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Biography

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**MY PRIVATE DIARY**

*by*

**RUDOLPH VALENTINO**



*Photo by Mabel Sykes.*

Rudolph Valentino who tells the inner story of his trip abroad  
in his "Private Diary".

# MY PRIVATE DIARY

By

*Rudolph Valentino*

*With An Introduction*

By MICHAEL A. ROMANO



1929

OCCULT PUBLISHING COMPANY

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DEDICATED TO  
"THE WORLD'S GREATEST LOVER"

Whose glorious memory is being perpetuated in word, type and film by the Chicago Valentino Memorial Club of America who invites your hearty cooperation—from all parts of the world—that the inspirational flame of this great Genius shall ever live in the hearts of the millions who crowned him "King of Romance".





## AN INTRODUCTION TO THIS BOOK

*By* MICHAEL A. ROMANO

TO THOSE who knew Rudolph Valentino merely as the shadowy "Sheik" of the films, adored by shop-girl and debutante, disparaged by the envious, who saw in him all things they could never be, the public announcement of his contemplated trip abroad was just another publicity stunt.

To the few who knew the *real* Valentino, it meant that he was reaping the reward and receiving the recognition that so rarely comes to a great artist in his lifetime.

What did all this mean to Valentino himself? Not many years before, he had stood on the very dock at which now lay anchored the great ship that was to bring to him the realization of one of his many dreams—an immigrant boy, nameless, penniless, unknown. He had wandered about the streets of an indifferent city seeking a friendly glance, a word of encouragement. He had heard much of America as a land of golden opportunity and success.

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The most splendid tribute that can be paid to Valentino is a tribute also to the greatness of America. Just as in her early struggles she emerged invincible and great, so Valentino, by his indomitable will and courage surmounted all obstacles and attained that pinnacle upon which only the truly strong can poise—the “Eagle” himself.

The fickle public, who adored him because he brought to their prosaic lives the spirit of romance (and yet completely ignored his true genius) failed to understand that Valentino was one of Nature’s phenomena. Like a meteor that brilliantly illumines a darkened world and then vanishes into space, he flashed across the horizon, and before his fire was fully spent, dropped into Eternity!

We met at a time when the fruits of his success were turning bitter. Involved in litigation, his means of livelihood threatened, yet he was never happier in his life. Soon he would be free to marry the woman he loved—Natacha Rambova—and all his thoughts were not for his, but for their future. He entrusted to me all the details of arranging his marriage as if it were my own. Strangely enough it was just at this time that I was preparing for my own marriage. He was as excited as a schoolboy. Nothing would

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do but that we make it a double wedding. However, this could not be accomplished, and he accepted my compromise that I attend him as best man at his wedding. With the simplest of rites before a Justice of the Peace, with the exchange of plain silver bands, the "World's Greatest Lover" pledged a love that remained with him even to the last breath of his life, and according to his own belief, must still continue with him.

It has been said that "Nature raises us into life, and life drops us into our proper grooves". Art raised Valentino into life, but an insistent public forced on him the role of the eternal Don Juan. In what contempt he held those roles in which the public loved him most! Had he only lived long enough to realize the cherished ideals of his art!

In discussing his work he was entirely without egotism, and his conversations were remarkably devoid of the personal pronoun "I". He could discuss his portrayals with complete submergence of self—impersonally, detached, and always critically. At times his humor became introspective, and—more rarely—his tone confidential. It was then that he would pour out the aspirations he had for his complete development as a great dramatic artist.

We had just returned from the triumphal

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showing of his picture "The Son of the Sheik". It had been received with much acclaim, and his ovation when he stepped on the stage attested unmistakably to the fact that adversity can chasten but can never destroy true greatness. Valentino had "come back"—greater than ever!

Rudy, George Ullman, and myself were having dinner together, and over our coffee and cigarettes I drew a quick response when I remarked that I could never accept the "Son of the Sheik" as the genuine artistic achievement of his "Monsieur Beaucaire", his "Julio" in the "Four Horsemen", his "Gallardo" in "Blood and Sand".

"Rudy", I said, "your 'Beaucaire' was splendid. Why not do 'Francois Villon', 'Cyrano de Bergerac'? I know the public wants happy endings, but you ought to do tragedy—'Romeo', 'Hamlet', even Goethe's 'Mephistopheles'".

"I'll soon have the chance to do all that", he answered, "and all the other things I've always wanted to do. I'm under contract now to make three pictures for Joseph Schenk, and that will settle all my money worries. Then I'm free to do some of the great historical characters. I want to do 'Cesare Borgia'. I want to do some of the characters of our own great Italian play-

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wrights — Benelli, Pirandello, D'Annunzio. When I was a boy in Italy I watched from a gallery seat such great dramatic artists as Novelli and Grassi. It's been the dream of my life to re-enact their character studies and see what I can do with them. If I have any artistic ability at all, that's my medium of expression, and the public must accept me for that".

