

AMALFI

and  
ITS VICINITY  
by  
ANTONIO PROTO

— 07-0-10 —



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*and*

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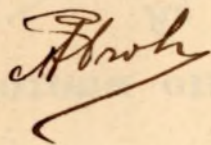


AMALFI

Stab. Tip. Umberto Dipino

1930 - Anno VIII

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. Every authentic copy of this  
book bears the signature of the Author.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "H. H. H.", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

I DEDICATE  
THIS HUMBLE WORK  
TO MY DEAR COUSIN  
**ANTONIO MILANO**  
WHOM I SHOULD CERTAINLY HAVE ENUMERATED  
AMONG THE ILLUSTRIOUS AMALFITANTS  
HAD NOT DEATH  
CUT OFF HIS YOUNG LIFE  
ON OCTOBER 18<sup>th</sup> 1918



## PREFACE

*Many of those who have taken Italian lessons from me have from time to time asked me news concerning this city, but it is not always possible to record all its glorious history in an improvised conversation. This book will satisfy the admirable curiosity of those interested enquirers.*

*At the same time it has a wider aim. It exalts the natural beauties and the ancient glories of all the villages of this enchanted Coast. Above all is my hope that natives living abroad, especially in America and England, give their sons, nationalised in these lands, a book, which can tell them the glorious history of the land of their parents and thus instil within them a great attachment and affection for their home land.*

*I have not written this book in Italian, for my friend and fellow - citizen has already one in hand, which is soon to be published.*

Amalfi, January 1930.

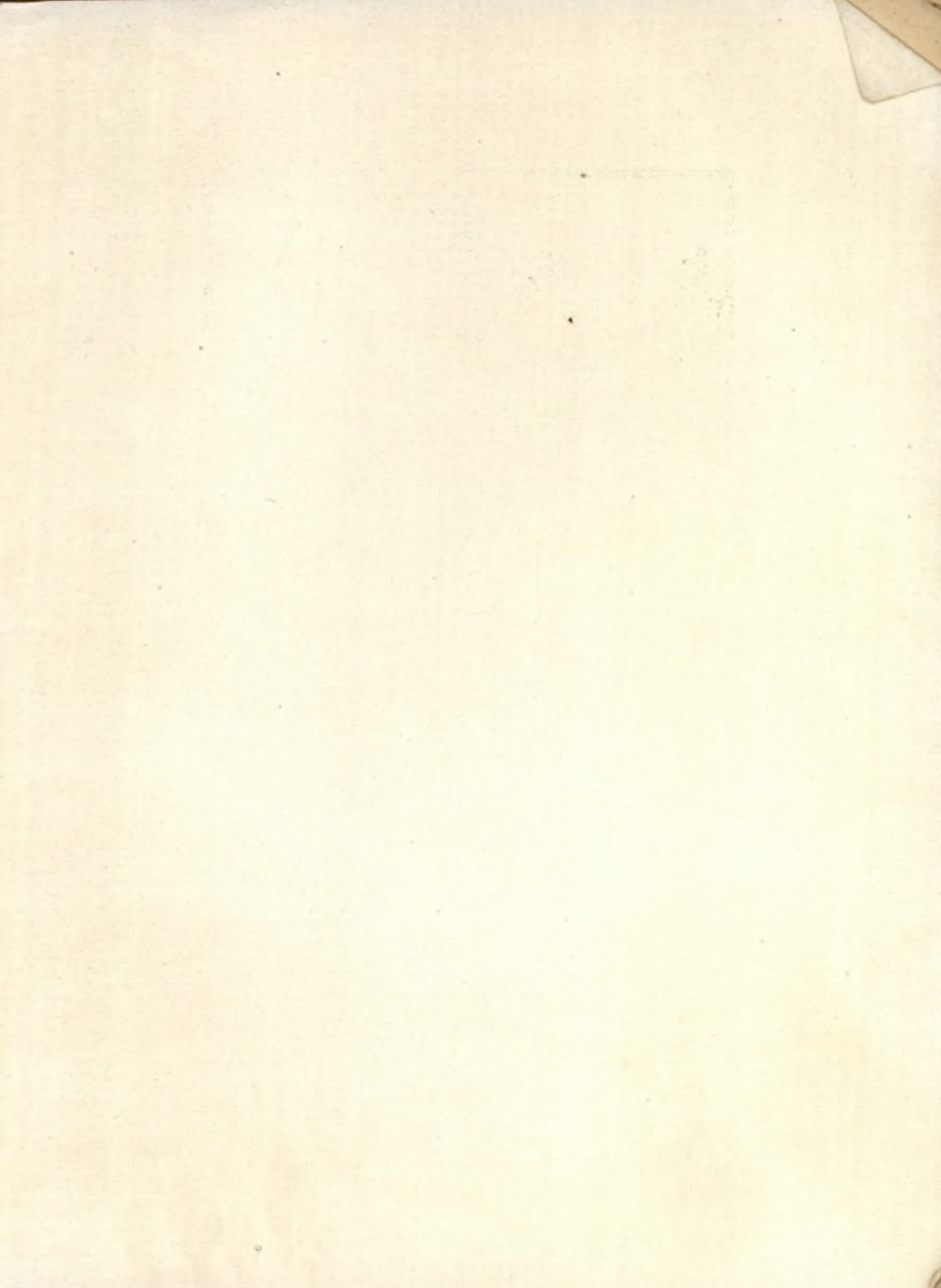


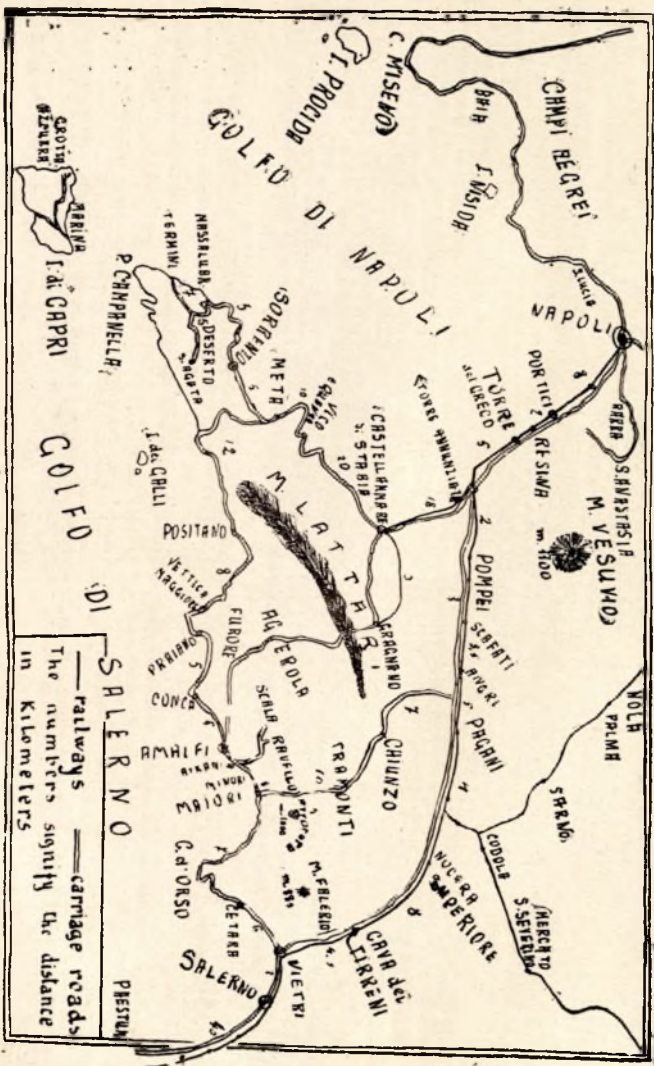
# PREFACE

The following work is the result of a long and arduous task, and it is hoped that it will be found to contain some new and interesting facts. The author has endeavored to present the results in a clear and concise manner, and to give a full and complete account of the work. It is believed that the work will be found to contain some new and interesting facts, and it is hoped that it will be found to contain some new and interesting facts.

Author's Name







## The divine Coast

That part of the coast that opens on the Salerno gulf and stretches between Vietri and Positano is called the Amalfi coast.

It rises from the sea with numerous bays and creeks. Its rocks now rise with high and jagged peaks in the varied forms that appear thrown by a Divine hand, now open in immense bulwarks, now jut out lapped by the sea waters like a ribbon of cliffs embroidered by a fairy hand. Tufts of grass, groves of ilex and olive-trees, golden oranges, hanging terraces with rows of vines and lemons, prickly pears, high pine-trees with wide leafy umbrellas appear hither and thither on the rocky cliffs and are reflected in the emerald water.

Nature always gives us, with her scenes, delightful and spiritual pleasure, the inspiration of poetry, painting, sculpture, and all beautiful arts, but here Nature has surpassed herself. I think no description can thoroughly make one feel the beauties and charms of this coast and the villages rising along it. To have an idea of the effect it produces

on the new-comer who admires this Paradise, I relate a passage from the Pisan poet Renato Fucini, who drove along the main road, that, like a ribbon, winds and clings to the juttings and indentations of the rocks.

“ The Amalfi coast - he wrote - gives the effect of gazing at the sun - disk; you are dazzled and unable to see anything for some time. If you then ask me in what consists such a beauty, I answer as if you had asked: why are Homer's poems beautiful? Homer's poems are beautiful because they are beautiful, and if some one would prove it with other arguments tell him he does not understand anything and you will not have erred.

Along the trip between Vietri and Amalfi, one that is over enthusiastic runs the risk of “ losing his head „. And there were moments when I thought I was really going out of my mind. The road that runs on the half level of the steep mountainsides, or better, of the huge cliffs in some places, completely hangs over the deep sea and almost on the surface of this blue carpet, I saw big merchantmen gliding with their sails all spread, and crews swarming the decks, which distance made to appear motionless and diminutive. I felt the voluptuousness of an air trip without the horror of danger.

Now and then one encounters solitary ruins of Norman castles still standing in spite of exposure and storm and, here and there, single and very

clean small houses, whose happy residents, in going to the hill - top, gather the chestnut, the plant that signifies the belt of frigid zones, and, in going down the shore, the sweet prickly pears, orange flowers to perfume their little rooms, and the palm branches that twine above the door of their houses, driving away thunderbolts and witches.

The strands of Maiori, Minori, Atrani, Masaniello's country, that we meet along the way are the most charming and picturesque sights in the world.

Those quiet and smiling groups of houses that, like goats, climb from the sea up the rocky steeps, the domes of those churches that are surrounded with majolica and shine in the sunlight and are surrounded with citrons, lemons and oranges, the steep by - paths that descend winding to the shore, where a quiet group of fishermen work and sing amid rows of nets that reflect the sun, give an ineffable joy, a serene peace, such a sensation of beatitude enters and presses our heart so sweetly that little by little we feel compelled to pass our life on those shores and even to die there, although the idea of death seems so strange on those magic banks. The day that the *Amalfitani* go to Paradise is only to them a day like any other day.

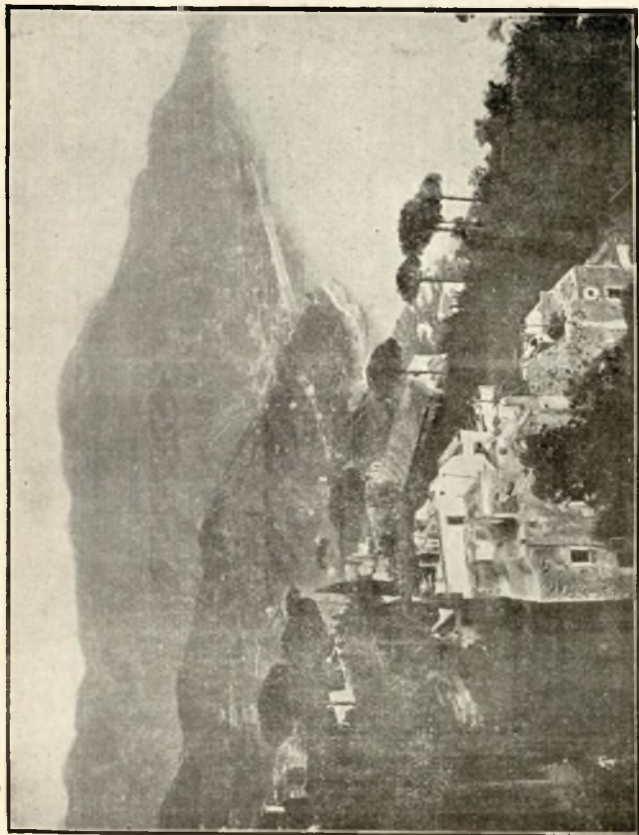
How sweet must be idleness in the shadow of an Amalfi olive tree! Indeed if those inhabitants are able to earn a living only by the sweat of

their brow, we have to recognize they have a great virtue, for the one powerful desire that is felt in that climate is the need of doing nothing; surely Adam's life before the fall.

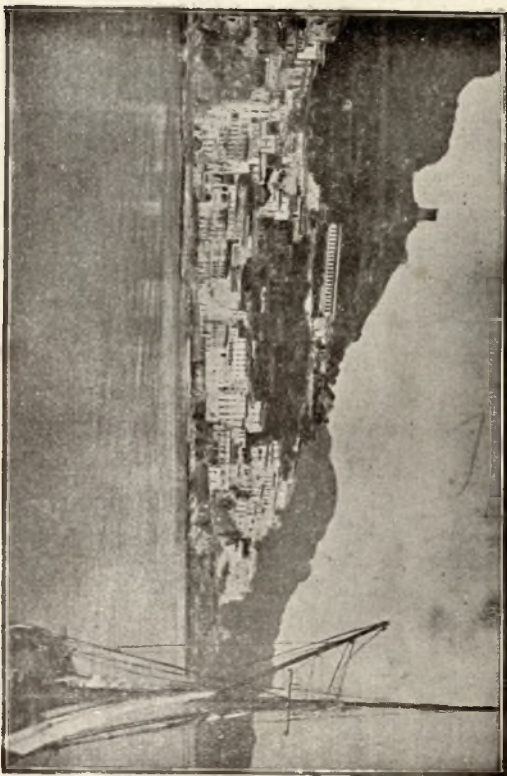
The access of contemplative ecstasy before such a luxuriant gift of Nature's generosity is followed by a wild enthusiasm.

And I do not know what I should have either said or done had not my companion's countenance restrained me. He had opened his mouth only once, at the beginning of our journey to ask me to allow him to lower the hood of the carriage!„





The "divine," Coast seen from Ravello



AMALFI - Panoramia



## Amalfi

“ Of Amalfi I have a great vision of sea, sky and glory! Also I passed - an unknown pilgrim - through your town, I lodged at the “ Luna „ hotel, I kneeled down in your large cathedral “republican „ imperial, marine. I trudged the “ Via dei Mulini „ and of those hours I have but a memory and the strongest desire to return! Dear, dear, adorable Amalfi,, so in 1921 Benito Mussolini wrote to the Amalfi Fascist Secretary, Mr. Nicola Ingenito.

And the American poet Longfellow sings:

« Sweet the memory is to me  
of a land beyond the sea,  
where, the waves and mountains meet,  
where, amid her mulberry - trees  
Sits Amalfi in the heat »

Amalfi lies in the centre of this divine coast. It lies ensconced between two sloping hills that advance into the sea. On moonless nights they give to the fancy of an artist the fantastic illusion of a syren abandoning herself to the embrace of a magician, while the sea caresses her feet with its

waves as they break in foam on the marina: and the electric lights twinkling from end to end of the town appear to adorn the syren with a shining pearl necklace.

