island is divided by a chain of mountains. In the lesser one, toward the south, is built Honolulu; on the other, which goes down with a gentle slope toward the sea and is attended by the trade winds, are tiny dwellings and villages and the

vegetation displays a wealth, a variety that are truly marvelous.

One arrives at the Pali by an extremely beautiful street which climbs gently, flanked by woods of mimosa, of hau trees with flowers changing in color according to the hour of the day, of white and rose oleanders. Little by little the throat tightens, the two sides rise almost vertically, and it might be said they almost touch each other, so small is the amount of sky which appears up above.

The pony—whose name is Dom, perhaps in memory of the cathedral of Milan—checks his course, pants, then all of a sudden stops; we arrived at the top of the hill and as if the curtain of a stage were raised, one faces a spectacle so wondrous, that I let forth a shriek of true admiration, the first perhaps from the time I landed, for all I have seen hitherto is charming, but completely lacking in majesty.

From this side the island appears immense, and remaining still on the height, we dominate the entire slope with its endless forest that sways in the breeze, the sugar fields with a gentle and cool green, and far off, behind the line of the sea, we contemplate the fiery globe of the sun that hides behind an indescribable aureole of rays tinging the water with violet, making these mountains that unroll like pipes of a titanic organ more gloomy. And to complete the illusion, the roar of the air which is engulfed in the gorge, there escapes from the abysses the murmur of the water descending from the summits and going to feed the coolness, the vegetation of the plain, producing a thousand gentle or sonorous, tender or threatening voices which echo in the evening like a full and marvelous orchestra.

We return silently and wrapped up in the night which already extended over this part of the island.

It was not a moonlit night, but I did not miss the pallid light; it was dear to me to remain in my inner contemplation of the scene I had enjoyed, an unforgettable temple where I had truly witnessed the greatness of God.

I do not know why men have had to reduce their divinities to the confines of a chapel, of a temple, of a pagoda, while the presence of the Creator under Heaven's vault, amid beautiful and fecund nature, is so much more alive and more to be sensed.

When we came down from the hill there were shining, at the entrance of the harbor, the lights of the American warships which had recently arrived to protect their nationals. Disorders are at hand and I should not be surprised to witness a revolution. And welcome, there will be some activity! [USS "Vandalia," USS "Juniata," USS "Mohican," HBMS "Conquest," were all in port November 29, 1887.]

Honolulu

I NEVER paid attention to politics in my country; barely did I know, if I did know, the ministers' names and their different powers: I always had the somewhat sceptical conviction that down deep, with rare exceptions, one of them was worth any other, that is to say very very little, just that amount sufficient to hold them in office the longest time possible, to obtain some favors for those protected by them and some medals, a few chivalric decorations for themselves, and at this moment when one of my relatives occupies in fact one of these most lofty posts, I can only commiserate, with good grounds, the people who entrust to him their destinies.

Here there is no help for it; I must perforce be up to date with events: my husband is one of the leaders, actually, the head of the revolutionary kanaka party, and it is not fitting for me to remain completely in the dark about the matters of the day which are causing so much ferment in this tiny country, almost unknown by the rest of the world.

These natives then would wish as a rule for the autonomy of the Kingdom, and in this I cannot say they are wrong, but they are not seconded by the King who, thanks to his weakness, to his vices, and to his indifference also to matters of State, is now in the complete power of the Protestant missionaries, or better, of their descendants who have in their power the highest posts and possess money, the true strength of all authority. Those remaining then, natives and foreigners, and, according to me those who are thinking clearly, see the prosperity that will come to the islands with annexation to the United States,

something opposed by England which for now exercises a sort of protectorate. Hence the presence in the harbor of warships of the two rival nations, even though they are sisters; hence the struggle, muted for now in which are engaged these different parties.

I confess that they make me laugh a little; they seem to me like children playing at statesmen.

This puts my husband who would wish me to become more deeply interested in their problems into a rage. But what should I do?

Plot? and against whom? Why?

The kanakas have true right on their side, but I am not at all fond of them, notwithstanding the good qualities I recognize in them, nor in the very interest of my husband would it be proper for me to show that I am against those who at this moment have authority in the country.

I think it is very much better to remain a simple spectator, something which moreover the Italian and the French consuls advise me to do, both of whom show me the most cordial sympathy. Indeed, we too have not a career officer, but a consular agent: Mr. Schaefer; of Swiss origin, and resident in Honolulu for very many years. [Frederick August Schaefer (1836-1920), who arrived in Honolulu November 14, 1857.]

Truly Italy could not be better represented. The Italians, whom whim or fate cast on these distant shores, find at the home of Cavaliere Schaefer, a refined and cordial hospitality, and they have in him an effective and intelligent support in the despatch of business.

At the home of the French consul [Georges Bouliech] the problem of the perfect Franco-Italian alliance has been resolved in the best and pleasantest way, and I believe, in fact, that if those governing made use once in a while of women to resolve the question that has been agitating them for centuries and has caused so many rivers of ink to be poured out in diplomacy, the most admirable of agreements would be established shortly.

Mrs. B . . . , wife of the consul, is a likeable and refined Venetian, descendant of a family of doges, who worships her husband, who for his part offers her that chivalrously courteous worship of which the French have always been masters. In this house I have had a most cordial welcome; there

in the evenings are gathered together the representatives of the different nations, and extremely pleasant hours are spent in the most fraternal of international harmonies. My husband is almost always absent from these gatherings; he presides over meetings, writes articles for the local papers, prepares speeches, chats, becomes upset, and I think prepares woes and disappointments for himself.

I too have attended one of these meet[ings] where he, who it seems is a splendid orator in his language, enunciated his program: the hall was filled with kanakas with their wives.

It goes without saying, I did not understand one word: I do not know and shall never learn Hawaiian; the only word I have been able to retain is their "aloha" of course! they repeat it at least a thousand times in an hour: it is both vocative and an interjection, adjective and verb, it synthesizes all their feelings, any emotion whatever of the soul. And all who emitted it in honor of my husband, who was haranguing them, expressed to me clearly the enthusiasm aroused by his words. And they shifted to me also a part of his triumph; they applauded me and wanted to kiss my hands, they offered me flowers, almost suffocating me, and I, amid that dark frantic throng, felt like a pitiable object, and would have tried to flee, not see them again ever, I could have wept with anger and disgust.

One kanaka, never mind! but a hundred, a thousand kanakas that love you too much, are more than my strength will bear, or else I am not quite made for popularity.

And I also have to defend myself from these passionate impulses on Sundays when I leave the Catholic church after mass. A moving spectacle is provided by those wide naves full of Japanese, Chinese, natives, devout people, engrossed as I have never seen the faithful in the churches in Europe; the women on one side in their most beautiful olaku [holoku], hat in the fashion; the men on the other side almost all in white and genuflecting, their heads bowed over their books like children watched by their mother, or hanging, literally, on the lip of the priest who is explaining to them the word of the Gospel.

Catholics are very numerous in the islands; our religion, with the pomp

and theatrical majesty of its rites, was bound to speak better than rigid Protestantism to these fervent imaginations, and they embraced it with all the enthusiasm of neophytes, rendered more ardent by their temperament. Our missionaries—who do not become rich buying land, selling opium, liquor and other poison, and who, remaining uninvolved in local politics, build churches, schools, hospitals, attend the lepers on Kauai—have become truly the friends of the natives who go to them for advice and comfort, and pronounce their names with veneration and affection.

Honolulu

I VISITED St. Louis College of which French missionaries are in charge, and I retained a most agreeable impression of it for the order, the cleanliness that reign supreme there, the sense of individual freedom that one feels in these attractive little rooms where every student is his own master in studying, thinking, dreaming. Before going to Europe or to America to complete their studies the foreign youths, but especially the natives, frequent this model school where they learn not only sciences and languages but the arts of drawing and music in which they achieve truly astonishing results.

We are going through a period of stormy weather; the other night a tidal wave removed a long section of the beach at Waikiki; a large whaleboat, which was returning from the hunt in the northern seas, shipwrecked when already in view of Diamond Head; there are no victims, but the cargo was lost. Also our island felt the strong shock of an earthquake, but here they are accustomed to it; the one-story wooden houses, made to withstand the calamity that causes dismay in other countries, sway back and forth as if they were on the ocean, nobody is upset by it, and this morning they were all laughing at my terror.