The advent of the "talkies" brings to me more forcibly than ever the realization of the theatre's great loss in the death of Valentino. It was not generally known that Valentino's art found other means of expression besides the movies. He dabbled in paint and poetry, and was possessed of a beautifully resonant baritone voice which had been trained by years of musical study. Among my mementoes of Rudy is a victrola record he made shortly before his death. He sang the "Kashmiri Love Song". I treasure it not only for its sentimental value, but for the excellence of the performance itself. What beauty, Valentino's portrayal through action and voice, Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac"!

He loved life, whether in poverty and obscurity, or in wealth and fame, he had that sustaining faculty of extracting from each day its fullest measure of happiness.

And so, the immigrant boy of ten years ago

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embarks the famous and jubilant idol of America, the plaudits of thousands ringing in his ears, his heart ecstatic with love, on his first real holiday. He would wrestle from life happiness complete, as if ominously there reverberated through his very soul Shakespeare's admonition—

“ . . . and this thou perceivest to make thy  
love more strong,

To love that well which thou must leave 'ere  
long.”

**MY PRIVATE DIARY**  
**—RUDOLPH VALENTINO**





## MY PRIVATE DIARY

*By Rudolph Valentino*

*June*

MY DREAM is coming true!

That is, one of my dreams . . . I have so many. . .

And so this will be, in a measure, the rambling record of a dream. A dream come true. From day to day, from night to night, here and there, I am going to write down my impressions. I am going to put down on paper the things I think, the things I do, the people I meet, all the sensations, pleasurable and profitable, that are mine from the moment I pack my first trunk to leave America's friendly shore, until the moment I unpack it again, when I shall have returned once more.

It is a great thing, I think privately to myself, to have a dream come true. For dreams are scarce these days, and realizations even scarcer. They say that only poets and fools dare dream . . . that is why I attempt to write poetry. . .!

I am going aboard.

I am going "back home". Home to the old

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country. Home to my people. And this means more to me than it would to a great many people. It isn't merely a casual return to the old town to say, "How are you?" "How have you all been?" No, it is much more than this to me. . .

Ten years ago I came to America poor, friendless, unknown and penniless. I didn't know what I was going to do. I didn't know what was to become of me. No one met me when I landed at the pier. No one even knew that I was coming, and if they had known, it wouldn't have made the least difference in the world to a living soul. They would only have thought, if they had thought at all, "Oh, another poor Italian boy coming to America!" Nothing could be more uninteresting. Another young Italian, coming to the shores of Liberty to make his fortune . . . if he could. But I wanted more than mere fortune. My ambitions vaulted high above the earth and fastened themselves to the immemorial stars. I wanted Fame. I wanted LOVE. I wanted my name to ring around the world. And I wanted that name to awaken love in the world as it went its ringing round.

I shall never go home, I said to myself, until I can go home SOMEBODY.

The mere thought, the poor, thin, fruitless hope of such a thing thrilled me to the very core.

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To have left, as I left, poor and unknown, a Nobody. To go back . . . supposing and supposing I *should* go back . . . rich, famous, successful . . . What a desire! What a dream!

I write all this down now to make myself realize that, after all, dreams do come true, can come true. Sometimes, very secretly, I pinch myself a little, in the good old-fashioned way, to be sure that it isn't *all* a dream. Sometimes I am afraid I will awake again, a lonely, friendless boy, shivering on the borderland of a strange and alien land.

A thing you have planned for as long a while as I had planned this trip I am to take does acquire the color of dreams after awhile. It is hard to believe that it is coming true.

The very day I landed in America, I had the vision of some day going back as now *I am* going back.

When Natacha and I were married in Mexico, before all our troubles and complications began, we planned to go then, right after we got back to the East. We even had a passport issued and then the various difficulties that surrounded us prevented that.

But now I am really going. *We* are really going.

We are like two children, Natacha and I . . .

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We sit about and look at one another, and one of us says: "When we get to London, we will do this!" and then the other cuts in with: "When we get to Paris, we will do this!" And then I say, breathlessly, "And when we get to Italy . . . ah, when we get to Italy, I will show you this and that . . . and that . . . I will show you the sunny street where I played hop-sotch as a little boy . . . I will show you the very room I was born in . . . you will see where my father is buried and where my dear mother lies beside him . . . you will meet my brother and my sister . . . and the girls and boys I grew up with. . . Under the full Italian moon I will regain my childhood . . . my boyish dreams . . . all the dear and distant Past that has led me to this bright and happy Present."

And then Natacha recalls me to the facts of packing and arranging for our passports and shopping and saying good-byes and all the attendant fuss and flurry of a long voyage.

Tomorrow I shall go to see about the passports. . .

*July*

Tomorrow we sail.

Everything is arranged. We were only ten minutes in the passport office. The man who took my photograph said, "This is a great pleasure, Mr. Valentino. I hope I prove to be a

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satisfactory cameraman." I have looked better in pictures than I looked in that one, but it was satisfactory enough for me.

I haven't done any shopping. I decided to get most of my clothes in London, which has also been a long-deferred dream of mine. And besides, I don't mind admitting it in a private diary, the clothes are cheaper there! Even a movie star must grapple with that fact! Natacha, of course, has Paris in mind when she thinks of clothes!