Every day and several times a day new beauties, new sensations and new enjoyments are reserved for the traveller who has the good fortune to reach this enchanted place.

He stands enchanted at day - break, when the faint hues of the sky are growing brighter and when the sun rises like a fire ball behind the lowest part of the mountain range, while the opposite hill - tops begin to glow with gold and the sea to reflect the colours of the sky.

He thinks he is entering a fairy world when, after having passed through Via Pietro Capuano, he threads the narrow road beside the river Caneto and admires the picturesque bridges above the stream, the numerous sparkling water falls, the vineyards above the slopes on the opposite hills, the orange groves, the many coloured flowers, the green walls of the terraces covered with creepers, and with maidenhair fern growing thickly along the bank, the white buildings of a paper - mill with the ceaseless rumbling of the wheels worked by the water - falls. And if he climbs up the Madonna del Rosario as far as the depth of the valley he has a delightfully new and unexpected sight. There the valley widens, surrounded with a

circle of mountains clad with bushes and raising their peaks irregularly into the air, and the brook merrily rushes and leaps between its stony banks. Nature is in a wild mood, but it is not displeasing to the eye, as one enjoys this change of scene.

All Amalfitan views are beautiful, but the Amalfi sunsets are divinely beautiful and supremely enchanting. Whenever we have the chance we remain estatic. Down on the horizon the sky sets as in flames, that vanish into a thousand hues, from scarlet red to the daintiest and lightest yellow, that softly blends into the blue of the sky. What attracts our eye is the incessant and scarcely perceptible change of colour in ever daintier tints. And all those hues and colours reflect into the sea, while some stray cloudlets appear as flaming pennons waving in the sky and the dying sunbeams gild the tips of the mountains opposite.

It is surely a feast of colours, tints and reflections.

At night when the smooth surface of the sea is dotted with countless lights from fishing - boats and the sky shines with thousands of sparkling stars our soul soars on the wings of our fancy and we dream, dream, dream.

In the morning a sense of strange peace and serene joy thrills us as we admire the boundless ocean on which the sunbeams shed their light and the rippling waves that shine and sparkle like shimmering plates.

Everywhere harmony of varied colours, reflections of pageant lights, birds' songs, rustling of leaves lightly moved by the breeze, and a stillness that would be wearisome were it not broken by the noise of cars on the winding road with people of all nations that, with smiling appreciation, enjoy, exult, and silently bless the God, who has given this land a portion of his Paradise.

### The origin of Amalfi

The nymph Amalfi, that was born like Venus from the sea foams, fell in love with Hercules so fervently that she consumed herself and lost all her beauty. She appeared and then died on this coast which took her name.

Thus a popular legend explains Amalfi's origin.

According to the soundest judgments the life of Amalfi began about the IV<sup>th</sup> century on the fall of the Roman Empire, and exactly in the era of Constantine, when many Roman families transferred their abode to the new capital. Some of those families embarking on five vessels were overtaken by a gale and thrown upon the Dalmatian coast, near Ragusa. But three years later, they left Dalmatia and steered to the land near Palinuro, on the river bank of Melphes, where they founded a village that

they called Melfi, and the inhabitants took the name of "Melfitani". That settlement is called old Amalfi. Then they abandoned Melfi and went to Eboli, but they needed a sheltered place for protection against the barbarians, who freely raided the peninsula. So it was that they climbed the mountain Lattari and, through the mountains, arrived at Cama hills - now Scala - astride of Amalfi. Here they obtained the hospitality of the people. But the scarceness of the products of the soil and the growth of the people forced them to descend to the sea shore, where they founded a new town, and to become sea farers.

On the sea they found riches, honour and glory!

### The most important historical summary

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, 833 Amalfi was constituted into a free Republic. She was ruled by two *rettori* or *presidi*, then called *praefecturi*, who were elected for two years, but if they gave proof of bad management they were forced to resign sooner. They were assisted by a *Giunta* or *Consiglio di giudici* or *comites*. Elections took place at Atrani in St. Salvator church, which still exists, but it retains nothing of that ancient Parliament.

About 900 the *praefecturi* were reduced to one,

then the election was for life and later on Mansone II took the name of *Giudice* and with the popular favour proclaimed the charge hereditary. In 958 Sergio, by the help of a plot, took the title of Doge and in a short time the Republic became aristocratic.

In 848 the Amalfitans went to Taranto with their vessels and by stratagem they freed Siconolfo, Duke of Salerno, who triumphantly entered Salerno, where he was proclaimed prince of the town.

In 849 for the second time a horde of Saracen raiders threatened Rome, but the fleets of Amalfi, Naples and Gaeta betimes warned by Pope Leone IV were before Ostia, and the sailors, after having had the Holy Host bravely fought and defeated the Saracens. The prisoners were obliged to build the walls around and still nowadays it is called "*città leonina* „ after Pope Leone. An illustrious historian called the Ostia fight " the most famous sea victory obtained by the Christians over the heathen before the battle of Lepanto. „

In 920 and 936 the Amalfi fleet was very powerful and, with the help of the Greeks, then of the Neapolitans and the Pugliese, bravely fought against the Saracen raiders till they were driven from the Italian coast.

In 1043 Guaimaro, Prince of Salerno, availing himself of internal discords occupied first Amalfi, then Sorrento, and proclaimed himself Duke of the Amalfitans and Sorrentins.



AMALFI - Valley of the Mills



AMALFI - The ancient Porta dell'Ospedale



She succeeded in reacquiring her independence mostly by chance, but it was for a short time. The Norman Robert Guiscard, who had conquered Sicily, and Apulia, forty years later took Amalfi deceitfully and allowed his soldiers to sack the wealthy town. Then he ordered the assault on the fortresses of Scala and Ravello. Hard was the resistance and terrible was the revenge of the victors.

In 1027 Amalfi, taking advantage of the discords between the Northmen Roger and Raymond, reacquired her independence. It was at that time that the expedition of Pisans, Genoese, and a large colony of Amalfitans took place against the Saracen Timin. The expedition was led by the noble Amalfitan Comite Pantaleon of Mauro, who at that period took the bronze doors to the Amalfi Cathedral.

It was of no value to Amalfi to reacquire her independence again because in 1101 Roger treacherously siezed Amalfi. The greatest injury consequently came to her when the Pisan fleet, summoned by Robert and the Neapolitans against Roger, being aware that the Amalfitan fleet by Roger's order was far off, assailed and sacked Amalfi, Atrani, and Scala. Ravello (once a city of 30,000 inhabitants) held out till the military aid sent by Roger arrived from Sicily and the Pisans were put to flight. But the rich plunder was not wrested from the raiders.

A second time, in 1137, the Pisan fleet was called in by Naples and Capua, and sacked Amalfi,

Scala, Ravello, Minori, Maiori, and almost destroyed Atrani. They took away gold, silver, brocades, sacred arras and, what was more grievous still, the Pandects of Justinian that Amalfi so jealously kept. This plunder was for the Pisans still more precious for they perhaps learned the secret of the compass that only the Amalfitans knew thanks to its invention by her native Flavio Gioia.

She never more reacquired her independence, and her great power and glory vanished slowly. Her commerce, contrasted with the other flourishing sea Republics, lost ground in the West; the struggles among the countries on her coast raged harshly and caused sad consequences, for, siding with one or another dominator, exposed her to dangers and injuries without recompense; raids of the rival Republics were frequent and terrible and despoiled Amalfi and the other cities on the coast. As if this were not enough for the unfortunate Republic, Nature added a very evil calamity. On November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1343 a horrible storm damaged all the Neapolitan Coast, engulfing more than half of Amalfi and hastening the Republic's decline.

In 1544 the fierce Saracen Kair Eddin, known by the name of *Ariodeno Barbarossa*, the commander of Solimano's fleet, an ally of Francis I, against Charles V, after manifold raids and pillages, spreading everywhere carnage and destruction, presented himself, with his terrible fleet before Amalfi with the

aim of assailing and ravaging it. The notary Battimelli relates that the sea was calm and the sky serene, when suddenly a terrible storm burst and the majority of the fleet was either sunk or damaged, and Barbarossa had to escape and give up his grim purpose. The same notary Battimelli also asserts that the storm did not occur by chance, but it was a miracle of St. Andrew, the protector of the city, who appeared on the shore and invoked God's aid in favour of the wretched Republic.

Hence every year on June 27<sup>th</sup> to this day, religious and civil feasts take place at Amalfi, with the greatest solemnity in honour of St. Andrew. The other great annual festa is on his day November 30.<sup>th</sup>

## **Maritime and commercial power**

The jurisdiction of the Republic extended from Vietri, on one side, to Positano, on the other, and included even the isle of Capri and the Sirenuse (now i Galli), and inland comprised Ravello, Scala, Lettere, Tramonti, Agerola and Gragnano. On the eastern and western side Amalfi possessed large ship-yards with suitable stores and machinery for her vessels. Galleys and merchant-men were built for the needs of the large commerce and her military kingdom on the sea. Most of the galleys

were for 112 rowers, but there were some for 120 and 200, the smallest for 70. The flag was blue with a transverse red strip flanked with the cross of St. Andrew and the compass.

The towns were defended with fenced walls and fortresses besides the towers along the coast. At night the approach of the enemy was signalled with fire signals among the fortresses and castles.

The sea towns provided the sailors, while the inland towns gave the land soldiers. The compass secured navigation for the Amalfi vessels, which touched the furthest harbours and havens. They exported thither European products and took back spices, drugs, perfumes, Persian silks, Egyptian carpets, precious stones, amber, ivory, skins, all those products brought to Constantinople or to Egypt from Asia and Persia.

In the XI<sup>th</sup> century Guglielmo di Puglia so wrote of Amalfi "This town is full of people and riches: and no city abounds so in gold, silver and precious cloth. Its numerous sailors have buildings in every country in the world and are very clever in finding out the ways of the sea and the sky. They bring over Antiochian and Alessandrian products of export, they overpass the furthest straits and are known in Arabia and in the Indies not less than in Sicily and Africa „.

Desiderio, Abbot of Montecassino, who afterwards became Pope Victor III, when he had to



(Samaritani)

**AMALFI - Ancient dockyard, now a garage**



The bronze tablet sent to Jerusalem

present gifts to the Emperor Henry IV purposely came to Amalfi for his purchases.

During feasts such as a prince's wedding, or a Pope's journey, or court receptions, the squares and streets were draped with Arabian stuffs, Syrian purple cloths, and precious silks.

On the solemn entrance of Callisto II into Benevento the Amalfitans, who were great traders there, adorned the streets with wonderful silks and burned rare perfumes in gold and silver censers.

They had shops, streets, establishments, banks, and even entire quarters at Jerusalem, Constantinople, Acre, Cyprus, Soria Tripoli, Durazzo, Cairo, etc. It might be said there was no western harbour, where the Amalfitans had not a shop, a colony, and a church.

Their vessels, like those of the other sea towns, carried crusaders to the Holy Land. Therefore the Amalfitans obtained exemptions and privileges in that land from those Christian Kings and Princes.

Beyond their own quarter, they had at Jerusalem the convent and church of *S. Maria la Latina*, the monastery and church of *S. Maria Maddalena*, a hospice for men, a hospice for women and the hospital with a small chapel under the protection of *S. Giovanni l'Elemosiniere*, where Fra Gerardo Sasso founded the Order of the Hospitalers.

These buildings rose near the church of the Holy Sepulchre and were included under the name

*Della Latina.* All trace would have been lost as these ancient and glorious buildings crumbled into decay, but for the actions of the two present chief leaders of Amalfi. Monsignor Ercolano Marini, Archbishop of Amalfi, had the opportunity of leading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in May of last year and the Podestà of Amalfi, Comm. Francesco Gargano, had the happy idea of sending with him a bronze tablet to be placed on the modern church of Santa Maria Latina to remind posterity of our glorious Amalfi.

I translate one passage from "*Il mio pellegrinaggio in Terra Santa*," by Archbishop Marini himself and hope the kind reader will not be wearied by this digression.

"Santa Maria Latina. May 31, 1928. It is the graceful Italian church sprung from the genius of architect Barlizzi and arising near the new Italian hospital in the charge of the estimable "Opera per la protezione dei missionari all'estero,".

It recalls to us the ancient S. Maria Latina, the *gerosolimitano* poem of Amalfi that we must recite. The pilgrims are present and along with them are the Italian colony and schools, the representatives of the Patriarchate, the Custode of the Holy Land, and the General Consul of Italy. The church has taken a gay and solemn aspect.

After having celebrated the mass I bless the bronze tablet, already fixed on the left wall close



to the entrance. Beforehand I had visited the cloister, the facade, the site of the ancient S. Maria Latina, now in the hands of the Protestants: I had visited the church of S. Giovanni built in the form of a shamrock, now in the hands of the Schismatics; I had visited the quarter and the shops of the ancient Amalfitans, now in the hands of the Jew and the Arabs; then I could not keep silent and had to express myself in these words of which I give you a short summary. The Commune of Amalfi - I said - ought not to be absent from the pilgrimage managed by its Archbishop and by an exquisite thought has sent an artistic bronze tablet. There is reproduced in relief the monumental facade of our Cathedral for, in the Middle Ages, when the Faith swayed all social life, the Cathedral was the centre of every activity and bold enterprise. There is also reproduced the sea of Amalfi with the Amalfitan galleys in act of leaving for Palestine, this being the crowning glory of that coast called divine because of the beauties of Nature.

History has surrounded the people of the ancient Republic with a garland. This seafaring race who, on the fall of the Roman Empire, became the arbiters of the Mediterranean, this seafaring race who sent their merchants to the main towns of the East, this seafaring race full of Southern ardour could enthuse the Latin quarter around the Holy Sepulchre and rebuild from its foundations the church

of S. Maria Latina, built originally by the Emperor Charles the Great.

How admirable are these men who while they cared for temporal interests yet had eternal interests at heart as well. The hardship of pilgrims and the sufferings of the sick moved their hearts. It was for them that they built near by the church of S. Giovanni, which is the most ancient monument of the VI<sup>th</sup> and VII<sup>th</sup> century, an hospital to achieve this double purpose.

Here is one of the most beautiful glories of Amalfi because the nursing Orders, so tender with the sufferers, when the hostile forces rush in, are ready to brandish the sword against enemies of Christ. So the Crusades added a military character to their Institution.,,

Even at Constantinople they had their own quarter with a Convent of Benedictines and another of Cistercians and the churches of St. Andrew and S. Maria della Latina.

Further the Amalfitans settled their commerce at Siracusa, Palermo, Catania, Cefalú, Messina, Naples, Trani, Barletta, Molfelta, Melfi, Brindisi, Bitonto, Cosenza, Reggio, Bari, Benevento, Capua, etc. and they even had their own quarter in some of the above mentioned towns.

When the fortunes of Amalfi were declining and her trade was hardly beset by the Venetians and the Genoese, the Amalfitans increased their

commerce in South Italy to balance the growing losses. Thus she was rich even after having lost her independence and power on the seas.

### **Amalfi, maestra di diritto. Her coins.**

The continued and gorgeous development of the maritime commerce, that about the year 1000 was unrivalled and extensive, compelled the Amalfitans to rule such a commerce with peculiar laws and regulations, that were collected in one volume called *Tabula Amalfa*. This represents a real standard of wise maritime and commercial legislation. The laws collected in the *Tabula Amalfa* concern cost, freight, captain's and sailor's duties, charges of insurance, exchange, compensation for sea risks, average, losses of ship and merchandise in case of danger etc. They felt the need of a Court to discuss these litigations. The lawful Court, was the Maritime Consulate which had jurisdiction internally and abroad. They had the privilege of their own Courts with their own Consuls in Acreon, Jerusalem, some Southern Italian towns, and elsewhere.