The islands are of volcanic origin: all these pali or precipices, imposing for being grandiose and picturesque for the vegetation that develops there so abundantly, are simply craters of extinct volcanoes; of these the only one that

is active is that of Mauna Loa on the island of Hawaii, the largest and they say the most beautiful in the archipelago, where the famous Hilo bay opens up, the bay from which was born Pele, goddess of fire whom the kanakas still worshipped when Captain Cook landed on Oahu [island of Hawai'i].

Legend tells that Pele, fairest of all women, had not disdained to fall in love with a shepherd, young, handsome, and brave. But the other gods, jealous of the happiness of the lovers, inflamed the most powerful of the tribal chiefs with love for the girl, and he vainly tried to dazzle her with the glory of his victories, to seduce her with the splendor of his gifts. And he killed treacherously the gallant lad who dared contest with him the heart of the goddess, who, attracting the cruel one to the top of the mountain, struck the summit with her tiny foot; an abyss of fire opened up and in it the chief and his warriors fell, while the goddess disappeared with the remains of her beloved. From that time on Pele was worshipped as goddess of love and of fire, and even today, although converts to Christianity, the kanaka women secretly invoke Pele in the griefs and joys of love, turn to the goddess when the volcano that encloses her in its viscera agitates its sea of fire and shakes its powerful sides that seem bound to break into pieces.

Those who are engaged still exchange Pele's hairs, fine and transparent filaments like glass that the volcano spews forth with the lava and which are gathered with great risks inside the crater.

About the graves of all the ancient chiefs reigned the deepest mystery: they were buried in the dead of night, in concealed places not known by the people, and the servants who had excavated the grave were sacrificed so that they would not reveal the secret. This explains the story that has it that Captain Cook was devoured by the natives. After having accorded him when alive almost divine honors, they gave him a royal burial, and the place of his repose has always been unknown.

Now a monument has been erected where one has it that Captain Cook was killed.

To persuade us that they still remain a bit savage, these good kanakas, despite Christianity, schools, the electric light, the telephone, the newspapers, and the constitution, it suffices to see how they watch over their dead: they

come even from afar, friends and acquaintances, all dressed in black and usually wearing leis; they surround the house of the dead person, and sitting on the grass in Turkish style, they wait for the hour of the funeral weeping, howling, smoking, eating, drinking in turn, so that seen at night, you would think you were watching a witches' Sabbath.

They still have fortune-tellers in whom they believe blindly; philtres that inspire love, stones and herbs that avert bad luck; lucky and unlucky days in the year.

My husband claims that I exaggerate, but my guide, through the intimacy of these people, is as a matter of fact a sister of his, a charming little woman married to an American who has given her the beauty of eight children, who reads our Boccaccio [Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375)] in English and works like a fairy.⁸

Extremely active, intelligent, cultured, she would deserve to figure among the leading women in the country, but it seems that some children were born to her before her marriage to the handsome American and the natives, who are chauvinistic when it comes to love, never forgave her for preferring the foreigner while the apparent Puritanism of the missionaries excludes her from good cosmopolitan society. She does not care about it, lives isolated with her little brood of children that she raises in the modern manner; she reads magazines and musical scores, adores her husband; her verandah has the most beautiful flowers in Honolulu and, when I am with her, I forget I am in the islands.

It seems that my mother-in-law, [Kalua Makoleokalani Wilcox] a princess of the blood of the Kamehamehas, a friend of that Queen Emma who has given her name to all the remodernization, the civilizing of the Kingdom, was a woman of exceptional virtues of mind and of heart. From her this relative of mine must have inherited her extremely talented character, certainly not from the father, [William Slocum Wilcox, a whaler from New England] a New York Yankee, rigid, tall, dried up, deaf as a cracked bell, whom I have seen only once fortunately. He received me like a stranger and, as his only courteous act, could say to me only: "Italy, Italy! oh yes beautiful country!" Too nice of him! Moreover he did not show himself any more loving

and expansive to his son whom he had not seen for so many years.

Fortunately, he and the rest of the family live on Maui, another of the islands which I certainly shall not visit.

Unfortunately, my desire to go to Hawaii, to see this famous volcano with its gigantic waves of liquid fire that boils amid the peaks covered with eternal snows, will also remain, for now at least, one of my desires: more than one hundred dollars per person is necessary for the trip.

Something else is needed! For these moonlit nights! My husband engages in politics instead of contenting himself with a job even a modest one which would give him a comfortable income and independence, and meanwhile this morning I had to cut his hair because he did not have the necessary money. It would be laughable if it were not sad. Poor man! afterwards, he looked like an ill-sheared sheep!

Honolulu [November 1887]

A GOLDEN card with the royal crest invited us to a *luhahu* in the palace. [A grand *lu'au* was held November 26, 1887.] This is the name given to the native dinner. My gastronomical recollections of Nuuanu Valley were not such as to tempt my stomach, but already I knew, Kalakaua, *operetta* King, to be in his own home a polite fine lord; thus I should have an opportunity to visit that home which is imposing for its grandioseness, if not for the elegance of its lines, and which I had scarcely more than half glimpsed during my first visit to the sovereign.

The invitation was for five o'clock, and at five, with royal punctuality, there opened up the doors of the dinner hall, large, rectangular, with walls of white wood, rather barren except for some antique plates of Japanese manufacture, very beautiful and tastefully arranged.

Although the affair had no official character, to the right of the King sat the wife of the minister of the United States, dean of the diplomatic corps [George W. Merrill, U.S. Minister to Hawai'i 1885-1889]; to me, most recently arrived to the country, but in whose honor (so Kalakaua said to me

gallantly) the party took place, he reserved the left. Very few ladies and all foreign with the exception of the beautiful Mrs. Iaukea, wife of the chamberlain, a stupendous couple of half whites who have a truly princely home [Curtis Piehu 'Iaukea and Charlotte Kahaloipua Hanks 'Iaukea].

Then many English and American navy officers, the aides-de-camp of the King, elegant in their white uniforms.

*The very long table is barely a few centimeters high above the ground, and we seat ourselves around it, our legs crossed on the matting, as beautiful as a carpet, but truly not at all soft. On the tablecloth of the finest linen, amid the silverware, glasses and flowers, are arranged the national dishes, but fine in quality and prepared with art so that they give forth delicious odors: the poi in the calabashes, large fish cooked in the long leaves of *Aspidistra* (cast-iron plant) in ovens appositely dug in the ground; whole suckling piglets roasted, boiled rice, uncooked lettuce, sweets, fruits of every type: strawberries, figs, Kona bananas which smell like roses, oranges, guavas, mangoes, pomegranates, small and ugly but delicious peaches, candied flowers: in short all the products of these islands so fertile that even the rocks are covered with vegetation. The bottles of champagne, of liqueurs, of excellent California wines are in great quantities on the table; there are no servants, only lined up along the walls some kanaka girls, the dancers of the court in their white olaku [holoku], wave with cadenced motions large feather fans that maintain the coolness of the air, now saturated with intoxicating perfumes. The royal band plays in the garden with a devilish verve; toasts succeed each other praising the host, the guests, the various nations represented, feminine beauty; it is an uproar, a hubbub like a bacchanal, I am giddy, I see only flashing eyes, mouths smiling a bit stupidly; joy reaches the highest pitch, and finally the women withdraw; we go out to breathe the fine breeze of evening which meantime has invaded the garden and brings us the fragrance of the sea gleaming in the distance.*

We take advantage of the opportunity to visit the royal palace; and Mrs. Iaukea, who wears a dress just arrived from Paris as she takes care to inform us, serves as guide.

Nothing characteristic in the home of the black King; much gilt, paintings less than mediocre, clocks and candelabra, marble console-tables, a Venus de

Milo in marble placed opposite to a bust of Kamehameha in bronze; Persian rugs and vases from China; golden mirrors and maple furniture, the usual commonplace, in miniature, of many royal palaces in Europe where the intelligent eye of a woman does not keep vigil.

In the hall of curiosities, "curiosity-room" as they say, some ancient calabashes embellished with such fineness that they might truly bear the signature of one of our great engravers. "Now," the lady says, "these fine artists exist no longer; the kanakas of today have become commercialized, they think only of profit." "It is you foreigners who have spoiled them," she adds smilingly.

