

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers* 2, 1886 – 1887 June 5, '86 to May 21, '87)

San Marino

The East India mail passes through Italy on the fast express from the Gotthard Tunnel by Milan and Bologna, and along the Adriatic to Brindisi. The road first touches the sea at Rimini. To the student of history it were worth while to stop here, and, having crossed the Rubicon by rail, view at leisure objects of interest such as Caesar's column, which marks the spot in the public square where the invader stood before advancing on Rome, and harangued his legions, the local garrison, and his friends from Rome who had come to meet him.

The column is four or five feet high. It is rather slender for a rostrum, and has no means of mounting, and is evidently modern; no claim is made that it is the original stone on which Caesar stood. The enthusiastic citizen pretends only that it is monumental, and marks the place where that great historic event occurred. And this claim may be accepted if qualified by saying that the stone stands within the area which was the ancient forum of Arminium, in which Caesar made his address. In the same market-place is a chapel dedicated to St. Anthony on the spot where he preached to a hard-hearted generation who refused to hearken unto him; wherefore he went forth with religious indignation to the sea-shore, and preached another sermon to the fishes which, as if to rebuke their sinful fellow-mortals, swarmed to the surface, and leaping out of the water gave evident signs of their appreciation of the wisdom and eloquence of their saintly preacher. Not far away on the present canal, then the sea-shore, stands a church which contains pictures illustrating the life and miracles of St. Anthony, which are explained by the female sexton, who is full of simple faith.

Memorials of ancient grandeur are the arched gate-way of Augustus and the marble bridge over the river Marecchia on the road from Rimini to Rome. The medieval castle is supposed to cover the site where died Francesca da Rimini with her lover. The cathedral is a curious structure by Alberti, filled with strange pictures and monuments, and adorned on the outside with sarcophagi.

The modern city is an important sea-bathing station with excellent accommodations, an elegant fashionable resort, patronized by the nobility, and national and foreign notables. But my chief object in stopping there was to go across the country to the little Republic of San Marino whose capital sits upon a craggy mountain which rises 2200 feet above the sea, and is crowned by three castles, surmounted by towers, from which rise iron plumes. The city on a hill being about 10 miles inland, is visible, and the most important landmark from the railway to the sea.

A diligence, a sort of half omnibus, half stage, was running daily, fare very low. Carriages were offered for the round trip for 20 to 25 lire, say four or five dollars, and would have been preferable if comfort were consulted, but my choice was prompted by curiosity to see the people and converse with them on the way; a wish to be free to stay at

San Marino as long as please me, a romantic impulse to go as a republican to the republic, and finally, let me confess it, the hope of enjoying the rare luxury of economy in travel. So, against the scornful protest of hotels, livery stables, and their agents and owners, I firmly ordered and paid for my seat, stubbornly took it and persistently stuck to it, and about 2 PM on a hot summer day, in company with four or five native passengers, rolled and rattled out of Rimini in as rickety a conveyance drawn by two as shabby hacks as any community should ever tolerate.

We were soon crossing the fertile plain on a good, well-graded macadamized road which runs to the foot of the mountain up which it winds. The whole road is so well constructed that a double team could trot the entire distance up and down, and the ride should be an enjoyable excursion.

Two of the passengers were citizens of San Marino, and the conversation turned upon the merits of the Republic and her advantages over the surrounding kingdom of Italy. It would be hard to find citizens of any Nations more proud of their country than are the eight or ten thousand inhabitants of this State. They are familiar with her history, which, though long, is not broad, and is full of stirring incidents of heroism in war and wisdom in Council. Their rock has been besieged, and defended in desperate fight. It has been the subject of international treaties and guarantees. Its laws are models of wisdom and justice, and its code of agriculture is considered one of the best in existence. There is no public debt, and there are no taxes. It was refreshing to hear the republicans talking with citizens of Rimini on the subjects of taxation glad of a new listener, they went over afresh what must've been an old story to them, and appeared to enjoy my surprise.

The talk ran thus:—

Citizen of the Republic. How much tax do you pay on your houses in Rimini?