An appendix, added to the *Tabula*, dealt with naval warfare with regulations regarding the harbour, the fleet, sailors, arms, victuals, discipline, etc.

With other Mediterranean towns Amalfi formed maritime contracts, which sometimes were real treaties.

If the *Tabula Amalfa* and the appendix were the basis of the commercial right and naval warfare, the *Consuetudini* (municipal laws) were the basis of public and private rights: but they were not common to the towns of the Republic since some, especially Ravello, had their own charters. The *Consuetudini* were founded on the famous Digest of Justinian that the Amalfitans either stole or bought from Constantinople, and when they were insufficient to settle any controversy the Roman right was recognized by the Digest. This is even called *Pandette di Giustiniano* or *Pandette Amalfitane* for Amalfi kept it until the year 1137 when the Pisans seized it.

Amalfi boasts of having discovered the most precious source of Roman laws, from which the revived studies of Jurisprudence of that day benefitted greatly.

The Pandects of Justinian were taken by the Florentines later on, and now they are kept in the Laurentian Library of Florence.

The original entry of the *Tabula Amalfa* adjoined to the *Consuetudini* has been kept for long in the Austrian Imperial Library, but last year, it was rescued and is soon to be handed over to the rising Historical Museum of Amalfi.

Amalfi was the first to issue coins among the ancient Italian Republics and probably even the very first since the fall of the Roman Empire. The

origin of her mint is thought to be about the X<sup>th</sup> century. The *tareno* or *tari* was her coin. It was a tiny shaped coin cast in gold or silver, both its faces bore the cross of the Hospitalers Order (now the Maltese cross). Around the cross on one side was written "Civitas „ and on the other " Amalfia „. It was accepted throughout the world.

After having lost her independence, she kept the privilege of minting her own coins until 1321, when Frederic II abolished them and the Brindisian coins replaced them in circulation.

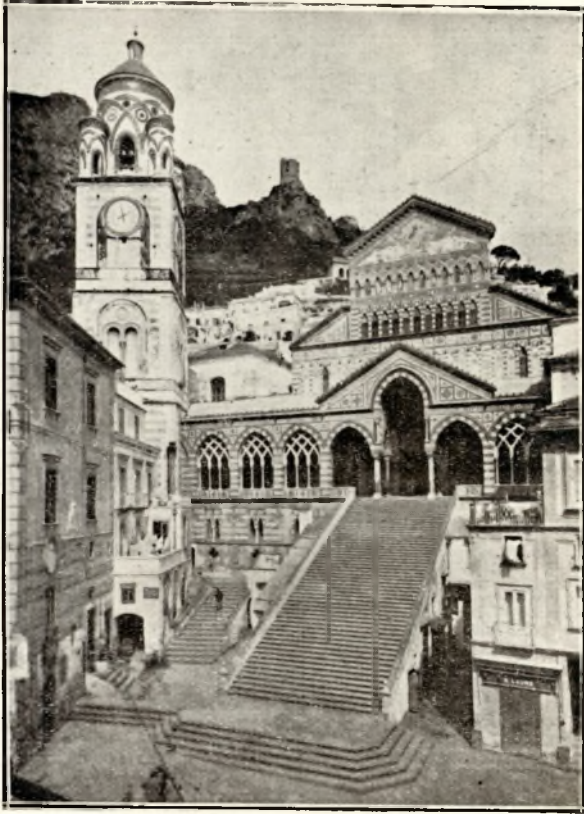
Somè copper coins in the period of Mansone III and Mansone IV<sup>th</sup> are kept in several collections and the *tareno*, the only specimen discovered by the illustrious Amalfitan historian Matteo Camera is kept by his family with a series of Angevin and other ancient coins.



## Illustrious Amalfitans.

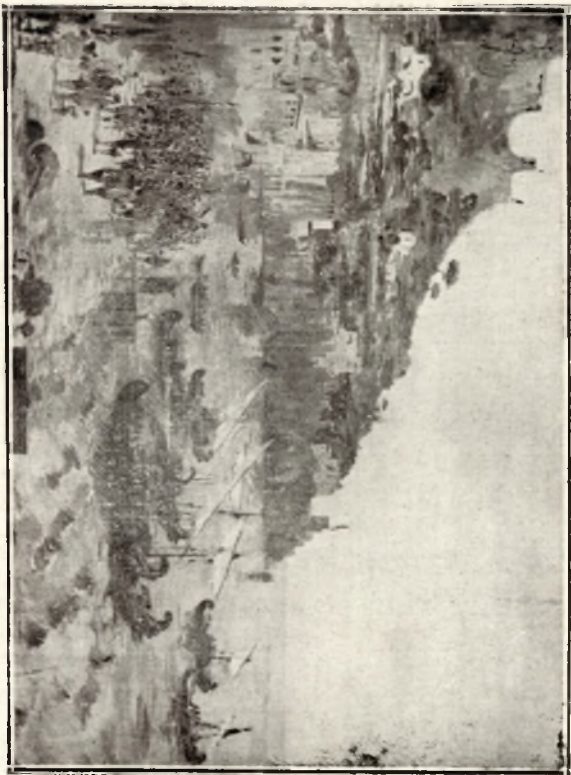
**Beato Gerardo Sasso.** The Amalfitans had great influence in Jerusalem, and besides churches and institutions built in former times, had a chapel and hospital dedicated to S. Giovanni l'Elemosiniere: their friar Gerardo Sasso founded the Order of Hospitalers (or of S. Giovanni). He was the first prior of the Order, and gallantly led his votaries to fight against the heathen. The Order, through the long and hard defence of Christendom, passed to that of the Knights of Cyprus, of Rodi and then of Malta, which traces its far origin to the pious and brave Amalfitan friar Gerardo Sasso. He was still alive when the Order was recognized by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and came under the protection of the Holy See by the Bull of Calisto II (1113).

He anticipated the Crusades in defending the Holy Sepulchre, a very courageous task at that time, for the hordes of the Selgucide Turks were invading Palestine, and, when the Turks defeated the Arabs and sacked Jerusalem, many Hospitalers were massacred, and friar Sasso himself was made a prisoner.



(Samaritani)

AMALFI - The Cathedral



Departure of the Amalfitan Crusaders

(Samaritan)



He was saved and then continued his task with greater enthusiasm. In the first Crusade, in May 1099, he was at the head of his Hospitalers with the sword and the Christian symbol at the assault upon Jerusalem.

When Godfrey de Bouillon was proclaimed King of Jerusalem, he sent Friar Sasso as hostage to Azor. Friar Gerardo Sasso accepted this sacrifice with humility for Christ's sake. The faithless enemy refused to send him back, and crucified him. He was thought to be dead and his body sent to Jerusalem, where he was healed of his wounds and, although lame and crippled, resumed his mission in assisting the sick and wounded.

His fame spread abroad and numerous patricians flocked to him and received the black cassocks with the white cross from his hand, and so the Order increased in all Syria.

The saintly and courageous friar died on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1120. On the fall of the kingdom of Jerusalem his body was carried to Rodi, and, when this isle was lost, was transferred to the church of Manosca in Provence (France).

His Order had many transformations and changed its name several times, finally taking that of the Knights of Malta, and suffered struggles, persecutions, and martyrdoms, but it continued the high and strenuous mission begun by Gerardo Sasso, and was for ever in the East a Christian bulwark against the invading barbarian Mussulmans.

**Cardinal Pietro Capuano** - Studied at Bologna and Paris, and was beloved by Popes Clement III and Celestino II for his learning and his severe and wise character. The former appointed him his private chaplain.

In 1192 Pietro Capuano was elected to the high charge of Cardinal. Then he was selected for the most delicate and difficult missions. He visited Sicily, Lombardy, Poland, Bohemia and went twice to France: the second time he induced Philip Augustus and Richard Coeur de Lion to make peace and succeeded in meeting them at Venon on the Senne; Philip Augustus on horse back and Richard in a boat.

He went with the Cardinal of Santa Prassede to Constantinople on a mission from Pope Celestino III with full power to heal the schism of the Greek Church. During his stay at Constantinople he paid a visit to the Holy Places and gathered many relics, among which was the entire body of St. Andrew. When he went back to Rome, his boat was escorted by nine Amalfitan galleys as far as Gaeta. There Cardinal Capuano ordered them to carry the body of St. Andrew to Amalfi and hand it over to Matteo Capuano, his uncle, who was then Archbishop of Amalfi.

On May 8<sup>th</sup> 1208 with solemn feasts the precious body was buried in the crypt in the Cardinal's presence.

Cardinal Capuano lavished his riches on his

native town. He had the crypt built, enlarged the Cathedral, instituted the Abbey of St. Peter of the Canonica (now hotel Cappuccini) and an hospital with the church of Santa Maria della Misericordia and began the construction of the harbour.

Recalled to Rome he died there on August 17, 1217.

A bust of Cardinal Pietro Capuano stands on the left wall of the atrium of the Cathedral, a perpetual reminder to the Amalfitans of the great deeds and earnest love for his native Country of this eminent benefactor.

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**Flavio Gioia** - Is the great inventor of the compass that enabled mankind to extend navigation and so opened the route to America for Christopher Columbus.

Much discussion and many polemics have arisen among modern historians and scholars who are divided in two camps, those in support and those in opposition. The strongest opponent is Padre Bertelli. But although he denies the existence of Flavio Gioia, he affirms the Amalfitans were the first to use the compass. I translate his own words - ... the compass is of such importance that we may rightly assert an Amalfitan genius invented a new instrument. - This is not the place to discuss the matter, but from Bertelli's conclusion, I deduce that

the inventor of the compass was with all probability an Amalfitan. Whether he was named Flavio Gioia ro, as some suggest, Giovanni Gioia, it is still for the glory of Amalfi.

Amalfi rightly honoured its great citizen in raising a superb monument in the square in front of the sea.

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\* \*

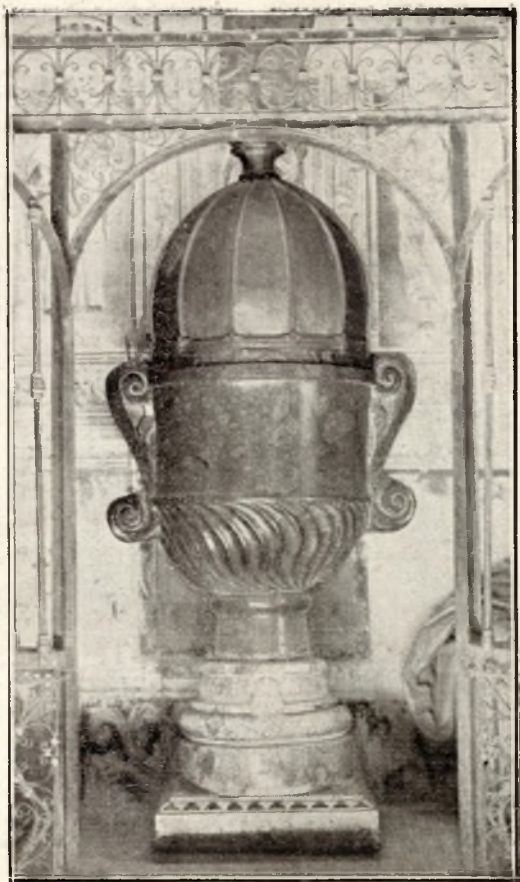
The small size of this work does not allow me to mention all the Amalfitans that honoured their native country in letters, science, and art and carried their boats in search of new lands.

I choose the greatest as **Giovanni Augustariccio** (1210 - 1282) learned in juridic and medical science, who reformed the " *Consuetudini* ", **Giovanni Vacca**, an illustrious juriconsult in the public study of Naples, **Romolo Albizzo** a Government officer, **Orsini Bemba** (1275 - 1281), **Marco Bemba**, a very rich and brave sailor, the following patricians on whom the military belt was conferred as a sign of their proved value and their nobility **Pietro**, **Matteo**, **Andrea** and **Tomaso Capuano** (1236 - 1285 - 1371), **Giovanni Favaro** (1352), **Franzone d'Alagno** (1360), **Giacomo** and **Tomaso Carbone**, brothers, (1324) **Carlo del Giudice** (1341) **Mariana Corsaro** (1333), **Ruggiero Cappasanta** (1340), **Francesco del Giudice** (1344), **Andrea del Giudice** (1422), **Pietro Brancia** (1420), his son **Francesco Brancia** (1427), **Giacomo de Cuncto** (1482), the



(Samaritani)

**Bronze doors of the cathedral of Amalfi**



(Samaritani)

**Baptismal font in the cathedral of Amalfi made of one  
piece of porphyry**

following who gained the title of "*sire* „ Niccolò de Penna (1368), Giacomo Quatrario (1382) Marcuccio de Gulioso (1389) Cicco Rizzolo (1394), Valente Issalla etc.; then the gallant Captain Buffillo del Giudice (1466), the brave warriors Domenico and Damiano d'Afflito, Marcello Bonito, learned in letters, history, archeology, paleography, a charitable man who has the merit of inducing the Amalfitans to defend themselves, the following Knights of Malta Friar Fabio del Giudice (1591) Friar Francesco d'Afflito (1591 - 1618), Friar Filippo Bonito (1632 - 1638) Friar Domenico Bonito (1691); the statesman Giovanni de Cunto, Doctor and Captain Giacomo de Cunto, Nicola Pagliaminuta, who did his utmost to improve the state of the roads, Antonio Milano, famous juriconsult, Matteo Vitolo, knight and preceptor of the Hospitalers of Rodi, the painters Giacomo de Persico, Giovanni de Forno, Tobita and Vincenzo di Ponte, Angelo D'Amato of Maiori, Pietro Capuano, Marino del Giudice, Landolfo Marramaldo, Ludovico Bonito etc. and the illustrious contemporary Matteo Camera the renowned historian of the Coast.

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**Matteo Camera.** Was born at Amalfi on December 20, 1807. At the age of 22 he obtained the degree of engineer at Naples University, but more than in mathematics and compasses he was talent-

ed in letters, philosophy, history, paleography, numismatics, literature, philology and foreign languages. Also he studied music and painting: in fact he played the violoncello and painted fair water - colours. His family still retain many of his paintings among them a collection of pictures representing the different fruits of the Coast.

Matteo Camera was of many parts. He united love for everything beautiful, a kind and affectionate character to a strict study and severe talent and at the same time did not dislike jokes and subtil witticisms.

He lived a long time at Naples and spent his time there in historical researches, especially in the Archives, till his hard work was hindered by the Borbonic Government that was suspicious of him and of other learned men of that time, who tried to trace the past glory and sad vicissitudes of their beloved land amidst old charters, documents and records.

In 1843 he married Miss Gaetana dei Marchesi Ventapane of Naples and went back to Amalfi. No child rejoiced their lives.

Matteo Camera continued his favourite studies and carefully searched for old manuscripts and records among ancient churches, monasteries and private archives and at the same time did not miss an opportunity of enjoying fishing and shooting. He always defrayed expenses for such researches and



was on friendly terms with the chief historical, literary, and scientific scholars of that day. Don Pedro, Emperor of Brazil, who came to Amalfi in 1872, had Matteo Camera for his guide and greatly admired his profound learning.