I think she is right, but I should like to ask her what she thinks of the fashion of Paris and the magnificence which I admired in her home. Instead I observe some grotesque but delightful Japanese ivories, very beautiful Satsuma pieces that the Mikado sent as a gift to Kamehameha V; I admire the two royal cloaks made of yellow feathers, for which were killed millions of birds, a species of hummingbird that possesses each one only two single tiny feathers of such a type under the wings, so that it took years and years to put them together, and they have the value of a diamond. This too, the industry of feathers, has almost been lost in the islands; in fact I have seen no trace of the abundance of birds of which I had heard so much and about which the books dealing with the islands speak; rather the woods are silent; there are too many men here now and too much civilization, for the peaceful inhabitants of the air to enjoy prospering lives.

We see the bedroom of the King, "a room for display," says our guide who does not seem to me to be too devoted to the sovereign; actually the king almost always sleeps in his Bungalow at the beach, a small pleasure house which rarely unaccompanied, good girls approach, after sunset, and about which are told the most mysterious and strangest adventures.

In the room we are going through is a large bed with columns to which are tied with golden ribbons high tufts of feathers similar to the pope's feather fans and which are none other than the insignia of royalty or at least of the great chiefs; I indeed was given some, but I hid them; they seem to be dark ghosts on moonlit nights. At the head of the bed, I know not if for artistic taste or

for religious sentiment, smiles a fairly good copy of the Madonna of the Chair [a Raphael painting].

As a matter of fact, many say that Kalakaua was secretly converted to Catholicism and, only because of politics, attends the kanaka Protestant church.

But meanwhile from the windows of the palace we see that in the garden, the dancers, the host, and our gentlemen, excited by the champagne and by the beautiful warm night, have pleasantly forgotten that we are waiting for them: in twos, in threes, their shadows vanish behind the thickness of the groves, the sounds that reach us are not those of the insects hiding among the flower-beds in blossom, but have a sound recalling that of kisses; a few of the ladies get angry, goaded by a justifiable wifely jealousy, but fortunately we learn in time that around a table where gleams the glass of many bottles, serious and gathered together as if before a green or blue book on politics, have stayed behind consuls and ministers, the husbands of these women. When the trembling hearts thus are calmed, we leave the palace.

My husband, who was not sitting at the table of diplomacy, came back home at five, and thought it necessary to swear to me that he had been discussing politics with his friends. In fact he declared he had a very strong headache. The influence of this topic on delicate brains is terrible!

Whoever might read me would almost think I am jealous. But that would be a mistake. Rather, these games of Hawaiian love amuse me.

Honolulu Palama Palace. [December 1887]

T*HIS is the name of the dwelling of Liliuokalani, Kalakaua's sister, of whom I have been guest for a few days.⁹ I did not feel at all the need of this new move, but William thought it would be useful for him, and, since we cannot, who knows for how long, have a house of our own and at bottom we were already guests of these people, it is just as well to be here where certainly I do not enjoy myself but where truly the princess is very polite to me.*

She has placed at my disposition an attractive buggy and a rather slender little mare, gentle and obedient to the bit; I have learned to drive it, and I go out alone for a drive or visiting these ladies; I have a parlor where I receive, a beautiful bedroom, the garden is magnificent, and the princess gives me complete freedom; I see her only for meals which I have with her.

Oh that is even too much for my desires because, in truth, I do not have any liking for her; she is intelligent, but unlike Queen Kapiolani who is happy . . . to pluck her geese, she has taken seriously her role as royal princess, has her ladies, her court, her party, nourishes a queenly scorn for her brother whose weakness and lack of capacity she understands, and she actually aspires nonetheless to rob him of the throne and put herself in his place. With this goal in mind, doubtless, did she wish us to be close at hand: my husband who is basically a big boy, does not realize that he is only an instrument of this woman's ambition, and he follows her advice.

Liliuokalani is ugly, even for a Hawaiian; like her brother she has very notably the features of the black race and, when she dresses in European style, feathered hat, tight waist, gloves and veil, she could pass without irreverence for a dressed-up monkey of the sort which in my homeland perform in fairs, suburban markets: and yet besides her husband [John Owen Dominis, 1832-1891]—a poor half-paralyzed unfortunate man whom they would make Italian since he was found still in swaddling clothes among the survivors of a ship wrecked in a storm which had been hurled on the shore and which was flying an Italian flag—besides her husband, I say, the least decorative of prince consorts, the princess has several very intimate and not all Platonic male friends, if the chronicles narrate the truth.

Indeed with regard to her trip to Europe on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Queen of England,¹⁰ very shocking tales are told of her. It seems one morning the English chambermaid, having entered to bring breakfast, thought she had entered the wrong room because under the curtains of heavy damask she found two dark faces where the evening before she was certain she had left only one.

Quite a story! And yet you should hear how she preaches and passes judgment on customs, and morality! She presides over all charities, wears the

little blue ribbon of the temperance society, writes poems that celebrate chastity and all the feminine virtues, in short she follows to the letter the maxim of that good Father Zappata [probably the famous Italian priest and writer, Francesco Zap(p)ata (1609-1672)] of happy memory and enjoys life.

After all, don't many of our elegant ladies who pose as fairies of charity do likewise? Here the matter seems more comical, and that is why I derive more amusement from it.

I have a Japanese chambermaid assigned to my service: she is tiny, attractive as a doll, but slender, attentive, extremely able; it amuses me to have her chat and because of her I almost feel like visiting her country. Her descriptions are so delicate and picturesque! She came here on a ship loaded entirely with Japanese emigrants to America, not so much because of poverty as the desire to see new lands and people. They would work there, but to be able to support themselves to study in the schools; but she and a little sister of hers who were suffering from the sea too much, stayed in Honolulu. They like it here; the kanakas are so good, and here too there are so many flowers and so many Japanese: to her it seems that she is still in her homeland, but she will go back there when she is richer and can pay for her and her sister in a first class cabin, then she will not get so sea-sick! Meanwhile she is happy, always singing, laughs freely, and, when she does, she seems to swallow up her sweet and intelligent little eyes.

Indeed, as in California and the United States in general, the islands are full of Chinese and Japanese; but here they are better liked notwithstanding their being in control in great part of trade in this country. The lazy kanaka indolent by nature is almost grateful to those who work instead of him but since he feels instinctively that the whites tend, besides dominating him, to destroy him he prefers these Mongolians with whom he has greater affinities and amalgamates better.

But my little musume does not want to take a husband from the kanakas; she is engaged to a compatriot of hers, a student in San Francisco: "Handsome boy, my Kamokuri!"

Bless their hearts! these tiny people, so comical in their diminutiveness, manage to find each other handsome! And while she was sighing forth her

admiration all vibrant with affectionate desire, I pictured in my thoughts a young Japanese man who came every day to my hotel room in San Francisco to light the flame that cheered up my five o'clock tea; he wore glasses and never spoke but behind the round lenses, I could see his melancholy eyes following the undulations of the fire, as if they were lost in a dream. Who knows, perhaps he was that handsome Kamokuri of my "Moonbeam"; Kamokuri who serves foreigners to be able to study in the great American city and go back one day, learned and rich enough to make life comfortable for his faithful fiancée in their sweet far-off homeland.

A telephone call interrupted my Nipponic fantasizing.

So far I have not got used to this means of communication with which, to render honor to the truth, I have become acquainted among the savages. Of course I had heard of the telephone. I had learned its complicated mechanism in school, but when, the first evening after my arrival in Honolulu, I saw the ugly Mrs. Nowlien in front of the receiver, speaking, smiling, gesticulating like a fine kanaka with the invisible, it seemed to me I had chanced on witchcraft personified.

And a certain shyness remains with me still whenever I use the telephone. That day then I was truly stirred up: the voice calling was that well known and likeable one of Mario De Lungo, who had arrived a few hours before on Oahu aboard the "Australia" and was happy to meet up with his pleasant travelling companions. He invited us to accept a cup of tea at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, where he was staying and which he knew was the daily meeting place of society ladies.