I am so excited about it all I can't settle down to anything. I don't know that I have any definite sensations now that it is all so near, now that we are to sail in the *Aquitania* in the morning. I am almost dazed. And I am deadly tired. I begin to realize that I have been through a very great deal in the past months, in the past years . . . and now I am tired. I want to rest. Out there on the boundless, unfathomable waters, under the free and riding moon, I may be, not Valentino, the actor, but a tired dreamer, going home. . . That is a sweet thought to me. . .

Natacha says to me, "Aren't you thrilled, Rudy?" and I say, almost stupidly, "I don't know . . . I don't think I feel anything . . . I don't know. . ." And Natacha laughs at me, but tenderly . . . she understands. Women are creatures of understanding. . .

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I pack and unpack my last valise. The only new things I have bought are new cameras, so that I may make a picture record of our trip. Natacha tells me that I really should use a small Brownie No. 1, instead of the expensive Graflexes and other intricate cameras I have treated myself to. She says that I always take or three picture on the same film. I am a Futurist when it comes to camera work, she tells me. But I am happy doing it. I think I take very excellent photographs. But I shouldn't care to be my own cameraman.

I haven't been able to eat for three days. I can smell the salt in my lungs. I can see, when I close my eyes, the shores of Italy. I can breathe in the London fog . . . and it is like strong wine to me.

I have always longed to see London. Perhaps more than any other place in Europe. London is history to me. So many people invited us to dine with them the last night, but I begged to be excused. I told Natacha that I would insult any hostess, because I wouldn't be able to swallow so much as the first course.

Tomorrow we sail!

*The Next Day*

Well, we are on our way!

The ship moves with the slow and stately

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motion of some magnificent animal plowing a majestic course through the Eternities!

I feel almost impatient with it, as though I should get out, get behind it, begin to push it faster . . . faster . . . Excitement still runs in my veins like a fever. . .

We sailed this morning at ten o'clock.

I did not sleep for more than an hour or two the night before. I would drop off to sleep, then wake up with a start thinking, "Tomorrow we sail! Tomorrow I am going home!" and then I would drop off again for a few moments only to wake up again with the same stirring thought. Natacha sleep as little as I did. We lay awake and whispered excited, fragmentary things for most of the night.

At the dock I found a great crowd of people, waiting to see us off. We walked through the crowd with difficulty, but it was a difficulty I loved, because it was the most real and beautiful part of the dream I have put on. Ten years ago on that same dock, I wended a solitary, lonely, slightly frightened and quite friendless way. No one cared. This time with my wife by my side and my wife's aunt, Mrs. Werner, on my other side, I passed between a throng of friends, some whom I had never seen before, but all of whom had seen me, and were there because they loved me and wanted to wish me well.



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Perhaps the most enthusiastic of the crowd was Patrolman McIntyre, traffic cop at the dock. The patrolman is always on duty at Pier No. 54, and he came forward at once when he saw us leave our car. Then last night I recognized on shore as the great ship stirred and moved out was the patrolman waving a great handkerchief with the most lusty enthusiasm.

Fans were there to, as I have said. Nice girls and boys, men and women, waving and shouting farewells, some of them with tears in their eyes . . . I confess here that I, too, had tears in mine. . .

Of course I wasn't really sad as we left . . . I knew that it was only a trip . . . only for a little while . . . that soon I was coming back . . . but about every leave-taking, no matter how brief, there is an atmosphere of gentle melancholy . . . there is a trace of tears in the very words, "Good-bye! Farewell!" no matter how brightly and optimistically they may be said. And as I looked back at the beautiful skyline of New York, with its towering towers of triumph . . . as I looked back at the Statue of Liberty dissolving into mist . . . the skyline of New York, where I had reached my goal of dreams . . . as I thought of the many friends, some seen, many unseen, a raising tide of gratitude and affection dimmed my eyes with tears of happiness . . . I thought of

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the day when I should come back again as a voyager of dreams of coming home. . .

I realized then that I was a citizen of the world. That a man's country is where his friends are. And my friends, I feel are everywhere. In Italy. In England. In France. And most of them in America.

I LOVE all countries, and all peoples as I want all countries and all peoples to love me. But it is in America that my Golden Opportunity came to me. It is America who gave me the world.

As soon as we could see New York no longer, as long as the white trails of huge and frothy lace left in the giant lake of the great steamer had widened and spread like a hiding veil behind us, Natacha and Auntie and I went into our suite of rooms. We have a beautiful suite and we found them filled with flowers. Flowers everywhere, with cards and little messages. Baskets of fruits. Gifts. Cards. Cards from those we knew and cards from those we did not know. I wish that I could thank them all personally, touching their hands. But I thank them in my heart.

It took us most of the day to read the messages, cards, letters and telegrams we found in our stateroom, and then we realized how tired

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we really were.

We decided that we would spend most of the time going over in our own rooms. Now and then we would take a walk on deck, but meals we would eat alone. We needed the rest. After all, apart from going home, that is what I was taking the trip for. . .