Matteo Camera took part in public life as inspector of excavation in the province of Salerno and as Communal Counsellor, and both charges he undertook with wisdom and probity.

When in 1861 the facade of the Cathedral fell, his archeological knowledge was of vast use for he traced the Byzantine lines of the new facade for the illustrious Enrico Albino, attended to the execution of the work and then had the joy of seeing the work achieved in 1891.

He wrote several works of great historical value among which are.

(\*) Historical and diplomatic memories of the ancient Town and Duchy of Amalfi - two volumes of 800 pages each.

(\*\*) Historical and chronological ephemerides for each day, month, and year - octavo 646 pages.

(\*\*\*) Annals of the Two Sicilies from 1017 to 1285 two volumes.

He also wrote many historical articles for "Arte e Storia",;

He died on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1891 at the age of 84 leaving many historical manuscripts concerning the Amalfi Coast and Southern Italy, which, if

published, would give new light to historical science.

The following epigraph is written on the front of his house in Piazza Duomo.

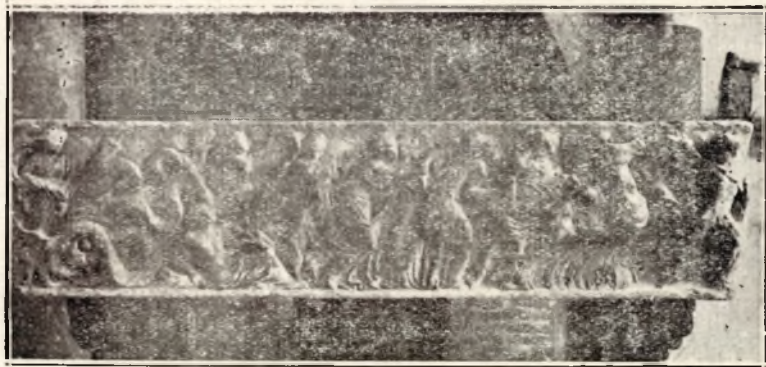
IN QUESTA CASA  
NACQUE IL DÌ XXI XBRE MDCCCVII  
E VISSE PER OTTANTAQUATTRO ANNI  
**MATTEO CAMERA**  
BENEMERITO E INSIGNE CITTADINO  
SALUTATO DAGLI ITALIANI E DAGLI STRANIERI  
ARCHEOLOGO E NUMISMATICO PROFONDO  
E SCRITTORE DOTTISSIMO DI STORIA NAZIONALE  
RICONOSCENTE  
DELL'OPERA DA LUI DATA  
A PERPETUARE NELLA COSCIENZA DEI POSTERI  
IL LUSTRO CHE EBBE AMALFI  
TRA LE CITTÀ MARINARE DELL'ITALIA MERIDIONALE  
NELLA NAVIGAZIONE E NEI COMMERCII  
IL MUNICIPIO AMALFITANO  
POSE QUESTA MEMORIA DEL SUO STORIOGRAFO  
IL DÌ D E DICEMBRE MDCCCXCIV

(In this house - was born on December 21 MDCCCVII  
- and lived for eighty - four years - Matteo Camera - meritorious and illustrious citizen - greeted by Italians and foreigners - profound archeologist and numismatist - and learned national writer - in gratitude - for the work given by him - to perpetuate in the minds of future generations - the lustre



(Samaritani)

AMALFI - (Chiostrco Paradiso) Ancient urn representing the marriage of Menelaus



(Samaritani)

**AMALFI - (Chostro Paradiso) Ancient urn representing the rape of Proserpine**

that Amalfi enjoyed - among the maritime towns of Southern Italy - in navigation and trade - the Amalfitan Townhall - placed this memorial to its historian - on December 2 MDCCCXCIX ).

Recently a bronze bust to Matteo Camera has been placed in the public garden. (\*)

## Artists of Amalfi

**Pietro Scopetta.** Was born at Amalfi on February 15<sup>th</sup> 1863.

For him Art had fascination. He writes thus of it " Art is, above all, strength of sentiment, enthusiasm, absorbing sensibility. Art is the soul, the emotion of the yearning soul „ And then " Fortunate is he who has the steadfast desire, and can pursue it eagerly with its compelling power. The desire stated simply is the desire of trasmitting an emotion.

The intensity, the quality, the tenacity of that desire makes the work of a genius. The desire itself

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(\*) It is out of proportion to the Greek column on which it stands, as the Committee that raised the monument intended to shorten the column and put the bust on one of the two stumps. This was forbidden and the Committee ordered the tiny bust to be placed where it is. Let us hope a worthier monument will soon arise.

is a spark of genius. Few have the inexhaustible desire that goes beyond the work of Art like Leonardo or Michelangelo „.

He gave up engineering to follow this vocation. He was two-and-twenty when he became a member of the glorious company created in Rome by Sammaruga, among whom were D'Annunzio, Michetti, Matilde Serao, Eduardo Scarfoglio etc.

He was endowed with an earnest soul and was fond of a wandering life. He wandered abroad for twelve years with sojourns at London and Paris, his especial love.

Scoppetta was the artist of Amalfi, the artist with his soul full of the songs and the lights, the beauties and the colours of the gorgeous landscapes of his country: his pictures have all the luminous charm of his native land. He was not only a painter, but also a musician and poet. He composed some tender pages of music and published some poems gathered in a book entitled "*Ritmi del cuore* „ (Rhythms of the heart) which are a lyrical expression of his soul sensitive, ingenuous and tenderly good.

Seeing beauty, he represented it on his canvas with subtleness and touches of colours, and at the same time with the human side of life portrayed. Naturalness and spontaneity gave his work unity of expression with a technical skill that, although used with wise mastery, disappeared to become incarnate in the form of the picture. So rose on his canvas

the many beautiful young girls and women, some talking, some smiling and some wrapped in thought.

He did not forget his beloved Amalfi and caught the beauties of his native town and of the Coast in his landscapes.

After long sojourning abroad he came back to Amalfi for a rest and to draw inspiration for new and better work.

He intended to leave for Paris, but at Milan he dreamed that a viper had bitten him under his foot. That dream was a foreboding of death, and he departed back to his Naples. Not long after in February 1920 one morning he died in his sleep.

Naples (the town of his adoption), Amalfi and all his friends and fellow citizens mourned him.

His handsome figure will remain in the memory of those who knew and loved him.

The following epigraph is on the wall of his house.

O ETERNI INCANTI DEL MARE AMALFITANO  
CHE CINGETE DI AMORE  
QUESTA CASA OVE NACQUE  
**PIETRO SCOPPETTA**  
E DI LUI DOLCEMENTE CULLASTE  
I PRIMI SOGNI URGENTI DI BELLEZZA  
DAI QUALI SORSE  
IL MAGISTERO IMPETUOSO DEL SUO PENNELLO  
SAPPIATE CULLARE ANCORA PIÙ DOLCEMENTE

IL SOGNO ULTIMO E SENZA FINE  
DELLA SUA PURA E GRANDE ANIMA DI ARTISTA  
ADDORMENTATASI PER SEMPRE  
ADULTA NELL'ARTE  
ANCORA FANCIULLA NELLA VITA  
SULLA SOGLIA DELLA GLORIA.

(O eternal charms of the Amalfitan sea - that surround with love - this house where was born - Pietro Scoppetta - that sweetly cradled - his primeval dreams eager of beauty - from which rose the rushing mastery of his brush - can you cradle still more sweetly - the last hidden and endless dream - of the pure and great soul of this artist - fallen for ever asleep - adult in Art - yet childlike in life - on the threshold of glory).

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\* \*

**Antonio Rocco.** Amalfi is proud of him not only for his excellent Art, but also for his ardent love for the divine Amalfi, which lives again in his splendid canvas abroad in Brazil.

In 1927 his great picture "Odalisca", gained the gold medal in the national competition of painting held at the *Salone of Rio de Janeiro*. Last year he attained the first rank among the painters who exhibited their pictures at the *Palazzo delle Arcades* at St. Paul reaching the highest number of works sold during the exhibition. I have here



several Brazilian newspapers which exalt Rocco's art with wise criticism. I hope I do not weary the kind reader in translating here only two short passages from "*Fanfulla* „ on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1929 " My dear! The world is full of excellent but unlucky painters. This shows that if a picture finds no purchaser no one need reckon it inartistic for the fault may lie with the people who do not understand or will not understand. But for Rocco we find the two elements united: excellence on the painter's side and the "*animus sapiendi* „ on the purchaser's side „ . The same writer concludes. " Rocco is complete. One needs only to look at his pictures to realize this. Every thing is there: landscape, figure, crowd, portrait, still Nature, darkness, sun, morning, mountain, ocean. All. Also the technique is varied, and one great and sensitive soul. The soul of Rocco is all in that dramatic movement of the great picture "*Miners* „ which is a master - piece of suggestive beauty „ .

Rocco is a disciple of Morelli and Palizzi the leaders of the glorious Neapolitan School and now carries on worthily the name of his famous masters.

Since 1913 he has lived at St. Paul, but his triumphs do not diminish his deep longing for his native country.

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**Ignazio Lucibello.** Is a young painter who as a boy showed a natural and distinguished talent

for Art. In fact he has revealed himself in his works as an artist of agreeable subjects. The beauties, the lights, the shades and the harmony of the Coast shine in his pictures. He can express every mood that Nature or Inspiration reveal to him with harmonious and delicate colours giving his works the attraction of poetry.

He has sent pictures to exhibitions elsewhere and has had two personal exhibitions, one in Sicily, the other in Amalfi. His study along the road that leads to the Hotel Cappuccini deserves mention here.

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**Giovanni Anastasio** - With a great regret we record the art of this painter who died so young. He exhibited landscapes several times and the last time at the "*Promotrice*," of Naples. He was also an excellent caricaturist.



## The Cathedral

**Interior, bronze doors, facade, atrium, crypt.**

The Cathedral once occupied the central place of the town, but now it is nearer the sea, for a part of the town was swallowed up by the sea in 1343. Hence it signifies the size of the the ancient Amalfi to a certain extent. (\*)

The origin of this gorgeous church shining with gold and mosaics is lost in obscurity. Quite certainly it was built with two naves and dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady, and in 987 was enlarged to three naves by Doge Mansone III. Hence it witnessed all the vicissitudes in the life of the Republic.

Two centuries later (1203) Cardinal Pietro Capuano rebuilt it in the Byzantine style, adorning it with marble and fine mosaics, adding the atrium and the crypt, where the body of S. Andrea was carefully laid under the high altar.

The illustrious Matteo Camera gives the following description of the Cathedral of that period. (\*\*)

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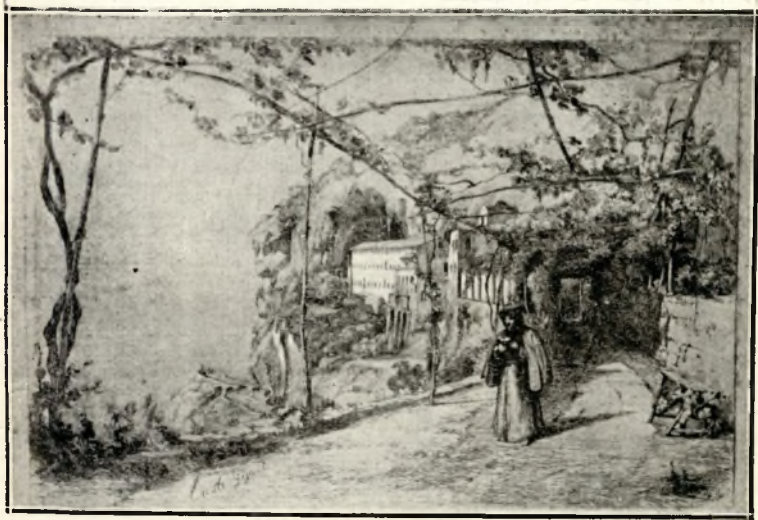
(\*) See pag. 18.

(\*\*) See « Memorie storiche » first volume, pag. 151.

“ In the central nave the high altar rose like a tribune (almost in the centre of the actual presbytery) covered with a small marble covered dome and adorned with porphyry columns of veined marble. The symbols of the four Evangelists were above and around among fine mosaics. The pulpit for the reading of the gospel and the ambo for the reading of the epistle were on each side of the tribune, both in marble and adorned with mosaics. The Archbishop's throne was small and simple according to the custom of that time. The ancient legend told that the porphyry pile in one piece, then and even now used as a baptismal font, was near the pulpit. The semicircular apse with the presbytery was at the end of the aisle and a half length gold figure of the Redeemer, enriched with very fine mosaics, shone with such splendour that it was seen from every part of the church.

Beneath were the busts of the titular saints, divided from each other by the branch of the palm tree, coloured in green. A long range of historic gothic windows, adorned with small columns and stained glass surmounted the marvellous monument,,.

Subsequently in 1526 and 1564 the Cathedral threatened to fall and was restored, and another restoration took place with some disfigurements. But the defacer of the magnificent cathedral was Archbishop Michele Bologna, who, presumptuous and ignorant, transformed the inside of the fine church



AMALFI - Hotel Cappuccini Convento

*SCALA - Torre dello Ziro e veduta del mare.*



(By courtesy of Cav. Gaetano Manzi)

**AMALFI - Torre dello Ziro**

into the style of that time spending his riches for fifteen years. He walled in the elegant and slender double rows of columns with big pillars (\*) overlaid with precious marble, covering and destroying altars, noble chapels, statues, frescoes, mosaics, all that was ancient and beautiful with a mania for renewing and fitting them into the style of his time.

But even still the cathedral is majestic and splendid in the baroque style.

Fortunately the construction of the present cathedral is still that of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the form of a cross, (\*\*) and of that glorious century there remain the two large and fine Egyptian columns at the entrance of the presbytery, the pile in one piece of porphyry standing in the chapel near the entrance of the right nave (still used for a baptistery) and the bronze doors.

The **bronze doors** in the central entrance were cast in Constantinople and wrought with traces of silver by Simeone di Ciria at the expense of Pantaleone Comite. Abbot Desiderio, who came to Amalfi in 1062 to purchase gifts to present to

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(\*) To ascertain the existence of the columns within each pillar a trial was made on the first pillar near the pulpit by uncovering a part of the hidden column and this is still visible.

(\*\*) Nearly all churches of the ascetic 13<sup>th</sup> century had the form of a Latin cross facing to the East.

Henry IV, took them as a pattern for those of Montecassino which in fact were cast in 1066. (\*)

On the front of the bronze doors of Amalfi are to be seen the effigies of Jesus Christ and Our Lady carved with silver outlines, and underneath those of S. Andrea and S. Pietro.

Below is written the following inscription in silver letters:

HOC OPUS ANDREÆ MEMORI CONSISTIT EFFECTUS  
PANTALEONIS BIS ONORE AUCTORIS STUDIIS UT PRO  
GESTIS SUCCEDAT GRATIA CULPIS.

(This work is dedicated by the donor to Andrea, who is mindful of us, to gain forgiveness for all his faults.)

Above a silver embossed cross is written:

HOC OPUS FIERI JUSSIT PRO RENDEMTIONE ANIMÆ  
MÆ PANTALEO FILIUS MAURI DE PANTALEONE DE MAURO  
DE MAURONE COMITE.

(This work was done at the expense of Pantaleone a son of Mauro of Pantaleone of Mauro of Maurone comite for the redemption of his soul.)