Now it is useless for me to hide it from myself: I had created in the meantime a true romantic novel: the handsome Italian met on the ship's deck, in a moment of such great sadness in my heart, who had been polite and affectionate to me and written me dear comforting letters, had exalted my imagination ever ready to be fed by pleasant chimeras. William's early jealousy, followed by his almost complete desertion of me in these last days, the possibility of seeing De Lungo again in this country which seems indeed the beautiful frame created for tender love, had accomplished the work of suggestion and I was almost assuming the attitude of heroine of a drama which had never existed.

And with what a trembling heart, I went that day to the rendezvous at the Hotel! how anxiously I asked the mirror to find me fair in the eyes of my ideal; I put on the dress that becomes me most, I bejewelled myself like a Madonna to seem irresistible to him, and I was cross to William who was loitering, I was almost brutal to the little mare who seemed slower than usual in going along the road! . . .

But the simple greeting, cordial on the part of that loyal and decent man, was sufficient for me; it was sufficient for me to read in his eyes the honest joy of seeing me again not complicated by subtleties of feelings to make me come back to my senses, so that, embracing as in a flash all the ridicule with which I might have covered myself and, even if suffering deeply in my pride, I found my frankness again, my good serenity, and I spent two hours with Mr. Mario, since my husband, perhaps a better psychologist than what I believe, had left us alone, under pretext of a meeting.

I spent two very pleasant hours which, however, convinced me that while I lack the lover of my dreams, I do have a good and faithful friend, an intelligent and benevolent companion.

I should have wished, though, that William had showed himself completely generous and had spared me afterwards his sarcasm over my defeat; but perhaps it was asking too much, and now when De Lungo comes to see me, he affects to go away, "anyway," he repeats to me laughing, "you have not made an impression on your Italian."

And that's exactly the way it is, and since I am now mistress of myself enough to show the most perfect and natural coolness, I do not even suffer because of my misunderstood and unrequited feelings; rather it seems to me to be almost a refinement of joy, this feeling of mine which has all the poetry of love, without the tortures and remorse that accompany the sweet sin, but with the spiritual and dear sweetnesses of friendship.

When we are near, I almost feel happy; if I am sad I tell him about this life of mine which is so false that it is both a burlesque comedy and a prosaic tragedy, going from the parody of a court to the dark poverty which sometimes deprives me of what is indispensable for one who does not live on bread alone. He knows how to find the words that comfort, invigorate afresh,

rebuild the strength to struggle or to resign oneself: he distracts me by telling his travels, with the reading of good authors, with brilliant discussions in which his noble intelligence stands completely revealed.

Sadly this feast for my spirit will be of short duration: De Lungo, tenacious in his purpose, will shortly leave for Kauai; science beckons him like a siren, the risks to which he is exposing himself do not terrorize him, the idea of bringing relief to humanity seems to him luminous, not only in and of itself, but for the joys that he expects from it. "I am selfish, dear madam," he often repeats to me, "it is for myself, that I work!"

Meanwhile, the King, to whom posing as a Maecenas to a European seems incredible, has named De Lungo court physician and, no sooner did he learn of his disinterested philanthropic mission, decorated him with the order of Kamehameha V [Dr. Mario De Lungo's name does not appear on the list of those decorated], and made available to him the house which he possesses on the beautiful accursed island.

But I shall be alone again, and this sojourn will seem to me still more melancholy, now that I can turn back and long for these dear hours which I have enjoyed!

Honolulu [January 1888]

FOR a few days I had been aware of more frequent secret meetings between William and the princess, but I confess I did not try to penetrate their mysteries. The departure of my friend De Lungo; the Christmas holidays so happy for a person with home and family, very sad for exiles; the preparations for a costume ball for which the daughter of the minister from the United States had asked me to design for her and help her to make a complete Ciociara¹¹ costume,—this combination of happy and sad things—which at bottom are what make up the lives of everybody, but which seem to be accentuated when it comes to me—had absorbed and distracted me so that the politics of the Sandwich islands left me indifferent.

William kept coming back home later than usual, but he said he was exercising at target practice; I could hear in the night firing of guns, pistols, but that did not amaze me: the sixty soldiers of whom the army is composed with proportionately a very much larger number of superiors carry out their manoeuvres at night because of the heat and in order to permit the armed clerks and workers to take part in the drills.

In short, nothing extraordinary had come to disturb my relative peace, when one morning a letter from my sister-in-law, delivered to me mysteriously by a tiny kanaka, while I was strolling in the garden, advised me under no circumstance to fail that evening to go to the accustomed rendezvous at the home of the French consul because the revolution would break out and the King would be killed; she begged me not to give her away to William who would never forgive her for revealing it to me.

One day perhaps, when I tell these events in Italy, and they will be so far away that it will seem to me that I never lived through them, I shall paint them with gaudy colors; in my imagination I shall think I was great, heroic, worthy of poetry and history, but the event took place in the simplest and most common way possible.

My husband, excusing himself with a note for not attending dinner, told me he would come to fetch me as usual, and I dined with the princess, forcing myself naturally to appear calm and self-possessed. Since I am not a woman for nothing, I was gnawed by the desire to tell this intriguer that I knew everything and had I but wanted to I could have foiled her ambitious plots; but I held my tongue, and, having collected my valuables in a small purse, I left to the slow trot of the little mare to join my friends in the trustworthy and pleasant little house which, situated on the other side of the island, distant from the city, remained safe from every danger.

I was bit pale when I arrived, but after I told my vicissitudes I became calm again and, chattering perhaps more than usual, to distract me the customary group awaited with me the outcome of the affair.

But is it my fate that ridicule which I abhor should play so essential a part in my life?!

Towards midnight a carriage makes the garden gravel creak, my heart

trembles because deep down it might bring me a message of misfortune; instead my husband gets out almost smiling, and with the placidness of a hero or of an idiot tells that his name had come out by lot to kill the King; he had penetrated to the bedroom, but when it came to planting the dagger into his chest, he had lacked the courage to do so.

I cannot describe the impression produced on me by my husband at that moment: it was a mixture of horror and contempt; in my judgment he was just as guilty of regicide—even though I have trouble surrounding with a halo of sovereignty this crowned marionette—and in addition of the ridicule which is born from failure in an enterprise, albeit a wicked one.

Now I am not sure how he will conduct himself in this small world.

Meanwhile I see that the princess during meals shows herself less affectionate to her aide-de-camp, and she affects rather a great politeness to me who continue to show myself ignorant of what took place and still insist on my wish to leave.

Moreover her behavior makes sense! She was persuaded that, thanks to this most devoted of her followers, she would be sitting today on the throne and to see him instead sitting near her in his customary place, with that depressed, humbled aspect, must not be too pleasant for her.¹²

Truly if I were not to suffer for it, if I did not see as a consequence of these comedies, all my life ruined, I should enjoy myself as in the theater, perhaps even more than I enjoyed myself evenings prior to that at the Kamehameha Music-Hall, Honolulu's theater, where an American working company gave a lyrico-dramatic performance of very mediocre taste.

Indeed, this unusual country possesses a theater, too, and the Hawaiians tell proudly that our Ristori [Adelaide Ristori (1822-1906)]¹³ and Sarah Bernhardt have performed there. They did not claim certainly to compete with the European artists, the modest actors of the other evening, but in truth more than the show I was interested in the audience, for it would be hard to find a more varied and multicolored one.

This morning I received at last a letter from Dr. De Lungo: he is satisfied by his stay, he describes to me his house situated on the plateau, overlooking the valley, where the lepers by whom he has been warmly received live. He

has already begun some cures, and he has become fond of the poor sick people whom he hopes to render back to life, to health. "The kanakas especially, I think, will respond to my expectation; they are so docile and patient! Believe me, madam, if I should succeed in curing one alone of these unfortunates, it would seem to me that I had won a glorious battle."

So he writes me in his fine apostle's enthusiasm. And he describes to me the magnificent waterfalls that murmur in the silent nights forming as it were a river through the rich sugar and cotton plantations; the grottoes of Haena which seem like temples with innumerable stalactites, iridescent like extremely precious marbles; and amid that enchantment of nature the horrendous monsters who walk about and appear to be the ghosts of all human faults and sorrows.

The papers had already brought him news of the deeds attempted but unsuccessful on Oahu, and he had thought so much about me, he had wished to be near me to comfort me; I should be cheerful, even for me happy days would return and I would remember the past like the dream of a bad night.

Also from Italy come to me more or less the same encouragements, the exhortation to patience.