Subject of Italy. That depends on the rent. We pay 40 per cent per year on the rent.

Citizen. There we have the advantage. We pay nothing.

Subject. So I have heard. How fortunate you are. But you have other taxes to pay.

Citizen. No, we pay nothing.

How could I refrain from saying, “How is that? Is it possible that you have no taxes?”

Answer in chorus. It is true.

Q. Then how is your government supported?

A. Our government is administered by the heads of citizen-families; and it is their interest to have good and honest government at a moderate cost.

Q. But you pay something for public services, and for public buildings, roads, etc.?

A. Oh, yes. We do not ask any citizen to serve us for nothing. Our buildings are good, we are proud of our churches, our hospitals, and our State House and City Buildings, which

have cost us hundreds of thousands of lire.

Q. How have these been paid for?

A. We have two chief sources of revenue. Italy pays us twenty five thousand lire a year, as a commutation for our ancient right to import free of duty, tobacco and salt, and transport them across her territory to our boundary. This alone pays our current expense. We buy these articles at Rimini at fixed wholesale prices. Then resell every year more or less of titles of nobility and decoration, which brings about twenty five thousand lire more.

Q. But, who buys such baubles?

A. Oh, whoever wants them. It may be some wealthy man without titles wishes to wed a lady of a noble family in Italy or elsewhere. We have the sovereign right of conferring ring-nobility, and for a consideration we grant to an applicant who is not unworthy a small piece of ground from the public domain with the title say, "Il Principi della Rocca," and he pays accordingly. We sometimes grant titles or honors in return for services rendered the Republic by able men of other nations; especially as jurists and legislators or diplomats; when we have important and difficult litigation between citizens, we refer the question to a foreign juriscounsel of distinction, and reward his labors with such honors as may be acceptable."

So conversing we crossed the line between Italy and the Republic, here a stream; and as we rolled over the bridge a citizen pointed to a solid stone house and said, "There is the old guard-house, we always felt more free when we passed it and entered our own country." – There was an instant change in the condition of the land. The soil of the Republic is admirably cultivated. The meadows, fields, and vineyards, far superior in condition to those of the Romagna adjoining. The vines are generally on stakes, as in France and Germany; not trailed on trees as in Italy: and this gives more and better wine. The houses, farm-buildings, and fences are in good, tidy condition, and the stock is good and well-cared for. This is doubtless due in some degree to the liberal laws for farming on shares: the landlord furnishes every thing including stock and tools, pigs and poultry and the tenant does the work, and the law divides every thing equally; grain, vegetables, fruit, wine, grass, and even the increase of stock and fowls.

This gives the tenant a common interest with the land-owner; yet the law guards the right of the landlord, and punishes severely all waste and frauds. We passed through several villages, and at last under the cliff, and about 500 feet from the summit we reached the [Borgo] or suburb, which is a modern town with a fine hotel, a bank, a school-house, and many handsome houses and a celebrated cavern wine cellar under the mountain where there is always a breeze. Here travelers generally stop, and only visit the old city above. They said there was no hotel in the city, only a poor locando (tavern); I preferred that, and we went slowly round under the wall while the sun declined, and were soon at the gate, which the omnibus does not enter. The landlord's boy bo was there, and happy to carry my bag to the house, which, standing on the wall, has a fine prospect. The landlord was an old soldier who had served in the Crimean and other wars and returned to the Republic to make a patriotic fight at tavern-keeping in the city. He was a good cook and a

better story-teller, and knew something of the place.

All the citizens were kind, and quite at my service, and I was tempted to apply for admission; but on mingling with the people I soon found that this paradise is not without its apple-tree. The masses of its inhabitants had been excluded from participation in the Government by what is called a "closure" by which, some centuries ago no one could say just when, the then-ruling families provided that no new family should be let in; and by operation of time, the rulers being reduced in numbers, it has become a close corporation; and the only practical right of the populace is that of complaining and protesting. This they can do at every semi-annual election of the Captains. There are two captains chosen by the Grand Council of sixty members: one to represent the city, or noble party, and the other the plebeian or country party.