Originally there was another silver cross on the opposite side with the initials of Simeone de Siria, believed to have been stolen by a vandal.

The **facade** of the cathedral fell in 1861, and the illustrious architect Enrico Albino rebuilt it. The marvellous picture of the Assumption and the mosaic of St. Andrew in the *sesto acuto* atrium are

(\*) See pag. 20.



the work of Morelli, who painted also the figures of the twelve apostles and the picture of the prostrate Elders before the throne of Our Lord, described in the Apocalypse of St. John, that were reproduced in mosaics by Salviati of Venice, and are now shining and luminous on the magnificent facade, Morelli's pictures are kept in the red room of the Townhall. Morelli was assisted by Paul Vetri, who has now worthily completed the frescoes above the walls of the **Atrium**.

The **crypt** built at the expense of Pietro Capuano was adorned with frescoes and pictures at the expense of the Kings Philip II and Philip III of Spain. The latter erected the monumental bronze statue of St. Andrew, a much esteemed work executed by Michelangelo Naccherino. The statue was blessed and inaugurated in 1604. It is flanked by two of Pietro Bernini's statues, St. Lawrence and St. Stephen. Fontana, father and son, the builders of the Royal Palace of Naples, worked for the restoration of the crypt and Vincenzo D'Amato of Scala painted the frescoes.

It was during the work of restoration that mason Scipione Cretella, in digging a wall for the chapel ordered by Philip II, discovered a marble

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(\*) The fresco above the door of the organ represents the solemn carrying into the crypt of the urn containing the body of St. Andrew. The bearers are all vested in mitres.

vase (\*) containing a fine head and some bones. A cross and the following inscription "Hoc S. Andree Apostoli," were carved outside it. That happened on January 8, 1603. The Archbishop of Amalfi, Giulio Rossino, ordered it to be buried again for he was afraid such a treasure might be stolen. Only on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1846 the vase with its precious contents and an entry signed by Giulio Rossino and other officers relating the fact was rediscovered. The churches of all the Diocese of Amalfi commemorate this event with the name "Invenzione del Capo dell'Apostolo S. Andrea,".

To day the back of the skull is kept locked up in a recess behind the altar. The front is kept at Rome by the Holy See with other relics.

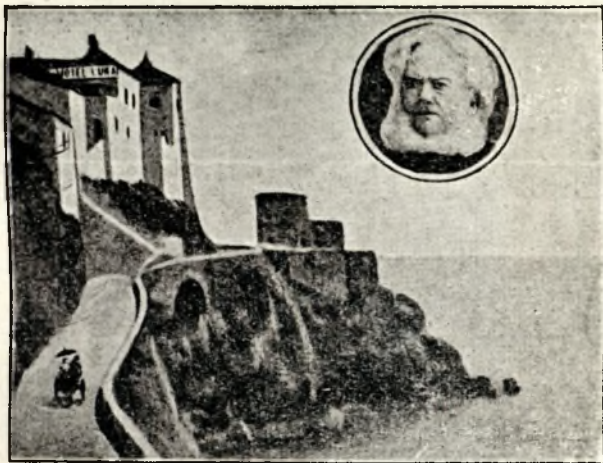
The remainder of the body is interred under the high altar of the crypt. Cardinal Capuano divided the sacred body hiding a part for he was afraid of robbery, and so that if a part was stolen the rest remained for the veneration of the Amalfitan people.

## The Campanile

The campanile by the side of the cathedral was begun in 1180 and finished in 1276 at the expense

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(\*) The vase is now grafted on the wall on the right of the entrance to the crypt.



AMALFI - Hotel Luna Convento and Tower St. Sofia



AMALFI - Cloister in the Hotel Luna Convento

of Filippo Augustariccio. It is in Byzantine style and rises gracefully into the air. The same archbishop endowed it with a large and sweet toned bell that still calls the faithful to the services with its musical and majestic toll. Also it reminds us of Amalfi's glorious history, for more than once the Amalfitans had to entrench themselves within the campanile and, taking courage, assail their enemies again.

The campanile was several times restored and not always artistically, but is still an imposing and fine monument.

### The Chiostro Paradiso

Is the ancient cemetery of Amalfi for nobles and patricians, adjoining the right side of the cathedral. It was in disrepair till some years ago, when, at the expense of Archbishop De Dominicis, Architect Avena restored it approximately to its former condition preserving many fragments and frescoes. This 12<sup>th</sup> century monument is now seen as described by Camera "A square piece of ground fenced with a sesto acuto peristyle supported by small columns, that have the appearance of a cloister. Around the walls there were five chapels covered with frescoes. In fact the chapels still exist, the frescoes are desecrated and each reveals the original more

beautiful fresco underneath. This cemetery was built at the charge of Monsignor Augustariccio, between 1260 and 1268, but, as it stands in the centre of the town, it has been unused, since the XVI<sup>th</sup> century. There are many precious fragments of wrought marbles, columns, and mosaics brought there either from the cathedral during its restorations or from ruined monuments. There are also two heathen sarcophagi in bas relief taken from Paestum: one represents the wedding of Menelaus and Helen, the other the rape of Proserpine.

## The Townhall

The townhall is a very ancient building and occupies a fine position facing the sea. It is supposed to have been the establishment of Amalfi's mint in the old glorious times of the Republic. It is now full of interest for there are to be seen the great sketches of Domenico Morelli representing the twelve apostles, then St. Andrew, St. John's vision in the Apocalypse (Chapter IV<sup>th</sup>) all reproduced in mosaics on the facade of the Cathedral. There are besides a mosaic portrait of St. Andrew, the flag of the man - of - war "Amalfi", sunk during the last world war, and some flags and maritime instruments of the dismantled - man - of - war "Flavio Gioia".

A large room is reserved for the Historical

Museum of Amalfi. There will be kept the " Tavola Amalfa „ and the " Consuetudini „ that soon are to be given back to Amalfi. (\*)

Several of Pietro Scoppetta 's pictures and an oil portray of him by the painter Antonio Rocco are preserved in the Sala Scoppetta. (\*\*)

A war - memorial stands in the Piazza Municipio at the entrance of the Townhall.

The white building, with a steeple, adjoining the western side of the Townhall, was a Benedictine nunnery built in 1380, now used as a school - building.

## The Cimitero

Rises above the western side of the Aureo mountain and can at once be distinguished in the panorama of the Town for its long set of arches. It was constructed from the ruins of the nunnery of S. Lorenzo del Piano, which was a rich and famous monastery for noble women.

## Towers

The Torre dello Zirro (called also S. Felice) surrounded with ruins of embattled walls rises on

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(\*) They are now in the Museum of Naples.

(\*\*) See pag. 40.

the ridge of the same Aureo mountain at a short distance from the cemetery.

It was a strong defence for the Town on account of its great military position, and was also a witness of many a glorious victory.

A notable crime was committed most probably at this spot. Giovanna D'Aragona, being left a widow at the early age of twenty, was illegally united to a noble officer of the Court, Antonio Bologna, and for this disgrace her brothers are said to have murdered her in this tower.

The Tower of Pogerola standing on the opposite mountain was also a very great military post. To-day it is partly demolished by exposure.

The Tower Taborre stands a little below that of Pogerola. It was named *Torre delle volpi* (the tower of the foxes): the reason for this name is unknown. It is said in the time of the Republic a trumpeter ascended there, whenever a capital punishment was to take place.

You will have noticed that many other towers are to be seen along the Coast. They were built in the XV<sup>th</sup> century by order of Charles V, by whose orders 360 had been constructed along the coasts of the Tirreanean, the Ionic, the Adriatic Seas, and were called *torri di segnalazioni*.





AMALFI - A beautiful view with Hotel S. Caterina



The shore of Amalfi with Hotel Riviera

## Churches

The existing churches of Amalfi have a little of antiquity except their origin and a few fragments: the church of S. Nicola de Abiso or de Graecis (to day also called of S. Biagio) with the congregation of the Santissima Trinità in the ward of Vagliendola, that of S. S. Filippo e Giacomo (to - day also of Carmelo) in the ward of S. Jago (once Ar-sina), that of San Spirito at the top of the Via Pietro Capuano, built in 1576 from the ruins of the church of S. Maria della Misericordia founded in 1213 by Cardinal Capuano, that of the Assunta, or S. Maria Maggiore, founded by Doge Mansone III, which contains two Corinthian capitals at its entrance inscribed

MANSO DUX ET PATRITIUS  
HOC FIERI JUSSIT

(Doge Mansone ordered this to be made), that of S. Basilio along the road from the Via dei Mullini leading to Pogerola, and that of Madonna del Rosario in the suburb of the same name.

Matteo Camera enumerates about forty churches and convents and nunneries in his "Memorie storiche," thus showing how strong was the religious sentiment in the soul of the ancient Amalfitans.

## Hotel Cappuccini Convento

Rises above the mountain Falconcello white and solemn.

It was founded by Cardinal Pietro Capuano in 1212 on the site of the church of S. Pietro ad Tusculum. Cardinal Capuano had a great predilection for this building. There at first he invited the canons of the Lateran, but after five years introduced the Cistercians in their stead, whence the Canonry obtained the status of an Abbey, endowed with many relics brought from Constantinople. In 1450 the Cistercians were forced to abandon the monastery, much injured during the long and terrible struggle between the partisans of the Durazzo and the Angevin families. Two years later the University of Amalfi restored it and asked the Holy See to send an Order to them, but only at the end of that century did the Dominicans arrive at the Convent for a short time. After being transformed into a lazaret house during the plague of 1527, it remained once more uninhabited, and was deserted. But so important a building did not deserve the fate of being abandoned. At the fervent request of the people, Pope Gregory XIII ceded the Abbey to the University of Amalfi which restored it at public expense, after the design of Matteo Vitale. In 1583 the Capuchins gladly made it their abode

staying there until 1815, when they were forced to leave.

The precious relics and treasures left by Cardinal Capuano were removed in solemn pomp from the little church of the Convent to the Cathedral. (\*)

In 1826 an unpretending citizen, Gregorio Vozzi, obtained leave to transform the Convent into an inn, but was prevented from obtaining a permanent lease by Monsignor Giannangelo Porta, bishop of Termopili, who offered an adequate equivalent and restored the Capuchins to the Canonry. Thus the monks returned on December 4<sup>th</sup> 1840, but did not stay long for they were forced to leave in 1866, owing to the new law by which religious corporations suffered confiscation.

It now seemed to them that the time had come for realizing their father's idea, and they transformed the Capuchin Convent (where they had been born and grown up) into the delightful hotel of to-day. Their sister, the gentle Donna Luisa, was the soul of the Canonry, in its new existence, and wished the place to preserve its original character as a retreat from the world for solitude and contemplation. She hoped in her heart that the old Abbey might some day return again.

To continue the history of this hotel would be to trace the history of the Vozzi family for

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(\*) They are now kept in the *Coro* of the Cathedral.

the names Famiglia Vozzi and Albergo Cappuccini are interchangeable.

This hotel has been honoured by the presence of the most illustrious men of the time.

The records of the hotel contain many well known signatures. Among others I have selected these famous names: Morse, Tolstoi, Baedecker, Giuseppe Bonaparte, H. W. Longfellow, Umberto and Vittorio Emanuele di Savoia, Don Pedro D'Alcantara, Emperor of Brazil, Queen Victoria of Sweden and her husband Gustavo Adolfo, Robert Kock, A Behring, W. E. Gladstone, G. D'Annunzio, Oscar Wilde, P. Villari, S. Mercadante, A. Nobel, Domenico Morelli.

This building contains on the outer wall at the entrance a memorial to the American Poet Henry Longfellow, who wrote a poem to Amalfi. (\*) The memorial consists of an epigraph placed there by the Public Administration expressing the gratitude of the Town to the American Poet, who

CELEBRÒ LE ROSE E GLI ARANCETI  
IL MARE E IL SOLE DI AMALFI (\*)

(He made famous the roses and the oranges, the sea and the sun of Amalfi)

The present proprietor, Don Alfredo Vozzi, Gregorio Vozzi's grand nephew, has gathered a

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(\*) See the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> lines of the epigraph.

collection of the famous Scuola di Posillipo, a bouquet of luminous and expressive works of art reconstructing the past history of the Convent.

## Hotel Luna Convento

( Church of St. Antonio and tower of St. Sofia )

Was founded about 1225 by S. Francesco of Assisi himself, who came here with his first companion Fra Bernardo Quintavalle and worshipped at the tomb of St. Andrew. (\*) It was kept till a century ago by the Minor Conventual Friars. The body of the venerable P. Domenico da Muro, who belonged to the Franciscan Order, lies in the church of S. Antonio, that is attached to the convent. In the crypt, on the altar, there was a picture representing the seraphic Poor Man of Assisi, considered by critics to be pre - Giotto, but was stolen, and unfortunately not traced: now there are an admirable tryptich of Our Lady, St. Peter and St. Nicholas (much injured) attributed to Cola dell' Amatrice and a mediocre picture of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

This convent has been for a century converted into an hotel by the family Barbaro under the name of Hotel Luna. Near by stands the Torre di S. Sofia between Amalfi and Atrani in a very

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(\*) See the inscription in the crypt of the church of St. Antonio.

splendid position over the sea. Hotel Luna maintains the ancient construction of the Franciscan Convent with the fair cloister, the well, the cells and a lovely terrace. Without defacing its construction, Mr. Andrea Barbaro (a fine type of *padrone*) has made it into a very comfortable hotel where guests enjoy a delightful stay under the shade of St. Francis.

The hotel Luna boasts of having given hospitality to S. E. Benito Mussolini, the Norwegian poet Ibsen who wrote there "The Doll's House"; Miss Sibyl Thorndyke, the great English actress, and her family, and other illustrious persons.

The Torre di S. Sofia was deprived of its walls of defence to give place to the construction of the Franciscan Convent. Once it was the protection of the glorious Town, now it is a place of peace and repose.

## Hotel S. Caterina

One who knew it less than ten years ago would be amazed to see it now. Then it was a small house, but now is a great hotel. This is explained by the fact that it occupies a very lovely position on the sea along the road recognized as the most beautiful road in the world and also because of the cordiality and courtesy that guests find there.

We find on the ground - floor a very large



dining - room, a salon, a sitting - room and a splendid terrace from which guests enjoy a charming view. On the mountain slope below stretches a garden with flowers of many colours and shady groves. The scent of the flowers mingles with the breezes from the sea. On the first floor the bed - rooms all look full South with a splendid view.

The proprietor is Mr. Crescenzo Gambardella who is the true type of courteous hotel keeper. He does his utmost to provide his hotel with the most modern comforts and satisfy all the requirements of his guests.

### **Hotel Marina Riviera**

Is a smiling hotel situated in a pleasant place near the strand and in the centre of the town. It is now managed by Brothers Gambardella, whose father made the three — storied building into a clean and comfortable hotel. The wide dining — room and the drawing — room open on to a beautiful terrace, where meals are served.

### **Hotei d'Italia**

Is a small, clean and comfortable house situated in the western centre of the town facing the South and overlooking the sea, entered from the first tunnel on the road to Positano.

It is kept by Mr. Giuseppe Amendola.