I think I have endured even too much, but can this adapting oneself to the inevitable be meritorious? because I swear, if I could see a single means of getting out of it, I would fight. I am tired of feeling that I am in the power of an evil destiny that is making fun of me as the wave does with the leaf which the wind has borne on its restless course.

Even the thought of my soon becoming a mother has not succeeded in giving me yet a single hour of joy. No layette to caress my hands with its treasures of fragrant flowers; no cradle to smile at me in the sacred corner of a room of mine; no dreams, no rosy hopes for that little head that I almost catch sight of sometimes, but which I almost try to drive away, because it already appears to be surrounded by a halo of pain.

I am tired, tired!

Honolulu [February 1888]

A VERY great joy and a deep sorrow. I am sailing tomorrow for San Francisco; Dr. De Lungo was found dead in his bed. I wept bitterly, but I have no remorse for these tears; it cannot be blameworthy to grieve for a friend who abandons us having left a bright impression on your spirit, having revealed there true goodness, lofty sentiments, perfect generosity.

I do not know exactly what I felt for him; certainly it seems to me I am not separated from him now more than before, because he had not read or did not wish to read to the depths of my heart; but since he was full of pity, he had taken in his hands my grieving soul and knew how to treat it, making it give forth its best notes, making from it rise energy, will, ambition. However this beneficial action did not cease with his departure from the world. Now and always I shall ask, in the various contingencies of life, how I should act to earn his approval, to hear him exclaim with his dear authoritative voice the words that restored to me confidence in myself, without which there can be for me in life neither struggle nor victory.

But already before his death I had this feeling of peace, of help in remembering him; actually knowing that he is at rest under the flowering sod of the cemetery of Kauai, I can almost feel him belonging more to me, because certainly I am the last woman to have passed into his spiritual life, and if I did not know even the caress of his hands, the warmth of his lips in the tenderness of a kiss, he must have felt me near in the last hours of his existence, because his last letter still so rich in faith, in enthusiasm for his work of encouragements, of hopes for my future dates from the eve of his death.

Not a word in that letter, not an indication of his imminent end; nothing was found to suggest a violent death, not a weapon, not a poison, not a wound, not a puncture on his young, vigorous body created to live and to appreciate life. The newspapers speak of the rupture of an aneurysm; what does it matter, after all? the cause does not change one bit the extremely sorrowful effect.

Is it not better after all, to disappear thus in a flash, in full vigor of strength and health, than to confront the horrors, the sufferings of old age, or be contorted in the spasms of the slow disease which struggles to gain the upper

hand over us? And since there is not a mother, a wife to weep over the death of the fine young Italian, fallen in a foreign land like a soldier, performing his self-imposed duty, since perhaps there will be only my tears on his memory, I am wrong to feel sorry for him; he was dear to the Gods and they have spared him the sorrow of fading away.

And now I am leaving: the "Alameda" will arrive tomorrow morning from Sydney and in the afternoon will raise anchor for San Francisco. [The Wilcoxes departed for San Francisco per S. S. "Alameda" on February 11, 1888.]

But how many battles, how many anxieties in these last days! Shortly after the attempt which failed against that poor Kalakaua, I was tranquilly writing in the parlor when the Japanese maid came to announce to me the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs [Jonathan Austin].

I had for a moment the illusion that he was bringing me some happy piece of news for William: they had in the past promised him the consulate in San Francisco, a lucrative post and one which would have satisfied his self-esteem. I think my eyes were shining with hope, and I dallied in meeting His Excellency, so hard was my heart pounding in its tumult.

It is so easy for me to believe in happiness!

But this was quite the most ephemeral of those that have smiled in my imagination, because I at once read in the countenance of the huge gentleman a misfortune: in fact, in a few words he told me that only because of concern for my unfortunate condition, they were warning me that the government had decreed the death of my husband, and if he did not leave the island or give up forever his political intrigues, he would be imprisoned and killed.

Very well! I did not faint, my hair did not turn white, I did not even shed a tear.

It seemed to me that through my veins flowed all the water of an icy river; with a firm voice I thanked the minister, promising him to do what was in my power.

An hour later I arrived at the Italian consul's with my jewels, and I begged him to hold them in exchange for a sum that might permit my husband and me to leave this hateful country as soon as possible.

Then yes, I wept; I wept all my tears because I forgot myself and in a horrid vision I saw this man to whom I belong—who loved me to the point of making me his wife, who is the father of this unfortunate child that is about to be born—shut up in horrible prison of Punch Bowl [sic], tortured, and killed.

And when William came later, pale and perturbed, I clasped him to my breast in an impulse of desperate emotion, with an affection which perhaps I had never felt before then.

I understood the grief of certain widows which seemed to me previously paltry, I felt I could still be happy taking him with me from this country which so changed him, alas!, that I could work also with enthusiasm for him, if that meant removing him from this ridiculous and false existence.

I want to forget the heartaches, the humiliations of these days: the ruses to remove him from the domination of Liliuokalani, furious to see the loyal captain of her forces fleeing; the money, gathered by subscription of friends and acquaintances which would give me back my freedom; I wish to forget all I have suffered; I wish to forgive also, if I only can get back to my country, among my people whom I should never have left. . . .

Mantea [Gina Sobrero]

Notes

1. Duke Tommaso of Genoa in 1874 became a member of the Hawaiian Royal Order of Kamehameha I, Knights Grand Cross: Gordon Medcalf, *Hawaiian Royal Orders* (Honolulu: Oceania Coin Co., 1963) 9.
2. King Umberto I also became a member of the Royal Order of Kamehameha I, Knights Grand Cross, in 1878: Medcalf, *Hawaiian Royal Orders* 9.
3. Elizabeth Maile, daughter of Samuel and Lucy Nowlein, was the single woman who studied abroad under the King's program. She attended Gina and Robert's wedding with her father in Turin. See, too, Agnes Quigg, "Kalākaua's Hawaiian Studies Abroad Program," *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 22 (1988): 170-208.
4. See Curtis Piehu 'Iaukea and Lorna Kahilipuaokalani 'Iaukea Watson, *By Royal Command: Biographical Notes on Curtis Piehu 'Iaukea* (Honolulu: Hui Hanai, 1988).
5. Count Ugolino died of starvation in the Tower of Famine. He was discovered in Hell chewing on the skull of Archbishop Roger who put him there. Dante, *Inferno*, canto 33.
6. Kapi'olani was crowned at the Coronation in 1883.
7. There were lepers on Kaua'i who were treated medically, but the main settlement was on Moloka'i.
8. Caroline Haupa (1856-1938), who married William F. Sharratt by whom she had eight children: Egbert Leland (October 19, 1876), Lucy Elizabeth (March 8, 1882), Winifred (January 20, 1884), Wilhelmina (January 14, 1886), Edith Carl (July 17, 1893), and Emily Mabel, Frederick, and Queenie, all who died in infancy.
9. Lili'uokalani befriended Wilcox and his wife. On December 12, 1887 they went to live at the residence of the princess.

10. The delegation from Hawai‘i to the Jubilee of Queen Victoria on June 10, 1887 included Queen Kapi‘olani; the heiress-apparent Princess Lili‘uokalani; her husband, Lieutenant-General John O. Dominis; Chamberlain Colonel Curtis Piehu ‘Iaukea; and Colonel James H. Boyd, aide-de-camp of the queen. They left Hawai‘i on April 12, 1887 and returned on July 26, 1887.

11. Ciociara, a term applied to women from the region of Ciociaria, Italy.

12. This is the clearest account to connect Robert Wilcox to a plot against Kalākaua. W. D. Alexander, *History of the Later Years of the Hawaiian Monarchy . . . and the Revolution of 1893* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Gazette Co., 1896): 23-4, and Lorrin A. Thurston, *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution* (Honolulu: Advertiser Publishing Co., 1936): 185-6, both write of a conspiracy. Alexander states that it involved the young men who had studied in Italy and had been recalled to Hawai‘i in 1887. Apparently one night they attempted to detain the King in a Palace room and intimidate him into signing his abdication in favor of his sister. Evidence was collected, but, because of political implications, their leader, Wilcox, was allowed to go to California, and the matter was dismissed. Thurston’s account alleges that Mrs. Wilcox interceded and promised him, Thurston, a government minister, that she and her husband would leave the Islands if the charges were dropped. Thurston added that F. A. Schaefer, the Italian consul, advanced or raised the money to pay the expenses of the Wilcoxes to the U.S. It should be noted that no account besides Gina’s directly links Lili‘uokalani to the conspiracy, and that hers is a surmised without positive proof that the princess knew of the plan.