I have just come in from a walk around the deck, before going to bed. The moon rode very high in the heavens and Natacha and I walked briskly, around and around, pausing for a few moments to hang over the rail and watch the rushing of the waters far below.

Tomorrow we shall be nearer . . . nearer London . . . nearer home. . .

### *The Next Day*

I woke early this morning . . . our first day out. I could see the waves, curling with a sort of gentleness around my porthole and bending down to meet them, gently curving, too, the dawning sky . . . I had an impression of the white and tinted arms of beautiful women circling the world. Lying very quietly, so as not to awake Natacha, I mentally wrote a poem to the impressions that were being borne in upon me by the trackless world we were traveling through. . . All of my recent difficulties and entanglements, personal and professional, seemed very far away in that morning hour. They didn't seem to mat-

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ter just then. I knew, vaguely, that they would come back again, that the pressing questions of what I was to do and when I was to do it would bear in upon me, claiming attention, soon again, but for the moment I was held in the delicious arms of poetry and peace.

We breakfasted in the stateroom, Auntie, Natacha and I. Natacha said that I would doubtless be criticised if I kept to my plan of remaining in the stateroom throughout the journey, but I told her that I would have to take that chance. I am tired and I have come this journey to rest.

Sometimes I think that the only thing the Public does not understand about an artist of any sort is his, or her need of rest. The People seem to think we are indefatigable; that we need never be alone, never draw into ourselves to store up new energy, to give them if we can, new delights.

After breakfast this morning, Natacha and I took a brief walk around the deck and while doing so, met George Arliss and Mrs. Arliss. I was delighted. I have long been an admirer of Mr. Arliss and now that I have had the pleasant talk with him I had this morning, my admiration is even warmer.

He and Mrs. Arliss are doing just like Natacha and I are doing—keeping to themselves.

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He told us that he is very tired after his long season and that he opens again in London in a few months' time and must have the rest. He agreed with Natacha that we would doubtless be unkindly talked about, probably as being "up-stage" but that he expected that. . .

We lunched together quietly in our stateroom and took a long nap afterward. I made out a list of the things I especially wanted to see in London and Natacha did the same for Paris . . . Auntie said that we were like two children going to the zoo or something like that. . .

Mr. and Mrs. Arliss dined with us in our stateroom that evening. We talked pictures and the future of pictures, and compared experiences. After dinner we strolled again on deck and Natacha teased me about two young girls who were walking with their father, I imagine, and who contrived in the most ingenious ways to meet us at every turn of the deck, "Any minute, Rudy," she said, "they are going to stop you and ask for a picture." But they didn't.

The moon was gorgeous, riding high in the heavens. The water seemed as black as night. I told Natacha that when I had been coming over that first time, ten years ago, the immensity of the whole thing made me feel shrivelled up and small and frightened, but that now, with her beside me, with the fruitful experiences of

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the past ten years as a sort of background of courage, I felt larger than Time and Space. We decided that one must feel larger than Time and Space in order to get along. There are so many things to beat in the world . . . so many fields of battle to triumph over . . . We stood toward the back of the ship. . . Now and then we made some fragmentary slight remark, for the rest, we were silent . . . it is one of the most perfect charms of life to me to talk to a woman like that . . . I mean . . . without effort, detachedly . . . here and there . . . in the moonlight and stillness . . . voicing the random thoughts as they come to me . . . wrapped and drowned in beauty. . .

### *Last Day Out*

Hours piled upon hours of sheer beauty and rest. . . Now and then some little thing of irritation to prove to me that I am not apart of the world of material troubles . . . just as we prophesied, or as Natacha prophesied, to give her the credit, I was severely criticized for keeping to myself. . . Some sort of benefit was got up on shipboard and I was asked to dance. Mr. Arliss was also asked to do something. We both refused. I gave what money I could spare to the cause, but told them that for me to dance was out of the question. Some woman on board who was very active in the affair, made the re-

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mark that she thought it outrageous of me. . . I owed the Public so much, she said, that the least I could do was to comply with a request of that nature. . . She said the same about Mr. Arliss . . . who also refused, but with a like donation of money. Why can't some people understand how tired we get? How much we need, now and then to be alone, to think, to store up energy? It isn't that I, personally, am not willing to do all that I can to please the people who have been so nice to me, but it is that there comes a time when it isn't a question of volition. . . I cannot do any more.

I felt very much today as I did the last day in New York. Part of the trip was drawing to a close. Soon . . . soon . . . now I should see England, London . . . the storied site of history. I should see the seats of royalty . . . the Tower of London . . . Buckingham . . . Hampton Court . . . Ascot . . . Leicester Square . . . and Picadilly . . . the Strand . . . I had veritable shivers of anticipation. . .

"I am glad" I told Natacha "that I instructed my secretary, who went ahead of me, not to announce the time of my arrival. I feel like I did when I first made a public appearance . . . it is a sort of stage-fright. . ." I was really a little bit afraid of the English people . . . how they would receive me . . . I wouldn't admit this pub-

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licly, but in the pages of my diary, I dare to say that I am still a victim of that ancient theatrical malady . . . stage-fright.