## Amalfi as she is to - day

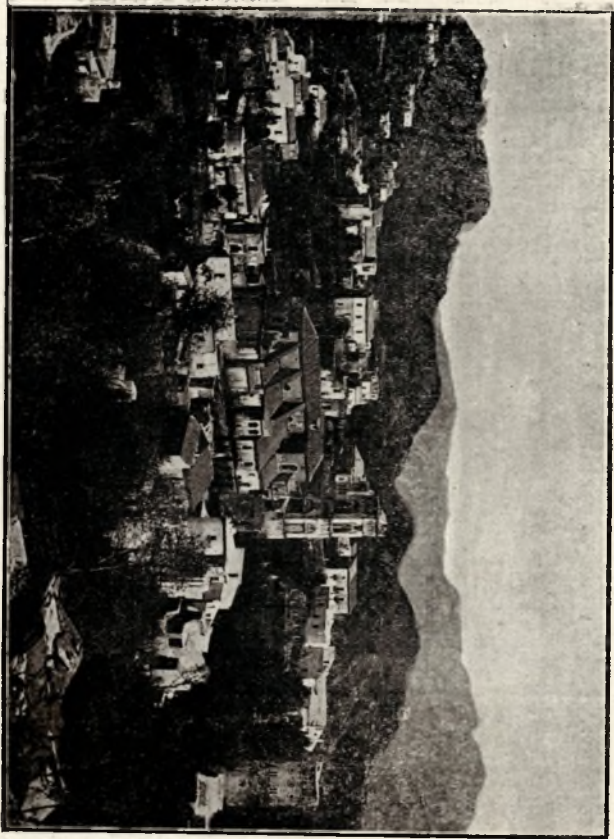
Amalfi is now quite a small city with not more than five thousand inhabitants, very small when compared to the fifty thousand in the days of her glory. Can we say that nothing remains of ancient Amalfi except the memory of her glory and her natural charms? I think not. There is perhaps something visible only to those who have a deep knowledge of this town, namely the talent for navigation and commerce, that every Amalfitan has received as an inheritance from his ancient ancestors. Until forty years ago Amalfi was still a very industrious town with its many *maccaroni* factories, flour — mills, paper — mills and soap — works, besides the great number of businesses and shops that the Amalfitans ran in South Italy and Sicily.

But the absence of a railway and the impossibility of expansion according to modern requirements have made it impossible to provide the necessary machinery. So all the ancient *maccaroni* manufactories have had to disappear, and the paper



(By courtesy of Cav. Gaetano Mansi)

**ATRANI - Panorama**



RAVELLO - Panorama

— mills unable to meet the competition of larger factories have been starved out of existence.

The Amalfitani and Atranesi still keep many shops and businesses in Calabria, Apulia, Basilicata and Sicily.

But although their business is afar they seldom abandon their native country which is far too beautiful for them to contemplate leaving.

Other sources of wealth for this town are the industry of the hotels frequented by people of every nationality, some paper - mills, a *maccaroni* factory, the exportation of lemons and oranges, the manufacture of copy - books, paper - bags and other typographical products. The latest advance is "The Amalfi's embroidery school", opened several months ago. It provides a new branch of industry to this industrious people and exhibits skilful and exquisite work.



Amalfi is an Archepiscopal see without having a suffragan bishopric. The Archbishop of Amalfi is now Monsignor Ercolano Marini, a noble figure of a prelate, who for fifteen years has been spending his mission of goodness and charity towards the people of this Coast.

The chapter is composed of eighteen canons. They have the right of wearing white silk mitres.

in solemn processions, a privilege conferred on only few chapters in Italy.

Amalfi is the chief town of the whole coast and has officers residing here, who have their jurisdiction from Positano to Maiori.

The post office and the telephone complete the rank of public offices, while the Banca Camera & C. is of value for every banking operation.

The *Podestà* of Amalfi rules over all the township (\*), which includes, besides Amalfi, even Atrani, Pontone, Poggerola, Pastena, Lone, Vettica Minore and Tovere.

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\* \*

Her institutions of charity are:

The pontifical male Orphanage *Anna e Natalia* which was founded eleven years ago by Archbishop Monsignor Ercolano Marini, who still labours for the better advance of this institution. It gives hospitality and education to about fifty boys. There are a very large dormitory, a dining - room, a study, a chapel where the orphans pray for their benefactors, a cabinet - work room and a garden. If it is one of the best orphanages in Southern Italy the merit is due to Monsignor Marini.

The female orphanage *Opera Monsignor Bian-*

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(\*) The township of Amalfi numbers 10.057 inhabitants.

*chi* is well kept by the sisters of Charity although not so large.

The town hospital dedicated to S. Michele for medicine and surgery to the poor, the "*Conferenza di S. Vincenzo dei Paoli*," that succours the poor and the sick at home and the "*Patronato Scolastico*," complete the public societies for the assistance of Amalfi.

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\* \*

Amalfi is united to Salerno by a daily steam-boat service with a motor-boat and by a service of motor-buses with three departures and arrivals per day meeting trains to Vietri and Salerno, and is united to Naples by a double weekly service of a steamer and three times per day by motor-buses via Meta to Sorrento.

\*  
\* \*

Amalfi is recognized as a health resort on account of the sweet and very dry climate. It is frequented by people of every nationality, especially the English who spend the Winter here.

Walks, excursions and drives are very delightful. I mention here the charming sunny Coast road, the picturesque Valle dei Mulini, the shady pathway from Atrani to Ravello and Scala, the glorious sunny road to the monastery of S. Rosa, mounting up to Agerola, the road ascending from Maiori

leads to the tower of Chiunzo, where one can see all the wide plain of Nocera and a great part of the gulf of Naples with the Vesuvius and the Partenopean isles.

Picturesque caves and grottoes are also seen along the Coast. The *grotta di S. Andrea* near the small strand behind the harbour of Amalfi, and the *grotta Pandone* a little way from Maiori only reached from the sea are especially lovely. The grotto of S. Cristoforo in the Cielo of Amalfi, that of S. Nicola in Vettica Minore, that of Santa Croce towards Conca Marini, that of Carmine in Atrani, that of Aglio in Scala, those of Lao and S. Cosma in Ravello and some others are picturesque.

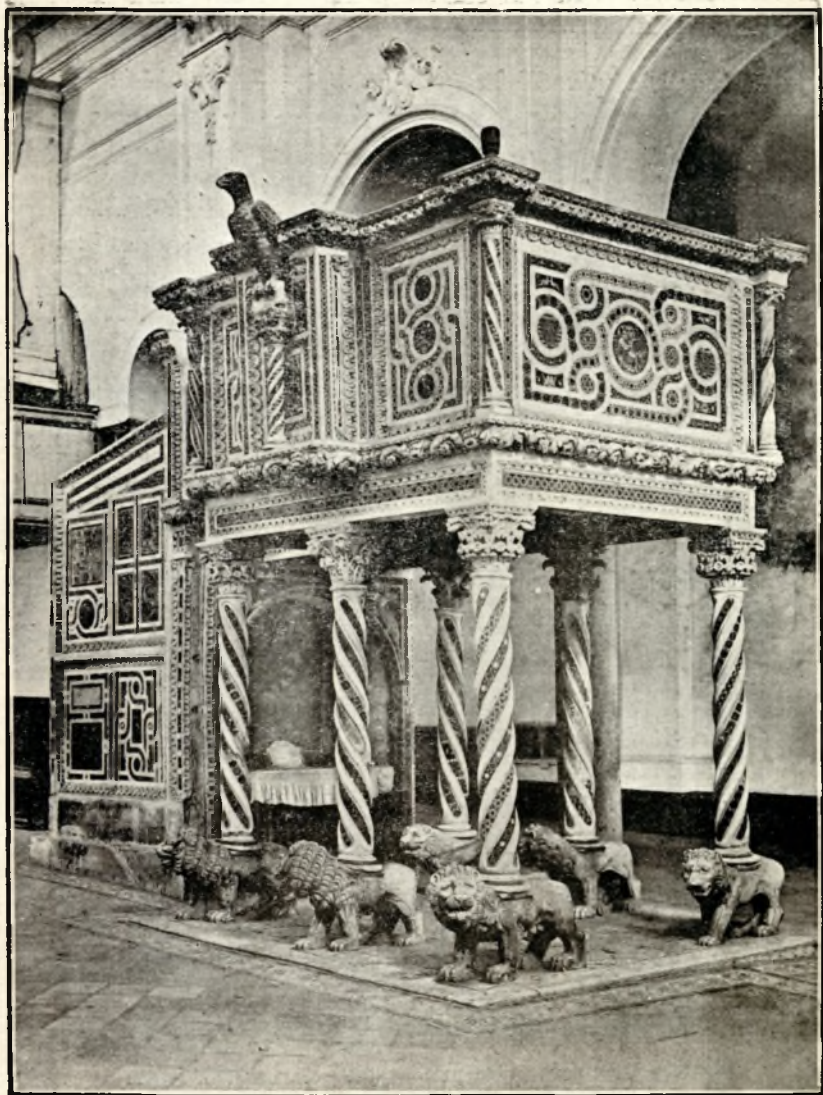
## Atrani

Is a village on the eastern side of Amalfi. Till a few months ago it was an independent Commune, but now, according to the new law of suppression of smaller Communes, is a part of the township of Amalfi.

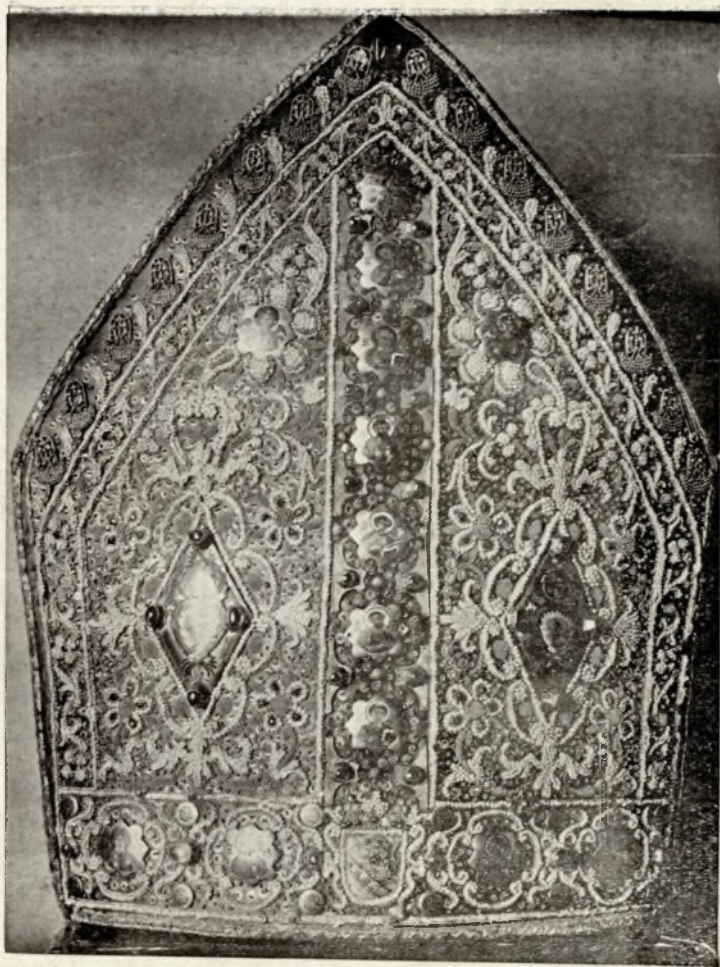
Atrani is the chief partner of Amalfi's glories and misfortunes owing to the short distance between the two towns. The greatest blow to Atrani was in 1254 when a colony of Saracens was forced upon her by Manfredi.

Its principal church dedicated to S. Maria Mad-





RAVELLO - 13<sup>th</sup> century pulpit



SCALA - Precious mitre presented by Charles I of Anjou

dalena was built in 1274, and has been many a time restored and transformed: the last time was in 1852 from the designs of Architect Casabore of Salerno.

The church of S. Salvatore (\*) is very ancient. The bronze doors cast at the end of the XI<sup>th</sup> century belonged to the church of S. Sebastian, and were transferred there when that church was suppressed and interdicted. The only remains of ancient days are those bronze doors and a Norman sarcophagus wrought in bas relief representing two opposite peacocks with their opened wings and fantails on the sides of a tree, with a bird on a branch that broods over many eggs.

Atrani, like Amalfi, was very industrious. The manufacture of woollen cloth lasted for several centuries, and was the chief industry of the town.

The "*Monte di Pietà*," was a philanthropic society among the wool manufacturers.

To - day Atrani is much depopulated and without industry except that of a few fishermen.

Very many Atranese emigrate to Southern Italy and become shopkeepers.

## Pogerola

Occupies a lovely position above Amalfi. It was called *Pigellula* or *Pugellula* and was in the Middle

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(\*) See pag. 15

Ages a manor surrounded by walls of defence for the inhabitants, and was considered the bulwark of Amalfi. In fact it held out against the assaults of enemies all the time.

The parish church of S. *Marina* dates from a very ancient time and has been many times modernised and defaced. At the entrance there is a Roman urn.

The other church dedicated to the *Madanna delle Grazie*, built in 1539 as a votive offering for those saved from the plague of 1528, contains an urn with this inscription

CONSTANT AP. Q. F. FELICULEE P. F.

A few years ago there was a flourishing factory of nails, an industry that had its origin in Roman times as is shown by the discovery of bronze tacks in Roman sepulchres.

## Pastena

Is situated a little way west of Pogerola on the slope of the hills with few houses. The parish church is dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady, where, beyond some well painted pictures, is another urn.

The inhabitants are devoted to agriculture and fishing.

## Lone

In proceeding to the west we arrive at Lone (the ancient *Lonun*) a rocky and steep land, but cultivated with vineyards, lemons, oranges and fruits.

The parish church is dedicated to *S. Maria di Montevergine*.

## Vettica Minore

On the western side of Lone is Vettica Minore, which is separated from Lone by a wide valley and is bounded by Conca. It is a charming place where in ancient times the Amalfitan Aristocracy spent the Summer. The territory is fertile for all kinds of vegetables, lemons, oranges and grapes. A great part of the village was swallowed by the sea in the terrible seaquake of 1343, and also on March 26, 1924, a terrible flood caused two large landslides destroying half the village.

The people are now divided into traders, sailors, fishermen and farmers.

A celebrated son of Vettica Minore was Filippo Anastasio di Nunzio, who was archbishop of Sorrento, then patriarch of Antiochia (September 25, 1650 - May 13, 1735).

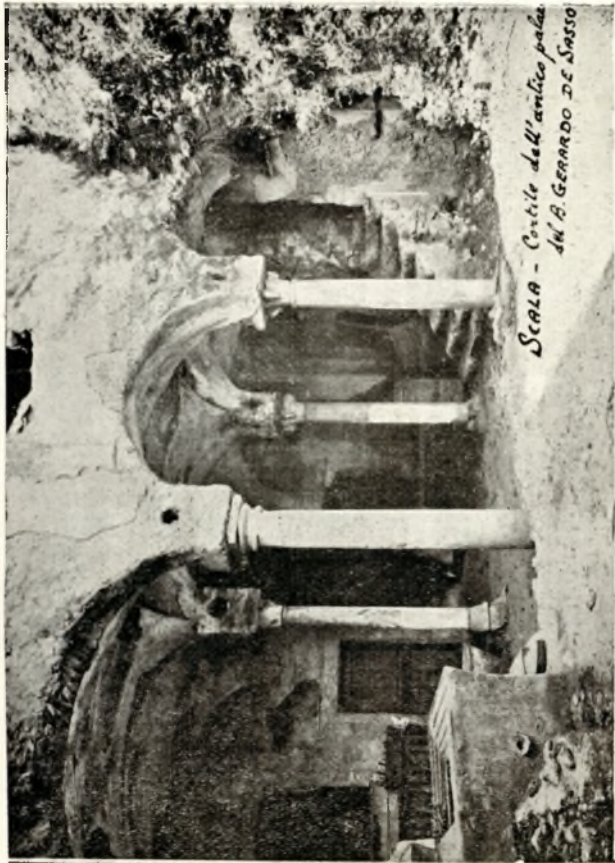
The only church is dedicated to St. Michael

the Archangel, where are to be found the splendid picture of S. S. Rosario by Marco of Siena and that of St. Nicholas poorly restored.