13. Adelaide Ristori (1822-1906), considered the finest Italian actress of her time, arrived in Honolulu from San Francisco on June 29, 1875 on board the *City of Melbourne* along with other artists. No record has been found of a performance by Ristori in Honolulu.

AFTERWORD

From Honolulu to Turin: Gina Sobrero's Inner Journey

GINA SOBRERO's highly self-conscious writing makes it possible to read *Espatriata* as a work of literature as well as a source of historical information. The book was published in 1908—two decades after her travels—and while it presents itself autobiographically in the form of a diary, it bears the marks of a novel, and indeed has been referred to as such.

Espatriata does not begin at the beginning; the first diary entry introduces Gina as an already disappointed newlywed, and the narrative fills in gaps with a series of flashbacks which tell us in an elegantly digressive way about her childhood, her family, her engagement, her wedding and honeymoon, and other events. The last diary entry leaves us suspended, as Gina hastily prepares to depart from Honolulu after her husband's failed revolution. Beginning and ending *in medias res* accentuate the text's seeming spontaneity—a desirable quality in a diary—but it is quite obviously the illusion of spontaneity. Since Sobrero knows that those who are happy have no story (“speravo di essere felice, quindi di non avere storia,” “I hoped I would be happy, and therefore would have no story”), her diary is tailored to tell an unhappy tale, which begins in disappointment and ends in horror and anxiety. The beginning, then, already implies the ending, and though the story is not told in retrospect, the narrative is shaped from the perspective of one who has undergone many a misfortune.

The Heroine in Exile

But is the ending truly an unhappy one? “Ci sono, ma non ci starò!”

"I am here, but I shan't stay!": the first two thirds of *Espatriata* prepare us for this willful statement which inaugurates the Honolulu entries of her travelogue and ironically reverse her subtitle *Da Torino ad Honolulu* (*From Turin to Honolulu*). The story does take us from Europe to Hawai'i, but the narrative discourse implicitly, but passionately and persuasively, explains why it is impossible for her to stay in Hawai'i, why she must return to Italy. As such, her narrative is also the signifier of a victory over the misfortunes and unhappiness of her "exile," a victory which transforms the ending into a happy one, and turns the protagonist from victim into a heroine.

The writer's psychological self-portrait, cultural and literary references, and narrative strategies all contribute to build a plot which will inevitably take her from Honolulu to Turin, rescuing her from the horrors of "exile." At the end of her very first entry, Gina declares she will make her husband Wilcox change his mind about women:

Once perhaps our women were as our poet says soft and forgetful, although I have my memory sufficiently fresh from studies as to be able to quote to him pages of ancient feminine names that have given an example of strength, firmness, of lofty moral and intellectual virtues; in any case, since then times have changed, and we, women of this century's end, have taken leave of placid flattery, we are not afraid of struggles, we feel like standing beside our husbands to share their problems, comfort them, if necessary, to work with them.

While she does not or cannot live up to the last part of her claim, much of her self-presentation is designed to emphasize her intellectual strength. By doing so, she consciously distinguishes herself from the typically romantic and oversensitive young girls who read too many of that time's Harlequin romances, and claims membership instead in a somewhat idealized category of well-educated, modern Italian women.

When recollecting her first encounter with Wilcox and his courtship, Sobrero forcefully distances herself from young women who are easily

inclined to spill tears or who see their own destiny spelled out in a man's eyes or smile. The analysis of her own feelings toward Wilcox is sharp and proceeds from an understanding of love which is not founded on extreme passions, loss of appetite, or suicide threats. Why did she marry him? After he proposed, the idea became a familiar one as her family reasoned with her, her friends envied her, and Wilcox himself conveyed the impression that he would be not only a spouse, but a friend and protector. The exotic undoubtedly attracts her, but reason and "society" persuade her, as she would have it.

Gina's Wedding

Does this mean—to use her mother's rather cutting words—that Gina is a "donnetta utilitaria," "a utilitarian little woman"? Perhaps she is a utilitarian, but never a "donnetta." Let's take a close look at the account of her wedding to see how her imagination works.

While getting ready for the ceremony, she feels split. Is the bride in the mirror the same woman who nostalgically thinks back to her family and girlfriends as she anxiously questions the future this foreign man is about to lead her into? At the wedding itself she experiences a different kind of doubling, based not on psychological dilemmas but context. Aware of the gossip, impatient with the official's predictable questions, smiling a little sarcastically—this is her vivacious and ironic portrait of herself during the civil wedding. And yet, the religious ceremony in the archbishop's private chapel moves her to "santo entusiasmo," "holy enthusiasm," which, however, soon gives way to the party's joys and busyness.

In this emblematic episode, then, Gina Sobrero displays the self-control of a woman whose expertise is etiquette and gossip but who conveys her own seriousness and depth of character by telling us how touched she is by the religious ceremony. A psychologically complex, but all in all reasonable being—one conscious of her weaknesses and strengths; one who can handle herself in difficult situations, who lets herself be moved in others, and who laughs at herself in still others; a

being familiar with social pressures and pleasures, but firm in her desire to use her own head; one gifted with a lively imagination, but not controlled by it—a strong woman, in short, who will not let violent emotions rule her life and does not succumb to fancy even as she makes a most fanciful marriage.

Strength in Adversity

Is this Gina Sobrero? Much of *Espatriata* presents her as such. And certainly her intellectual strength (which expresses itself most strongly as rational behavior) and her desire to make this strength known to her husband and then to her readers, stand explicitly opposed to the dreamy passivity of those heroines in romances for women, privileged then and still glamorized now. As she states at the time of her worst depression in Honolulu:

At this very moment I am suffering from all the inconveniences together of my situation; all my human strength could not at a moment's notice remove them from my path, but if I with patience, wit, energy, set about overcoming them, a little at a time, finally I shall triumph, I shall succeed in leaving this country which for the present I abhor, and I shall see again those dear to me, my country, which I yearn for with every fiber of my being.

Ingenuity, calculated patience, and motivation will no doubt save her.

Feminism and Patriotism

Sobrero's strength does not, however, link her to the emerging women's movement, in her opinion at least. Feminism, she lectures, is "la cosa più antipatica, più male intesa che si possa immaginare," "the most disagreeable, the most mistaken thing that can be imagined." Whatever feminist arguments we may, as late 20th-century readers, make for her, Gina Sobrero thought of herself very differently from the way her contemporary Sibilla Aleramo, the well-known author of *Una donna* (*A Woman*), did.

Sobrero's defense of women does not emphasize their oppression, their needs and desires, or their lack of economic independence as women. Though her negative comments on their honeymoon suggest that she and her husband view sexuality quite differently—for whatever reason, be it modesty, ignorance, or lack of awareness—she does not make much of this. She writes little about her pregnancy, and she entertains “work” as a distant possibility, and one that would require much courage, only as a way to help her husband out.

Instead, Gina Sobrero makes her claims to equality not in the name of early feminism, but of humanism—especially in the value she places on reason—and patriotism. If there is a group of women Gina Sobrero willingly champions, it is *Italian* women, “our” women as the long passage I first quoted puts it. She later proclaims, “. . . e farò vedere. . . al mio signore e padrone che le donne italiane sanno incontrare l'avversa fortuna coraggiosamente,” “. . . I shall. . . make. . . my lord and master see that Italian women can meet adverse fortune courageously and adapt themselves to circumstances”; and as the narrative unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear that nationality rather than gender is the stronger allegiance.

In Turin she wanted to show her husband that Italian women could think and act intelligently; in the United States she sees herself, independently of her sex, as a representative of her country and defends it against prejudice on several occasions. It is no accident, then, that Sobrero uses military language and metaphors to describe her preparation for her wedding and her overseas experience. She compares her behavior on the night before the wedding quite grandiosely to that of a general who sleeps soundly before a big battle; later she vows that once she has mastered the English language, “the Yankees” will find out how well she can defend her country. In either case, though, she feels in control because of her intellectual strength and her nationality, and not because she is a woman.