On these occasions the people make their complaints heard, and either applaud or condemn their rulers. Lately they prevented the re-election of a Captain because he had grown rich while in office. The election day is a grand ceremony when the whole people assemble, form a procession, and with music and banners March to the cathedral where the old Captains resign office, and the new are installed with religious ceremony and the blessings of their clergy, who are usually independent though good Catholics. The Cathedral is a very handsome church. Behind the altar is a statue of St. Marino, the pious stone-mason who many centuries ago established a chapel here, around which a little community of Christian refugees from heathen rage settled on these crags. His bed in the rock is still shown, and I found a poor rheumatic lying there in hopes to be cured. The Saint established a government of liberty and equality in brotherly love which is not yet extinct.

The State House in which the Grand Council sits is a handsome stone structure, and is well furnished and adorned with pictures and works of art. In the different public rooms are many gifts from potentates and powers; and hearing that I was an American, they showed with pride, and I viewed with pleasure, portraits of Hayes and Garfield. They have a little garden with a bust of Garibaldi, whom they greatly admire and love. The rock lies in a strata leaning at an angle of thirty or forty degrees, the highest part facing the sea. It is a mile long by half a mile wide, so that there is no danger of its falling. It is a fine sandstone, very good for building purposes, and the quarries are almost unlimited, and form the chief industry of the town. Under a liberal system of laws, each citizen can secure the right to work a quarry. The stone comes out soft, and slowly hardens on exposure, so that it can be worked into ornamental forms to great advantage. They are planning a railroad to Rimini, and if that were made, they would have the world for a market and we ourselves might have stone houses made in San Remo and brought here by water.

I visited three forts, and found the central and highest a prison. Here were three prisoners; two charged with counterfeiting and one with murder. They were well provided for. Their cells, ventilated and lighted; from the ramparts they had glorious views over the Umbrian Mountains on one side, and the sea on the other.

From here we could overlook the city, and the state, 22 square miles in extent oval shape and bounded by natural lines of stream and ridge: the prisoners were taking their evening

airing and exercise guarded by two Italian soldiers. The republic hires its police from Italy and Italy takes off its hands all felons. There is no capital punishment. If a man is condemned to prison for more than six months he goes to an Italian penitentiary to serve out his term. When that is over, he may return; but they seldom do, as they are despised by the people in general; and in so small a country find little sympathy, and few companions in guilt. This purges off the bad blood. The youth charged with murder had killed a rival in love at a farm-house which, nestled under the rock in full view. His seemed a sad case. The counterfeiters appeared reckless. The prison-keeper who lived there with his wife and children said he would soon be without a prisoner, as two of these were condemned, and the other was to have an early trial. A room in the prison is provided for the detention and treatment of incorrigible boys.

When a parent reports to the Council a minor son as bad and unmanageable, he is ordered to be confined in that room which is about 12 feet square, and without furniture except a bare wooden table, whereon, or on the stone floor the culprit has to sleep without bedding; and he has nothing to eat or drink except bread and water. Bad boys generally begged to go home after a few days, and on such request approved by the parent, they are released, subject to be retaken if they relapse.

The republic is a place of refuge for any one seeking refuge there, but no refugees can remain in the territory over three days. Within that time, they are free to come and free to go; but if they stay longer, they may be arrested and surrendered on lawful demand from another state. Under this law Garibaldi, when surrounded by Austrian armies led his broken bands into San Marino and they there dissolved and disappearing, found their way home; while the great hero passed on to aid Venice in her struggle.

It were vain to attempt to include all the points of interest touching this people; but there is one incident in their history which never can be forgotten. When Bonaparte conquered Italy, willing to reduce the Romagna, and enlarge the little republic, and thus at one stroke punish an enemy and make friends of lovers of liberty all over the world, he offered to extend the boundaries of San Marino to the sea, by making Rimini a part of the republic. Her wise rulers modestly declined, saying, "Sire, we thank thee; but we have always been little and prefer to remain so."

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