## Tovere

Above Vettica and more towards the west is Tovere (the ancient *Tobulum*) although steep and rocky yet is rewarded by a fine climate, whose wholesome effect is shown by the healthy and strong constitution of the inhabitants and by their longevity.





(By courtesy of Cav. Gaetano Mansi)

SCALA - Courtyard of the old palace of B. Gerardo Sasso



(By courtesy of Cav. Gaetano Mansi)

**SCALA - S. Lorenzo (formely the Cathedral)**



## Her Eastern Neighbours

### Ravello

In olden time was called *Rabellum* and *Ravel-lum*, some think even *Rebellum*.

It is a beautiful, illustrious and ancient town.

It stands on a jutting hill all covered with green between the valleys of Dragone and Minori. Its foundation dates from the VI<sup>th</sup> century. We have no certain historical hint of its first inhabitants, but they seem to have come from the Romans at the time when Italy was invaded by the barbarians and the mountains provided a safe shelter. Certain it is that the Romans suffered privation and trouble in these mountains for love of independence.

Afterwards they increased and felt the need of trading in far lands. Like the Amalfitani, the Ravellesi became rich and illustrious by commerce. At that time commerce was no humble and scorned occupation for even some angevin kings met the expenses of the court and recovered the cost of wars by commerce, when taxes were not sufficient

Ravello was contained in the Republic of Amalfi, was the most illustrious town along the Coast and kept its own "Consuetudini," (\*) In the year 1099 the see of Ravello received independence from the Archbishop of Amalfi owing to the protection of King Roger.

The Ravellesi obtained privileges and exemptions, occupied important charges under King Charles d'Anjou and his descendants. At that time it counted 35,000 inhabitants. Then the nobles of Ravello, united in a society, forming a noble *sedile*, inhabited the suburb of the Toro and kept themselves apart from the people, who on the other hand assembled in another *sedile*. The two were for long at rivalry on account of the tax. Later, on the decline of its commerce, many patricians emigrated, especially to Southern Italy in search of better fortune and their number began to lessen, but their *sedile* and privileges were abolished only in 1800.

Among the patrician families the most illustrious were the Rufolo, Della Marra and Frezza. Most likely the Rufolo family (now extinct) had a Roman origin and descend from Publio Rufo, tribune of the people, who was elected consul in 105 B. C.

The Cathedral was at first dedicated to the

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(\*) The Ravellese « Consuetudini » have not been traced although they are quoted in many documents.

Assumption of Our Lady and then was under the invocation of S. Pantaleone, the tutelar martyr of the Town. The form of the church was and is of a Latin cross with three naves. The central one was flanked by two rows of columns that supported the *sesto acuto* arches. A window opened above each arch and designs of varied form were seen between the spaces of the walls. The columns were sixteen of which two of *verde antico* of priceless value were sold to King Charles III of Borbone, who made a present of them to the parish church of Portici, while four more were walled into the pillars of support. This cathedral did not escape the mania for modernising and, like the cathedral of Amalfi, was defaced and marred: its interior was whitewashed also!

Fortunately it retains the mosaic pulpit which is a masterpiece of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century indeed! It was built at the expense of Nicola Rufolo in devotion to Our Lady. Six very fine columns, with spiral channellings, designed in mosaic, resting on four marble lions in act of advancing, support the pulpit. A large basalt eagle holding between her claws the inscription "*In principio erat verbum,*" stands on the pulpit for a lectern, while a fine bust with a natural and expressive face stands above the architrave. Probably it represents Sigilgaita, Nicola Rufolo's wife, but, as she wears a crown, some consider it represents Queen Giovanna II. Certainly it is so

admirable and worthy a work that it is no wonder that in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century it was coveted by the Viceroy, Don Pedro di Toledo who took it to Naples, but this loss woke a very deep sorrow within the Ravellesi, who implored for it so fervently that Don Pedro was moved and sent it back to Ravello, where on its return the people made great and merry feasts. (\*) Under the vault Nicola Rufolo had a small chapel built with a worthy wooden image, Nostra Donna della Bruna crowned and seated with the Baby in her arms and beside it stood St. John the Baptist and St. Nicholas of Bari. Certainly Nicola Rufolo would have endowed this church with other fine works had not Death overtaken him on May 23<sup>th</sup> 1276 in Apulia. His son endowed this church with another beautiful monument that stood there for six centuries till 1776 when, being much injured by an earthquake, Bishop Tafuri ordered it to be demolished in spite of the justly strong opposition of the people.

Against the pulpit is a magnificent ambo built at the expense of Bishop Rogadeo. Above it the prophet Jonah is represented ejected by a whale (a very ancient symbol of death and resurrection of the Redemptor) and behind the ambo is Bishop Rogadeo's grave.

The high altar, also built at Bishop Rogadeo's

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(\*) See protocol Notary Rattimelli

expense, is adorned with very fine marbles and chased mosaics.

To the left of the high altar is the Chapel of S. Pantaleone. There is a painting of the martyrdom of S. Pantaleone bound to an olive - tree, while the executioner is stooping over his knife, marvelling that the edge has become blunt.

A few panel paintings, perhaps by Andrea di Salerno, are kept in the sacristy: the best are the Coronation of Our Lady, the Angels of the Assumption of Our Lady and St. Sebastian.

This church contains the following relics: the head of S. Barbara, an arm of the apostle Thomas, a shinbone of Giovanni Damasceno, a piece of the precious wood of the Holy Cross and the blood of St. Pantaleone that is thought to have been brought from Constantinople by a Greek priest, who escaped from the carnage of that city in 1453. In 1607 the Viceroy of Naples, Gio. Alfonso Pimentel of Herrera, asked for a part of it from the Chapter, who at first tried to parry the question, but at last had to acquiesce.

The cathedral had a very fine atrium supported by four large *verde antico* columns, while three more stood close to the right wall. Two marble staircases led from the square to the atrium. The atrium, being much injured by an earthquake, was demolished in 1786.

Fortunately the bronze door, built at the expense

of patrician Sergio Muscettola, is still in preservation. It is attributed to the artist De Barisano of Trani. The forty - four panels of the door represent the Redeptor seated with an open book inscribed "*Ego sum via et veritas et vita* „ (I am the way, the truth and the life), Our Lady, the twelve apostles, St. John the Baptist, St. George, St. Eustace, St. Nicholas, St. Elijah etc.

The campanile retains its ancient form with three stories. The arch of each story is surrounded with red tiles and white marble cornices, and inside each arch are two smaller arches divided by a marble pillar and surmounted by a circular opening. Above the second story a frieze of white marble columns gracefully adorns the tower.

The church of S. Giovanni del Toro is near the Cathedral. It was built in 1018 in the time of the Amalfitan Republic at the expense of some noble families. The porch and facade were a marvellous construction with rich traceries, but owing to exposure they were falling and were destroyed in 1715. This church is of simple construction with three naves, the central one is supported by seven columns of Egyptian granite and one of translucent grey. The central altar once totally covered with mosaics is in honour of St. John the Baptist. A fine ambo, standing close to the Northern wall, is supported by four small columns with capitals on which are carved animals and arabesques. The am-

bo was built at the expense of the Bove family, probably about the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The church of S. Antonio, still kept by the Franciscan Minor Conventual Friars, is worthy of being mentioned. According to a pious legend it is thought to have been founded by St. Francis of Assisi, when he came to Amalfi. There the celebrated Cardinal St. Bonaventura taught philosophy and theology for some time and Beato Bonaventura da Potenza spent there a great part of his saintly life. The body of the latter is kept under the high altar for the veneration of the faithful. There is also a sarcophagus with the carving of Caron carrying the dead beyond the Stige and Acheronte. It was taken from the church of the Toro and had to serve for the Sepulchre of Beato Bonaventura, but being unsuitable was relegated to the sacristy.

The Palazzo Rufolo was built in the time of Charles I. The vestibule that gives entrance to it is covered with a vaulted dome very richly ornamented. Within a protruding cornice is adorned with red bricks and grey stones carved with heads of animals and ornaments. Four small columns of *terra cotta* stand there and support some arches of grey stones. In each corner is a *tufa* statue. These represent:

1) A stooping pilgrim clad in his mantle with a staff in one hand. The effigy of a scallop shell is on his purse,

II) A man pouring out the contents of an amphora that he holds on his shoulders,

III) The same figure standing with a gift is in the act of departing,

IV) A woman with a vase on her head and a boy in her arms also in the act of departing.

They are symbols of Charity and Hospitality.

The court is oblong, wide and magnificent. On the outer wall is the head of a crocodile that is probably a symbol of the greatness and wealth of the Rufolo family. At the entrance the court presents an oblong peristyle supported by ten large marble columns with wrought capitals. On the floor above is still seen a part of the magnificent intertwined columns that once numbered 104.

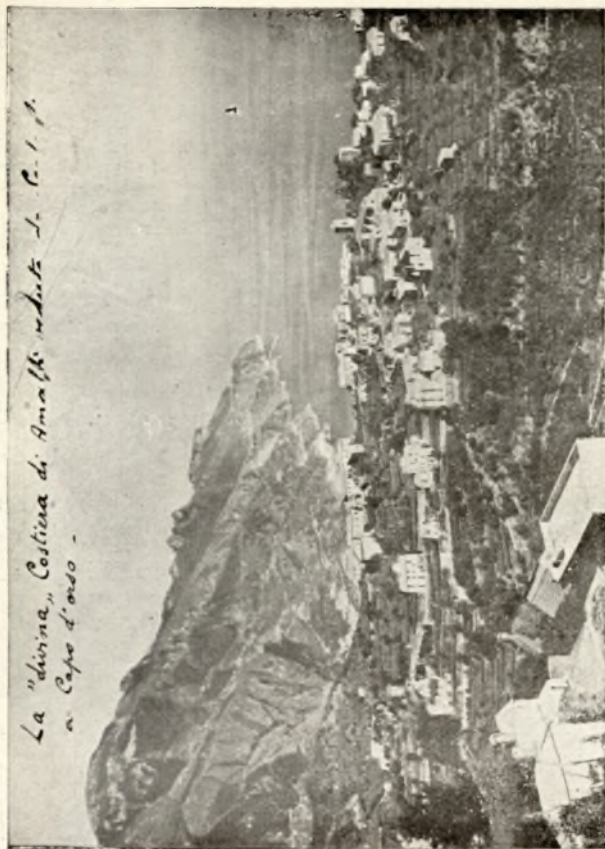
A high tower commands all the palace. It is of three stories with pointed windows, *tufa* arches and columns.

After the extinction of the Rufolo family the palace passed to the Confalone family and later to that of the D'Afflitto of Scala, and recently to the Scotchman Francis Nevile Reid.

The Rufolo palace is now known under the name of Villa Rufolo and the garden is splendid.

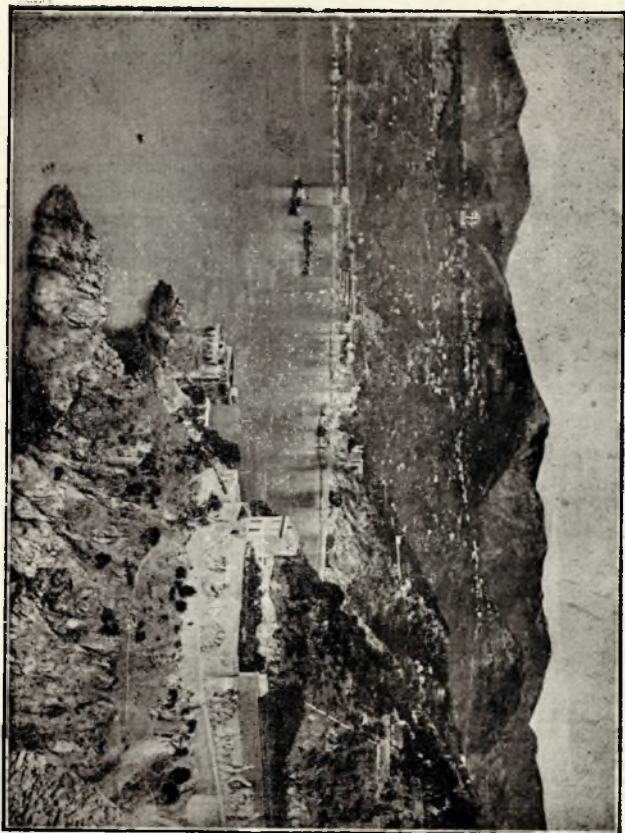
Villa Cimbrone was anciently a very strong fortress having a good military position and now is visited not only because of the few fragments of ancient monuments, but even more for the splendid





(By courtesy of Cav. Gaetano Mansi)

The "divine" Coast seen from Scala



Panorama seen from the Tower of Maitori

terrace on the vertical rock that commands a superb and enchanting view.

The present artists of Ravello are Manfredi Nicoletti and Paolo Caruso.

Manfredi Nicoletti distinguishes himself in a special form of art in representing the customs, the fairs the popular feasts of the villages and countries of the Coast. His pictures, which near by appear confused and blurred, at a distance take life and the reality is clearly seen. So we can appreciate the cleverness of the painter.

Paolo Caruso, although very young, has exhibited three times, the first at Naples and twice at Salerno (1926-1927).

The Hotel Belvedere (Pantaleone Caruso proprietor) and the Pension Palumbo (Vuilleumier Palumbo proprietor) with the splendid view of all the Coast and the little Hotel del Toro offer a comfortable sojourn.

## Scala

Although older than Ravello and thought to have been the mother of Amalfi is now but an humble village. In past ages it rivalled Ravello and, like Ravello, was full of merchants and industries: it must not be omitted by any traveller.

The Cathedral, dedicated to S. Lorenzo, rebuilt several times, has lost its ancient chapels and the noble tombs rich with marbles. In the Cathedral are

preserved a picture of S. Lorenzo on the high altar, another of the martyrdom of the Saint on the ceiling, a third of the Assumption of Our Lady attributed to the Fleming Peter Todos (1591), a magnificent *Ecce Homo* by Andrea di Salerno, the mosaic pulpit, a very ancient mitre covered with precious stones and enamel on gold presented by Charles I in 1279 and a splendid ancient chalice. The fine sepulchre to Marianella Rufolo is in the crypt.

The church of Santa Annunziata is in the next village Minuta. It contains three naves with twelve Eastern columns (pillars walled in); the fine pulpit was demolished and the pictures and frescoes marred and ruined.

Even Scala was an episcopal see possessing many churches of which no others remain. Marble and urns are often found in houses and hamlets, but, unfortunately, are applied to various uses. The palace of the family of Fra Gerardo Sasso, the great founder of the Order of Hospitalers (\*), is now made a farmhouse! There is still seen a vaulted porch supported by marble columns in the place called S. Andrea di Pando at a short distance from the carriage road.

Till last year Scala was an independent Commune, but, like Atrani, has lost its independence and

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(\*) See pag. 28

the whole territory now belongs to the townships of Ravello and Amalfi.