Education and Class Privilege

If humanism and patriotism are Sobrero's true causes, education and

class are her allies. In the long passage I quoted at the beginning, Sobrero lets us know that she has studied and can quote Italian poetry and the classics, possibly Boccaccio. In later entries, she speaks fondly of her school days, nor does she spare references to Dante, the Old Testament, fairy tales, and Alessandro Manzoni.

Both sensitivity and training shape her response to art. In Kalākaua's palace she not only recognizes a Raphael reproduction, but comments on its quality. In her travels through Europe, she knows what to look for, and in the United States, she displays her critical appreciation of architecture, music, and theater.

All this knowledge and keen judgment are not simply the result of personal interest and talent; institutionalized education and class privilege have clearly left their mark. Though she does not mention explicitly, her passing comments betray her class background. Gina was never interested in politics, but one of her relatives is minister for the Italian state. An archbishop celebrated her wedding in his private chapel. Financial worries only enter her life when she finds herself in Hawai'i with a "penniless" husband. As a baroness, she clearly expected to marry her equal, and though *Espatriata* does not mention it, she will later file for divorce on the grounds that Wilcox misrepresented his social position. Lastly, her mixed but finely analyzed feelings about the behavior and treatment of poor Italian immigrants on the ship to America and then in New York make her social distance from her countrymen almost palpable. Later when she encounters the comfortable, well-respected, and successful Italians of San Francisco, Sobrero's attitude is quite different, and she almost feels at home.

The Female Hero

A fierce belief in rational humanism, a strong devotion to her homeland, a solid liberal arts education, and an unquestioning class allegiance: these attributes contributed much to the making of Gina Sobrero. In *Espatriata* she chooses not to represent herself as a romantic heroine, a feminist or a helpless victim of destiny. Rather, she consciously and unconsciously

steps forward as a different kind of female hero in a novel where cultural, social, and national constructs of self prevail.

Thus, in addition to being autobiographical writing, travelogue, and “factual fiction,” *Espatriata* belongs—at least to some extent—to that sub-genre of Italian literature which Umberto Eco calls “the bourgeois popular novel.” flourishing during the last decades of the 19th century (with, e.g., Carolina Invernizio), this subgenre featured as its hero the common man, “the innocent one who triumphs after many trials over his enemies.” Explicitly or implicitly reactionary, imperialistic, and often racist—as much popular literature is—this subgenre also manipulates and combines well-known narrative situations and strategies to please and reassure its readers. †

Espatriata's sub-title, “Da Torino ad Honolulu,” invites this particular intertextual reading by playing off one of the most famous stories in Edmondo De Amicis's ever-so-popular *Cuore* (“Heart”), published in 1886. A true heart-breaker, “Dagli Appennini alle Ande” (“From the Apennines to the Andes”) tells of a young boy's desperate search for his mother; makes not so subtle comments about a woman's role in the family, and forges strong links between one's mother and motherland. The further the boy is from home, the more he realizes how important his mother(land) is to him and how willing he is to fight for her.

Gina Sobrero's “quest” echoes the boy's in at least one significant way: only when she is literally on the other side of the earth does she realize how much she belongs to Italy and to the social, political, and educational values of her fatherland which shape her and her narrative. As she

† Here I am using Umberto Eco's brief description of the popular novel in what he calls its “second period.” *Espatriata* could arguably also be seen as combining features of the second and third periods; the important point, however, is not to label the text, but to show that its handling of the narrative apparatus found in several genres—most notably the diary and travelogue—and its affiliation with the turn-of-the-century popular novel, can explain some of its ideology.

writes in *Espatriata's* last lines: "Voglio dimenticare quanto ho sofferto; voglio perdonare anche, pur di ritornare nel mio paese, fra la gente mia che non avrei dovuto mai lasciare. . . ." "I wish to forget all I have suffered; I wish to forgive also, if I only can get back to my country, among my people whom I should have never left"

Every(wo)man

Gina Sobrero's kind of heroism, and her implicit triumph over adversity, do not, however, contradict her equally insistent stance as the "innocent," "common," every(wo)man, since typicality and innocence are always ideological. An invisible net(work) of gender, cultural background, class, and nationality always defines the "common" man. Unlike the "Superman" hero (Eco's category) or the "Wonder Woman" heroine, Sobrero does not self-righteously represent herself as the role model we can never measure up to. Her weaknesses, deficiencies, problems, and distinctly personal qualities make her human and place her on the same level as her readers. The degree to which she is "good" or "bad" is never out of reach, and her readers can easily feel a certain kinship.

Here, for instance, is her candid explanation for why her lady acquaintances will not miss her:

I am not a useful person, I do not play, I do not sing, I do not possess in short those talents praised by ladies who receive visitors one fixed evening each week; on the contrary I am young, I dance very well, I enjoy everything, I am perhaps a bit flirtatious and not stupid, and therefore I prefer the conversation of men to that of women whom I often scandalize because I say what I think and I have the courage to laugh when I feel like it

With equal candor, Sobrero sometime later exhibits precisely these qualities when reacting to a possible Hawaiian revolution:

Will there be a revolution?

Well, it will be amusing to attend one, I probably have never attended such a party.

Will they dethrone this king?—They will create another one. And the coronation festivities, the receptions, the dances, the reviews, etc! I am already thinking about ordering my toilettes to hold my position worthily!

Coquettish and frivolous indeed she is. But this naive social butterfly cannot be dismissed as nothing more, if only because even her most imaginative and humorous passages contain a good dose of self-awareness.

The Imagined Life

Sobrero's lively imagination is dear to her; she knows how much it enriches her life. She does not waste her time with socially discrediting fancies—her adolescent fantasy of becoming a singer, for instance—but she does indulge herself in extravagant plots for the lives of people or imaginary characters, from the long-gone princesses of Versailles to the prostitutes in the red-light districts to the all-too perfect doctor De Lungo (whose historical existence remains a mystery).

Her favorite imagined life is clearly her own, but even then rationality and humor restrain her exuberance and steer her away from the overly dramatic. Sobrero is too much the society woman to be a different kind of heroine: “Nulla io temo più del ridicolo,” “I fear nothing more than ridicule,” she remarks in passing, and this fear perhaps plays a greater role than she would like to admit in anchoring and shaping her imagination. (Her reaction to Wilcox's failure to kill Kalākaua is a case in point.)

Her light-hearted sense of humor, so often directed at herself, also keeps her away from psychological and narrative excess. A commonsensical yet amused tone pervades the narrative, but I will point to three specific instances of Sobrero's tongue-in-cheek and self-conscious attitude. In the very beginning, possible cannibalism and definite sexual attraction blend together in her amused and amusing description of Wilcox's “smagliante bianchezza dei denti,” “dazzling white teeth.” When De Lungo meets her in Honolulu with no more than honest friendship to

offer, Gina is disappointed but, realizing how ridiculous her expectations had been, she quickly recovers her “franchezza,” “frankness.” And while describing her life in Honolulu to this friend, she comments on its falsity: “è insieme una burlesca commedia e una tragedia prosaica, tra la parodia di una corte e la miseria nera che qualche volta mi priva dell’indispensabile a chi non vive di solo pane,” “it is both a burlesque comedy and a prosaic tragedy, going from the parody of a court to the dark poverty which sometimes deprives me of what is indispensable for one who does not live on bread alone.”

Though strong and ultimately victorious, then, Gina Sobrero is heroic only in a “middle-of-the-road” way. Much of her narrative practice in *Espatriata* falls in the same category, relying on commonplace strategies which in turn assert its dated and, often unconsciously, imperialistic and racist nature.

Travel Book Style

Espatriata draws heavily on the repertoire of etiquette and travel books, a literature Sobrero knew well (see Nancy Morris’s introduction for details on Sobrero’s other writings). The account of her honeymoon and her first months of married life in Turin, for example, contains some personal details, but primarily it seems geared to produce more reasonable expectations in young brides-to-be. Her Switzerland, Paris, London, and Ireland entries often sound like contemporary travel guides—she mentions her own indispensable Baedeker—and she builds her descriptions of American cities and landscapes on comparisons with the better known sites of Europe.