Natacha and I took our evening walk around the deck that night to the tune of "Tomorrow . . . tomorrow!" Tomorrow we should see the cliffs of Albion, the outline of the English coast . . . tomorrow we should set foot on English soil, and the beginning of my dream-come-true would be mine.

Natacha has said that I am like a child, and I suppose I am. Isn't every artist? For if we did not quiver and react to all of the new and strange sallies of life, of people, of the things that happen to us, how could we, in turn, convey them to the Public. I think that an artist should be the most plastic thing under the sun, responsive to every touch, a sort of a victim, as it were, to every impression.

Tomorrow . . . tomorrow . . . it is like a chant in my blood. . .

*London, First Night*

Natacha is asking me why I do not come to bed. It is three in the morning and I am really exhausted, but too stirred and exulting to sleep. I want to put it all down in my diary before sleep dulls the first knife-like impression . . . it was tremendous. . .



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Auntie left us at Cherbourg with a long list of advice and admonition and a few tears of farewell . . . how sad they inevitably are . . . farewells.

We reached Southampton at seven in the evening and were met by some twenty or thirty of what I term my "unseen friends . . . friends." (Fans.)

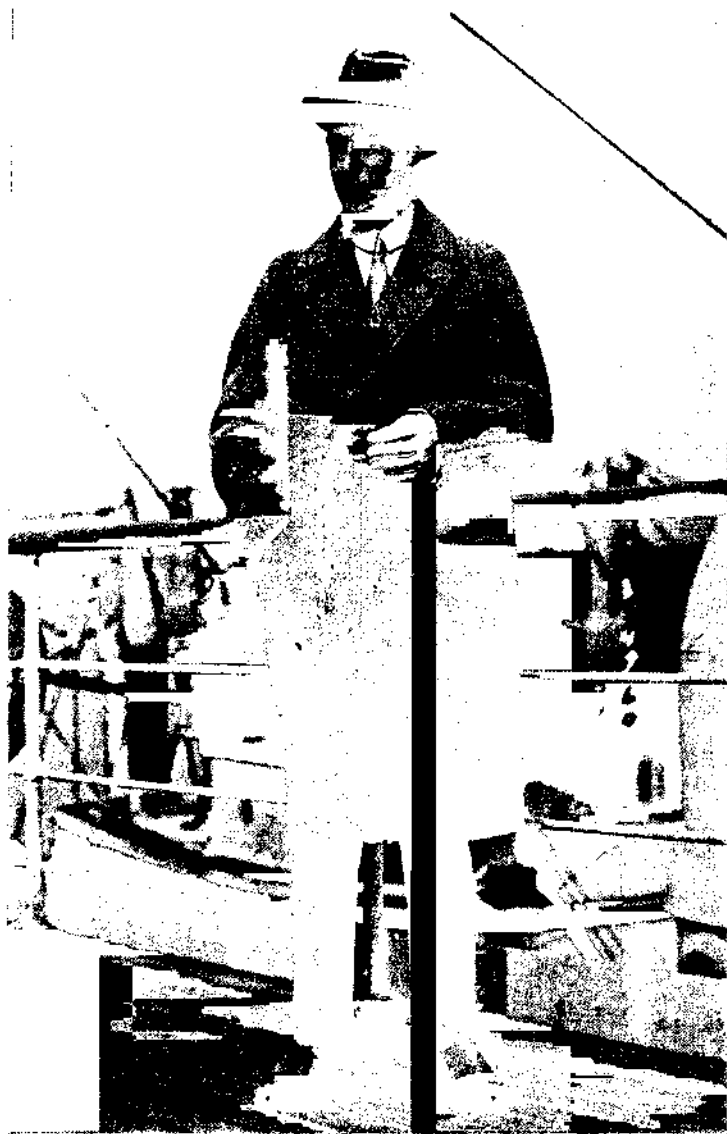
It had been rumored about before I left that I was the possessor of some unbelievable number of suits and other garments, and I had to exhaust all of my vitality and more than all of my vocabulary in convincing the gentlemen in authority that I had only a requisite and rather modest wardrobe and that I planned to get most of my suits and coats in London . . . which was also an inadvisable remark, as I was later to discover. . .

We reached London at midnight in a pouring rain.

I had expected to arrive very quietly, with no one but my secretary to meet me. It had been announced that we were arriving sometime that day, but not precisely *when*, and it never occurred to me that anyone would hang around waiting. . . To my positive astonishment we found that we were assailed by at least a thousand boys and girls, who had stood all night in the dismal pouring rain, waiting for our arrival.



Rudy and Natacha Rambova, his beautiful and talented wife, on the deck of the *Archipelago*, enroute to Burma on their defunct honeymoon



Valentino in sight of the shores of England.