## Minori

Along the enchanting coast road towards the East stands Minori (*Reginna Minor*) which alas retains not one of its ancient churches, all destroyed or transformed. Even the very ancient Cathedral is uninteresting for it has been rebuilt and despoiled of its marbles, paintings, columns, bas reliefs and is now a modern church dedicated to Santa Trofimena. Only the church of S. Lucia retains a picture to the Saint by Andrea di Salerno.

## Maiori

(*Reginna Maior*) a much larger village lies towards the East. It has a convent of Minor Observant Friars, which is supposed to have been founded by St. Bernardino da Siena about 1407: the church retains 17 patrician chapels and graves of 1500, some of which are adorned with marbles and pictures. The Transfiguration by Andrea di Salerno is a worthy picture. The mother church is dedicated to Santa Maria a Mare. It is very ancient and was built from the ruins of the fortress of Santa Maria, but was modernised and therefore contains nothing of its antiquity except a bas relief with

gothic angevin types of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century. The statue of Our Lady brought from Constantinople in 1204 stands there for the veneration of the faithful.

Maiori counts worthy painters among her sons as Raffaele D'Amato and Gaetano Capone, who belong to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their works were well known and distinguished for the luminousness, simplicity and ambition towards a more and more perfect Art.-

The living painters are :

Antonio Ferrigno who depicts the characteristic beauties and vivid reflections of his native sea and sky,

Luca Albino who has been in America where he has acquired renown and experience,

Angelo della Mura also a painter worthy of mention here,

Luigi Paolillo " the painter of the roses of the divine Coast " .

## Tramonti

Towards the North of Maiori is Tramonti, whose hamlets are scattered on a large mountainous territory. It is a very ancient country that Camera thinks was founded by the Picentini. Nothing remains of the ancient churches, and those existing have been transformed and defaced. Only

the parish church of Pucara retains some paintings by Luca Giordano in the side chapels.

## Erchie

Is formed by a group of houses lying in the entrance of a valley opening to the sea beyond the Cipo d'Orso. It had its origin from the Benedictine Convent of Santa Maria de Erchi, founded in 979 ruined in 1400, suppressed in 1451.

Before reaching this village we find the Grotta della Abbazia, where are the ruins of the monastery Santa Maria Olearia founded in 973 containing some very fine frescoes by Leone Amalfitano.

## Cetara

Is the last village on the Eastern coast. The parish church is very ancient, but through restorations and transformations is now but a modern church. The inhabitants are mostly devoted to fishing. The name of this village is derived from the Latin Cetaria (fish-pond).



## Her Western Neighbours

### Conca dei Marini

Once had a flourishing commerce. The nunnery of Santa Rosa stands on a vertical rock and commands a very splendid view, and is a glorious drive from Amalfi. It has not fallen into decay as it is now private property.

### Furore

Further towards the West and in a high position is Furore (*Terra furoris*). The territory is very steep with precipices, but the climate is healthy and the position splendid.

### Praiano

Its ancient name was *Plagiarum*, and was a suburban village of Amalfi, like Furore and the adjoining Vettica Maggiore (*Bettice*).



Praiano has the church of S. Luca with some pictures and a fine chalice. Vettica Maggiore contains the church of S. Gennaro possessing many pictures.

## Positano

The united military strength of the Emperor Constantin IX Porfirogenito, Pope John X, Guaimaro, Prince of Salerno, Gregorio, Duke of Naples, John, Duke of Gaeta defeated the Saracens encamped on the banks of the Garigliano, killing or putting to flight those who survived the battle. Then the Saracens that were at Agropoli terrified by that catastrophe, decided to retire to Africa. However first they took their revenge. On the night of June 23<sup>th</sup> 916 they surprised Paestum and, after having sacked it, put it to the flames. Then most of the surviving Paestans and their neighbours transferred themselves to the furthest border of the Amalfi coast, which is now Positano.

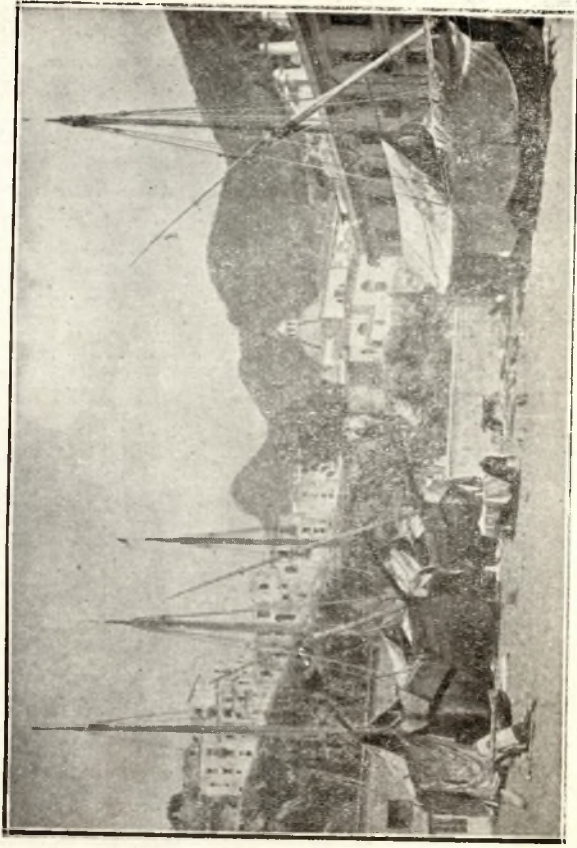
There already existed a Benedictine convent. They were received by those monks and found work in the grounds of the Abbey; at the same time they became subjects to the monks. They afterwards increased in number and lightly bore the yoke, and settled down as seafarers.

The Positanese found independence, power and wealth on the sea.

Contrary to the Amalfitans, the Positanese preferred to navigate the Mediterranean towards the North, to Liguria. They became rivals to the Amalfitans making injurious war upon them until Charles II intervened and succeeded in reconciling the two maritime towns. Amalfi and Positano provided Kingdom of Naples with the greater number of her sailors and men-of-war.

The parish church is dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady, where is venerated a very ancient panel of the Mother of God on wood in the Greek style. It is supposed to have been carried there during the iconoclastic persecution of the Emperor Leone Isaurico. There are also the splendid picture of the Circumcision by the celebrated Fabrizio Santafede with the date 1599, an admirable picture of Our Lady and a marble mosaic representing Neptune under the form of a monster eating a fish, while other fishes escape and a long tailed fox pursues another. This bass relief is fixed next the entrance close to the staircase of the belfry. According to the judgement of Matteo Camera the interpretation of this symbolical representation is Death that, as soon as we are born, pursues, catches and dismisses us into Eternity, and the monster is an allusion of the sea Positano's origin. Some think it is a symbol of the Syrens who entice the sailors to make them their slaves.

Not far from Positano on a high position is



MAIORI - Panorama



MINORI - Panorama

Mirabella's grotto, which is within the rock and one enters it through a hole. It is believed that there the brigand Mirabella hid his gold silver and precious stones and terrible skeletons were the keepers of the immense treasure.

Mr. Cito di Torrecuso relates a legend about this grotto. Three young men penetrated into the grotto and were dazzled by the glare of gold, emeralds, sapphires and pearls, but, as soon as one of them touched the treasure, all vanished and they sank into a gaping hole immediately opened beneath them.

The tower Clavel stands at a little distance from the Positano strand facing the cliffs, which rises from the sea *Mamma e figlia* (Mother and Daughter). It is one of the signal towers (\*) scattered along the Coast that Count Clavel restored and made very comfortable for his stay.

Matteo Camera quotes a correspondence from the newspaper *Il Monitore delle due Sicilie* relating an honourable deed for Positano and its environs. I summarise it here.

On October 10<sup>th</sup> 1811 a large convoy was coming from Calabria. A part of it steered to Salerno, the other sailing - boats were pushed by the wind to the strand of Positano. An English frigate, five launches and three boats with cannon had noticed

---

(\*) See «Positano» by Roberto Cito di Torrecuso pag. 44.

this and came to Positano waters to entrap the sailing boats. Their steady fire silenced the cannons of the little battery on the strand and then the English approached with five armed launches and three boats with cannons, but, although they were protected by the frigate, were driven back by the gun - fire and many were wounded and killed. They were enraged by this unexpected resistance and fired against the houses in order to frighten the people and weaken the resistance. Twice the English sent a truce - bearer to induce the Positanese to leave the sailing - boats and twice the Positanese proudly refused the proposal, and continued to fight bravely until their opponents steered away.

The English landing party consisted of two hundred men and the fight lasted eight hours.

To - day Positano is a beautiful country on the divine Coast. The position is splendid, the air very pure and the climate warm and healthful.

The hotel Margherita and the hotel Roma are the best inns in Positano.

## I Galli

Are three small isles close to the Punta della Campanella known also by the old name of Sirenuse. They would be uninteresting had not mythology spread their fame abroad. Homer tells us in the

Odyssey that Ulysses passed with his boats before them and only by following Circe's advice escaped from being captured by the seductive song of the Syrens. In fact he ordered himself to be bound to the mast of the boat according to Circe's advice.

I quote the well known passage

..... a great number of unburied  
Bones encumbered the shore (\*)

The syrens were beings who could sing so sweetly that the listeners were enchanted. They are represented in painting and sculpture with the body of a bird and the face of a woman, sometimes with the upper part of a woman's body, and the lower that of a fish.

To escape the sea - robbers, who found there a sure shelter and made raids along the Amalfi coast with their small boats, King Robert ordered the isles to be provided with a tower and walls of defence with an officer and a guard of soldiers.

In 1862 the isles were sold by the foolish Bourbon Government to foreigners.

---

(\*) Very probably those bones were but the skeletons of poor sailors fallen into the hands of the sea robbers, who captured their boats and murdered the crews.





## APPENDIX

### LONGFELLOW 'S POEM OF AMALFI

Sweet the memory is to me  
Of a land beyond the sea,  
Where the waves and mountains meet,  
Where, amid her mulberry - trees,  
Sits Amalfi in the heat.  
Bathing ever her white feet  
In the tideless summer seas.

In the middle of the town,  
From its fountains in the hills,  
Tumbling through the narrow gorge,  
The Canneto rushes down,  
Turns the great wheels of the mills,  
Lifts the hammers of the forge.

'T is a stairway, not a street,  
That ascends the steep ravine,  
Where the torrent leapes between  
Rocky walls that almost meet.  
Toiling up from stair to stair,

Peasant girls their burdens bear;  
Sunburnt daughters of the soil,  
Stately figures tall and straight,  
What inexorable fate  
Dooms them to this life of toil?  
Lord of vineyards and of lands  
Far above the convent stands.  
On its terraced walk aloof  
Leans a monk with folded hands;  
Placid, satisfied, serene,  
Looking down upon the scene  
Over wall and red-tiled roof;  
Wondering unto what good end  
All this toil and traffic tend,  
And why all men cannot be  
Free from care and free from pain  
And the sordid love of gain,  
And as indolent as he.

Where are now the freighted barks  
From the marts of east and west?  
Where the knights in iron sarks  
Journeying to the Holy Land,  
Glove of steel upon the hand,  
Cross of crimson on the breast?  
Where the pomp of camp and court?  
Where the pilgrims with their prayers?  
Where the merchants with their wares,  
And their gallant brigantines

Sailing safely into port  
Chased by corsair Algerines?

Vanished like fleet of cloud  
Like a passing trumpet-blast,  
And the commerce and the crowd  
Fathoms deep beneath the seas  
Lie the ancient wharves and quays,  
Swallowed by the engulfing waves,  
Silent streets and vacant halls,  
Ruined roofs and towers and walls;  
Hidden from all mortal eyes  
Deep sunken city lies.  
Even cities have their graves!

This is an enchanted land!  
Round the headlands far away  
Sweeps the blue Salernian bay  
With its sickle of white sand:  
Further stills and furthest  
On the dim discovered coast  
Paestum with its ruins lies,  
And its roses all in bloom  
Seem to tinge the fatal skies  
Of that lovely land of doom.

On his terrace, high in air  
Nothing doth the good monk care  
For such wordly themes as these;  
From the garden just below

Little puffs of perfume blow  
And a sound is in his ears  
Of the murmur of the bees  
In the shining chestnut trees;  
Nothing else he heeds or hears.  
All the landscape seems the swoon  
In the happy afternoon;  
Slowly o' er his senses creep  
The encroaching waves of sleep  
And he sinks as sank the town,  
Unresisting, fathoms down,  
Into caverns cool and deep!

Walled about with drifts of snow,  
Hearing the fierce north-wind blow,  
Seeing all the landscape white,  
And the river cased in ice,  
Comes this memory of delight,  
Comes this vision unto me  
Of a long-lost Paradise,  
In the land beyond the sea.

*Amalfi, 18<sup>th</sup> February 1883.*



FURORE - Panorama



POSITANO - Panorama

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	5
THE DIVINE COAST . . . . .	7
AMALFI . . . . .	11
THE ORIGIN OF AMALFI . . . . .	14
THE MOST IMPORTANT HISTORICAL SUMMARY . . . . .	15
MARITIME AND COMMERCIAL POWER . . . . .	19
AMALFI, MAESTRA DI DIRITTO. HEN COINS . . . . .	25
ILLUSTRIOUS AMALFITANS . . . . .	28
ARTISTS OF AMALFI . . . . .	37
THE CATHEDRAL . . . . .	43
THE CAMPANILE . . . . .	48
THE CHIOSTRO PARADISO . . . . .	49
THE TOWNHALL . . . . .	50
THE CIMITERO . . . . .	51
TOWERS . . . . .	51
CHURCHES . . . . .	53
HOTEL CAPPUCCINI CONVENTO . . . . .	54
HOTEL LUNA CONVENTO . . . . .	57
HOTEL S. CATERINA . . . . .	58
HOTEL MARINA RIVIERA . . . . .	59
HOTEL D'ITALIA . . . . .	59
AMALFI AS SHE IS TO-DAY . . . . .	60
ATRANI . . . . .	64
POGEROLA . . . . .	65

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PASTENA . . . . .	66
LONE . . . . .	67
VETTICA MINORE . . . . .	67
TOVERE . . . . .	68
HER EASTERN NEIGHBOURS	
RAVELLO . . . . .	69
SCALA . . . . .	77
MINORI . . . . .	79
MAIORI . . . . .	79
TRAMONTI . . . . .	80
ERCHIE . . . . .	81
CETARA . . . . .	81
HER WESTERN NEIGHBOURS	
CONCA DEI MARINI . . . . .	82
FURORE . . . . .	82
PRAIANO . . . . .	82
POSITANO . . . . .	83
I GALLI . . . . .	85
APPENDIX . . . . .	89





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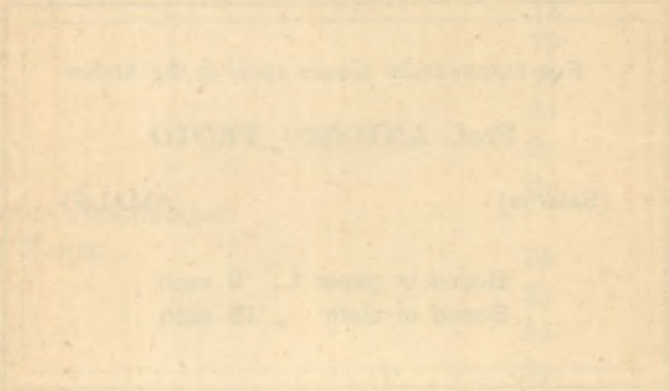
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