In typical travel book style, Sobrero also draws her readers into the experience of a particularly intense scene by switching to the pronoun “you,” thus increasing the readers’ appreciation of the scenery by pretending that they are the ones there observing it:

And the night without shadows on the plain, the carcasses of animals whitening in the dark like frightful ghosts; then again the

sun over the landscape of Utah which transports you in your imagination to distant Syria, with its natural fortresses echeloned by time along the flanks of the mountains, while you expect at every moment to see outline itself the gigantic shadow of some camel, with its human burden heading for an invisible and fascinating Mecca!

Of course, “you” will only feel at home in this scene if “you” are European and thus accustomed to thinking of Syria as less exotic than Utah—but then Sobrero’s intended readership fit these pre-requisites.

The New World Measured Against the Old

These and other narrative strategies allow Sobrero’s contemporary Italian readers to bask in the presence of the “already-known,” the familiar, and ultimately to find—in parallel with Sobrero herself—a confirmation of their own values and value. Similes, stereotypes, comparisons, in short, the search for sameness when experiencing something new, are the means for creating this effect in *Espatriata*, and in the travel and etiquette books, popular novels, and everyday conversation of its time.

Sobrero’s Switzerland, for instance, merely confirms what so many Italians will have already told you about it based on hearsay or a short visit; and she actually states that she did not experience anything that the guidebook had not already prepared her for. Her descriptions of Europe are thus utterly stereotypical.

The account of her cross-country travels in the United States reassures in a different way: Sobrero examines cities, people, landscape, and entertainment with a keen and curious eye, but never feels herself at a loss in understanding American culture. A well-educated and socially adept Italian can clearly travel to her satisfaction in America, and can appreciate its modernity, variety, and comforts, yet never lose her cultural superiority, as Sobrero’s comments on American architecture, theater, freedom, and *savoir faire* indicate. The New World is always

measured against the Old, familiar, beautiful, and positive world, to the point of discomfort, for after all, she must resign herself to her leaving Italy: “. . . bisogna che perda l’abitudine dei confronti, odiosi sempre, e in questo momento poi capaci sovente di farmi intristire,” “one must lose the habit of making comparisons, always odious, and at this moment capable of saddening me.”

Our Heroine Confronts Hawai‘i

What matters here is not the unblushingly ethnocentric nature of these reactions and comparisons—which her background explains, if it does not excuse—but rather their total inadequacy when our heroine confronts Hawai‘i.

When Sobrero imagines the Islands while still living in her comfortable European surroundings, her ignorance is so great as to be almost entertaining. She knows she will not need a fur coat in Hawai‘i, and she does bother to locate her husband’s country on the map, but her later complaints about leaving Paris to go to the “Sandwiches” show just how shallow her interest in the place really is: “Oh il brutto nome che per ora non mi suscita altre idee che di prosciutti, pasticci di fegato e pane imburrato,” “Ugh! the ugly name which for the present awakens in me no other ideas than of ham, liver paste and buttered bread.”

Though married to a Hawaiian, she has little interest in Hawaiian customs, history, politics, and values, taking almost for granted that since the kingdom is so small and distant, and her husband is such a “fanciullone buono,” “good overgrown boy,” Hawai‘i and its people must be trivial.

When actually thrust in the midst of it, Sobrero finds Hawaiian culture so alien that her epistemological habits break down. She adopts a defensive position and explicitly demands to live the European way in spite of where she is. Significantly, she is most unhappy during their stay with the Nowleins, where bathing outdoors at night in the beautiful Nu‘uanu valley surroundings is her only and unexpected comfort, and most at ease when lodged in a “boarding house” filled with American

military wives and wealthy English tourists. Kalākaua's court amuses her as a parody would, and though she does give her readers a "guided tour" of the palace, the tone implies her superiority in manners and knowledge.

The experienced traveler has no stock phrases for a place which is so different as to transcend even the exotic. Sobrero seems to exhaust her analogies between the known and the unknown in her initial impression of Diamond Head "che ricorda nel profilo il Vesuvio," "which recalls in its profile Mount Vesuvius."

Because her imagination finds nothing familiar to associate with Hawaiian culture, Sobrero conveys the impression that there is no culture to be experienced—and that what little there is pitifully mimics the European. In this country without a telegraph, the telephone, which she had never seen before, impresses her less than the equally novel American elevators or advertising. Her comments on Hawaiian history and religion suggest that she has learned a great deal during her stay in Honolulu, but none of this has any apparent effect on her own experience, which remains insurmountably negative. Even when she praises the people's musical talents or their good taste in making leis, she poisons the compliment by remarking on how ugly and lazy Hawaiians are. Like so many travelers in all ages, the more she feels at a loss, the more direct and crude her ethnocentrism and racism become.

Only the Islands' natural beauty escapes this defensive (and offensive) attitude relatively untouched, as her vivid description of the Pali reveals:

From this side the island appears immense and remaining still on the height, we dominate the entire slope with its endless forest that sways in the breeze, the sugar fields with a gentle and cool green, and far off, behind the line of the sea, we contemplate the fiery globe of the sun that hides behind an indescribable aureole of rays tinging the water with violet, making these mountains that unroll like pipes of a titanic organ more gloomy. And to complete the illusion, the roar of the air which is engulfed in the gorge, there escapes from the abysses the murmur of the water descending from the summits

and going to feed the coolness, the vegetation of the plain, producing a thousand gentle or sonorous, tender or threatening voices which echo in the evening, like a full and marvelous orchestra.

A sublime vista, and all the more exceptional, since Sobrero warns us that charming landscapes abound on O'ahu, but the majestic—which she admires—does not. So different and occasionally so beautiful, Hawai'i is worth a short visit, though Sobrero seems to suggest that if “you”—the Italian reader—are adventurous enough to undertake such a journey you should make sure to stay at a “boarding house” and to surround yourself with civilized people!

Once again, this is hardly an uncommon reaction to culture shock; what makes Sobrero's response interesting in *Espatriata* is how it forces her to recognize the strength of her ties to her fatherland and thus begin the most important stage of her inner journey.

Even before arriving in Honolulu, she recognizes the pull: “per ora la Perla del Pacifico mi attira assai meno del più modesto ciottolo che il sole d'Italia accarezza e intiepidisce,” “For now the Pearl of the Pacific attracts me a good deal less than the more modest pebble that the sun of Italy caresses and warms.” And nothing she sees in Hawai'i weakens Italy's hold, for the differences between the two cultures seem so extreme to her that they rule out any comforting comparisons. The more she tells us about Hawaiian food, ceremonies, entertainment, politics, and manners, the more she and her readers believe her earlier claim: “La moglie segue la nazionalità del marito' dunque, non c'è che dire, io sono hawaiana. Chiacchiere! l'anima mia è rimasta e sarà sempre italiana,” “The wife takes on the nationality of the husband,' therefore, there is nothing to say other than I am a Hawaiian. Nonsense! my soul has remained and always will be Italian.”

Espatriata: Da Torino ad Honolulu is the result of this assertion, one mapping out Gina Sobrero's inner journey, and anticipating her return home. In its lighthearted way, her narrative also appeals to her contem-

porary Italian readers' beliefs by valorizing the heroine's inner strength and eventual triumph over adversity—a process at the very heart of popular literature and one which *Espatriata* carries out with dexterity and brio.

Her style is easy and pleasing. Her narrative strategies are highly conventional, but she manages them well, and displays remarkable control both in her descriptions of people and places, and in especially dramatic scenes (such her first encounter with De Lungo or Wilcox's return after the attempted regicide) when she shifts her narrative to the present tense. Her metaphors are not strikingly new (marriage is an arch of triumph with no corresponding building, the ocean is human life, and San Francisco is a siren) but elegant; and the ample and flowing rhythms of her prose—which Edgar Knowlton's English translation felicitously preserves—reflect Sobrero's exuberance, giving the text a certain charm and liveliness, though not in excess.

As late 20th-century readers of *Espatriata* in English, possibly residents of Honolulu, and certainly not her intended audience, we may find her writing enjoyable, at times outrageous, at others refreshing, and ironically enough almost exotic. It is my hope that this essay situates *Espatriata* in its socio-cultural and generic context, thus allowing us also to understand and appreciate the full impact (as well as the beautiful assonance, unfortunately partially lost in English) of Gina Sobrero's impassioned cry:

“Honolulu! Tomboctu! Belzebu!” “Honolulu! Timbuktoo! Beelzebub!”

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