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It was the most spontaneous and thrilling greeting I believe that I ever had . . . perhaps because it was so unexpected. And at first they were all very courteous and gentle, until I had nearly walked my way out of the throng and then those who had not succeeded in acquiring the desired autograph, began to grow excited and fearful and a sort of hum rose up around us, like a hive in excited action. . . I did all of them that I could. It was so sweet of them to wait for me like that. I knew that they would have, severally and individually, a difficult time getting to their various homes, as all the bus-systems stop work at midnight in London. They had waited a long and dreary time to see me, and the least that I could do for them was to put my name on their pathetic little slips of paper. It was a slight repayal of what they had so patiently done.

We finally managed to locate our car and drove to the Carlton Hotel. The Carlton is under the same management as the Ritz, both in London, here and in New York. . .

My secretary told us that we had *the* suite, "the" very much emphasized, at the hotel and that the notable set of rooms and the imposing bed had been slept in by a long line of imposing personages before us. Natacha said that we were paying for history, and I said that one

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could pay for nothing more substantial. . .

I shall have probably only two or three hours sleep at the most if I keep on writing any longer. Natacha has fallen asleep and I have the sensation of being alone in London . . . rain falling . . . a London peopled by the ghosts of all the famous personages of Dickens and history . . . and friends . . . friends of mine . . . waving little white flags of a beautiful truce to welcome me in. . .

In the morning the London Press will be awaiting me, I am told . . . and in the afternoon I shall go forth to make what I can of London . . . mine. . .

What will it give to *me*?

### *London, First Day*

I have lived my first day in London. And it has in no wise disappointed me. I am always conscious of a certain thrill when a dream lives up to the expectation. Not so very many do.

One dreams of a thing, a place, an event, for a long, long while, and then, just before the dream is to come true, one feels a certain fear. Or *I* do, at any rate. Perhaps, after all, the dream won't be all we had thought it, hoped it. Perhaps we are in for a disappointment, a disillusionment. That is how I felt about London. That city of my dreams . . . peopled with figures steeped in history and the lore of Dickens and

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Shakespeare . . . if it should disappoint me. . .

But it didn't. The London I saw was the London of my dreams. The London of history, and of the great men who have immortalized it in words.

I arose at nine in the morning in order to be ready for the Press, for interviews.

This first day I have seen forty-five interviewers and every one of the forty-five shot at me an opening question, "What do you think of London?"

That is, after all, such a large question . . . especially for me who at ten this morning, had not yet *seen* London. And to each of them I answered that I didn't know, since I hadn't yet seen the city.

The interviewers go about their work much as the interviewers do in America. Most of them asked me questions about women, my opinions as to the modern women, my ideas on beauty, my preferences in type, my comparative ideas as to the beauty of Italian women versus American women, and so forth.

I said that to me comparisons regarding women were odious. How can you make comparisons? After all, beauty is to be found everywhere, and if one is more beautiful than another, it has little to do with a country and all to do with the individual.

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I didn't say what I may say here, in my own diary, and that is that on the whole the American girl leads the way in beauty, all things duly considered. I may, perhaps, be prejudiced because I married an American girl. But I honestly do not think so. Or it may be because America is the great melting pot, of beauty as well as of races. It may be that the beauty of all countries and all races has filtered into America and made of the American woman a gorgeous composite of all other beauties. But certainly I have observed that the American girls all have something of beauty. They may not all be classic types, but almost every one of them has a chic, a smartness, a knack of wearing clothes, some outstanding mark of loveliness that commends her to the eye. I should say that in other countries one out of every fifty women will be beautiful, but in America only one out of every fifty will be plain. That is, privately, about the way that I would figure it.

The English women, I noted today from the brief observations I was able to make, have extraordinarily lovely complexions and a certain look of robust, glowing health that is very charming.

Well, but to get back to my interviewers . . . this first day, as I say, I have seen forty-five. And when the forty-fifth had departed and I

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found that I was scheduled for a similar number on the morrow, I determined that, if I really wanted to see London, I would have to somehow apportion my days.

I therefore told my secretary that I would devote the hours between ten and twelve to interviewers, but from noon on my time was to be my own, for sightseeing and the other things I wanted to do in London.

One of my most amusing experiences had to do with clothes. I think I have said that I once observed how much I liked English tailoring. That remark must have found its way into every tailoring establishment, every haberdashery in the vast city of London, for if I saw forty-five interviewers the first day, it is nothing whatever to the number of tailors and haberdashers and "Gentlemen's Fitters" in general, all urging upon me the special value of their particular brand of London clothes.

It was really very funny. Natacha said that *that* one passing remark of mine concerning English clothes was much like a tiny pebble cast into the waters. My little "pebble" had stirred up a veritable sea of cloth in the tailoring waters of London. The waves that ensued bade fair to engulf me completely. I sent word to them that I was going to buy English clothes, even as



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I said, but that I couldn't buy all of them, as a mere matter of lack of sufficient time AND money, and with that, they had to be content.

We spent this first morning, then, between interviewers and tailors, and late in the afternoon we set forth to see the sights.

I felt like a child being taken into a shop full of fascinating aisles, each aisle laden with still more fascinating toys. Where to go first? What, of all the many things to see, to see first?

I told Natacha that I wanted to walk on my first incursion into London streets. I felt, somehow, that it would make London more mine, more a matter of my own, intimate discovery, if I walked rather than get into a car and be taken somewhere mechanically.

The London streets would be, each one, an adventure to me. I would make my own thrills as I walked down them. And I would be able to feel a part of the city as I would in no other way. Natacha and I walked almost in silence.

I finally decided that we wouldn't do any deliberate "sightseeing" this first afternoon. I don't know, as I muse over it, that I entirely believe in sightseeing, anyway. It seems to me that just to wander about a certain part of a country, soaking in the atmosphere, absorbing the color, the memories, half consciously, half

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subconsciously getting the *feel* of the place under your skin, into your blood and veins is a far better way of knowing a city or a country, than going about studiously striving to assimilate fact, dates, names.

I felt, today, as we walked here and there, at random, at will, that London was *my* London, in a sense. That I was speaking to her in my own way and she was speaking to me. We understood one another, London and I.

We dined together quietly at the Carlton, Natacha and I. I wanted to be alone this first evening.

Just as I was writing the above paragraph, Mr. Benjamin Guinness of the Guinness Stout people, phoned us and invited us to dine with him at Ascot tomorrow night. We accepted with a triple pleasure. We went to see Mr. Guinness. We will, in the course of the drive down, see some of the English country side which I have always longed to see, and we will arrive at Ascot.

As tired as I am, I almost feel as though I shall not sleep tonight. It seems to me as though the voices of London are constantly whispering to me, beckoning to me, urging me to be up and about. Natacha says no child would act as excitedly as I do about visiting a strange place. Perhaps that is so, but I think if we lose the

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questing child spirit, the child belief that just around each corner something new, enthralling and delightful is awaiting us, we lose more than half of the joy of living. I should never want to be so indifferent. I should never want to lose the thrill of new contacts, new places. If I had found myself inert to London, I should have been bitterly disappointed in myself. I hoped that there would be in me some strong echo of the powerful poetry of London, and there is. I can feel the mighty vibrations now. And if it were not for the fact that Italy is my true goal, this time, my birth place, the home of my fathers, if Natacha did not yearn for Paris for the reasons every woman knows (or can imagine) I think I should like to linger on in London the summer through. . .

### *Second Day in London*

Just a brief line or so before we go to bed. Natacha tells me that I shall be more exhausted recording what I do and see than I will be in doing it and in seeing the people and places themselves. But I want to make this record, exhaustion or otherwise. Things slip away from me. . . A rapid succession of thrills and events erase one, the other. . . I don't want to forget a single sensation or set of sensations that came to me on this trip. I may make, doubtless shall make, many other trips before I go for good, on

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the last and longest trip of all, but never again will I feel as I feel on this first one. It is like the peace after storm. It is fun after stern fact. It is rest after worry.

It is a precious interlude and it must be laden with the honey of remembrance. It is to put this same remembrance in *pot pourri* that I am writing this dairy. So that, years later, when I have grown a long beard and hobble about on a gnarled cane, I shall be able to lift the lid and ghosts will come out and live for me again. . . London as I *felt* it first . . . the friends who helped to make my London memories . . . the smell of the London streets at night . . . the fragrance of the English country lanes . . . the suite of rooms we sleep in now . . . peopled in the Past by so many far greater than we. . .

One of the things that started my day for me was my secretary telling me the names of some of the great personages who had occupied this particular suite before us. Pershing and Foch . . . the King and Queen of Belgium . . . Clemenceau and Briand . . . Count Forza . . . Admiral Sims . . . Paderewski . . . and the Maharajah of Bikaner . . . the Count and Countess Ishii . . . many others.

More than ever did London seem rich and heavy with portents to me . . . I glance about the room with a feeling of slight awe. . . When

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Natacha said that our stupendous hotel bill was "paying for the history," she spoke rather better than she knew.

In keeping with my self-imposed schedule, I was ready at ten this morning for the interviewers, and this time I was able to tell them a little bit more about what London meant to me . . . Perhaps they thought I had not a very scholarly knowledge of the place thus far, because I told them somewhat of what I have put down here in my Diary . . . about absorbing the essence of the city . . . getting the personality of London in my blood rather than, orderly, in my brain. . . I think they understand me . . . they were very courteous. . . .

As a matter of fact and as another matter, I want to record though I shall never forget it. . . I am deeply impressed by the courtesy of all the Londoners. Particularly in the shops. The shopkeepers are utterly courteous. There is none of the insistence that one finds in so many other places. You feel, rather, that you are a guest privileged to the entire hospitality of the particular shop you are in and quite without obligation to do any other thing than look about and ask as many questions as you please. You never feel conscious of the look of scorn occasionally met in American shops when you venture in to buy, and then decide not to buy after all.

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I was touched, too, because most of the shopkeepers asked me for my autograph. Whether I purchased in their particular shop or not, they all wanted me to write on the well-known slip of paper. Of course, I was very pleased to.

And speaking of autographs. . . In my mail this morning, along with the still incoming notes from tailors and their ilk, there arrived a perfect tray full of autographed albums. Here in London, it seems, the fans do not go in for autographed photographs as they do in America. They tend to the autographed album. I spent an hour or so writing my name in the various little leather books.

After the albums, the Press. This morning there were thirty. And after the Press, and a light luncheon, Natacha and I set forth to see the Tower of London.

This afternoon, very late, we had callers and also a phone call from Mr. Arliss asking us to dine with Mrs. Arliss and himself on the morrow and then go to see Sir Gerald du Maurier in "The Dancers." I had heard a great deal of Sir Gerald and we both told Mr. Arliss that the evening was entirely delightful and of course we would go.

Shortly after that Mr. Guinness called for us and we motored down to Ascot.

It was still daylight, and on either side of us

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the English countryside rolled away from us, precisely as I had pictured it in my mind's eye so many, many times. Natacha and I travel very much the same in one respect. . . We are silent when we are impressed. I have always the feeling that I must open my soul and mind to the impressions that crowd in upon me. We have, on the other hand, one point of difference, a point, I imagine, upon which most men and women are divided. And that is, Natacha does not care for motoring in an open car. It is her idea of misery to be grimed with dust, blown upon by truant winds and otherwise disarranged and made uncomfortable. All women feel the same, so far as I can tell. With a man it doesn't matter. Dirt and dust and discomfort are all matters of the day's drive with him. It is only one of the many times when a man has the advantage of a woman. And I am feminist enough, at least, to believe that women should have all rights, being endowed by Nature with so few, should I say, privileges?

We had a charming dinner party at Ascot. I found all of the people were tremendously interested in pictures from the serious and production angle of the making of them, and I am never happier than when I am talking on the topic that interests me, perhaps more than any other one on earth.

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I think that perhaps I am peculiar in this respect, peculiar, that is, so far as the general run of screen actors go. With many, I know, pictures as pictures are merely a source of livelihood. They do their work, of course, seriously and strive to do their best, but they do not regard pictures in the gravely serious way, I believe that I regard them. I hope I may not be misunderstood. Pictures mean as much, perhaps, to those who are working in them as they do to me, because they are their source of livelihood. The thing which brings a man or a woman his or her bread and butter, is bound to be an important sort of thing, but I mean by regarding pictures gravely, and a certain detachment that one feels in the presence of an art for which one has the deepest awe and reverence. I believe I am a little peculiar in this respect, in that I do regard pictures with awe and reverence. I feel the screen is a great art, the marvelous possibilities of which have only been vaguely realized, and I will confess that it is my great ambition to make pictures that will constitute great screen art.

Tonight a soft summer air envelopes London. Again I am reminded of the eternal charm of this British isle. I have known the great cities of the world, and each of them, has a charm I can see that is peculiarly all its own. Tonight the



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charm of London seems most preeminently to fit my mood. I sit by the window in my room in the Carlton and gaze out into the myriad lights, wondering what another day will bring. This is a very old city, this London, and I am caught in the spell and carried backwards years in thousands, to the early days when the Romans, with their golden eagle, landed on its shores and swung the torch of Roman civilization westward.

Tomorrow I shall see the Press at the usual hours and in the afternoon Natacha and I are going to visit the famous kennels of Mrs. Ashton Cross and see if we can find some Pekes. Natacha is passionately devoted to the small dogs and we shall probably return from the kennels with a large increase in family!

It has been a happy day. And tomorrow. . .

My day has had two outstanding interests. One has been to discover the flaming interest in the Prince of Wales. And the other has been, as I foresaw, to become the proud papa of three tiny Pekes.

On the first matter, of course we all knew in America that the gallant young Prince of Wales was a subject of more than ordinary interest and affection to his own people, as well as to all other peoples. But it remained for me to come to London to feel the actual pulse of this affection.

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I should say that he is considered and held in the hearts of the Londoners at least as much as the Americans would feel over a combination of Charlie Chaplin and John Barrymore. They laugh at him with the indulgent mirth of tender love. They gild him with the mantle of romance. They revere him. And they feel clubby with him. He holds their hearts in his young hands and he is not a spendthrift of hearts.

It is interesting. It shows the powerful effect of personality, whether that personality springs from royalty or reels.

I saw interviewers all morning, numbering, this time twenty-five. The more I see of interviewers and the Press in general, the greater grows my respect for their ingenuity. What can so many people say about one isolated person? And yet they do, they always do find something to say.

This thought leads me on to another that has always intrigued me, which is, that each one of us presents a different facet to each other different person. Seldom, indeed, that any two persons see us the same, or see the same things in us, perhaps I should say.

Perhaps the secret of Fame, of popularity, of what-you-will, rests in this very theory. When a great number of people *do* see the same thing in us, then the concerted opinion swells to a

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crescendo of fame. A nation, more nations than one, saw the lovely girlhood of Mary Pickford. Nations saw, in unison, the humor, the artistry, of Charlie Chaplin. He touched a common chord. He made them laugh, with tears beneath the mirth. He became famous.

It has been said that I have touched the underlying, but very real and profound vein of Romance. It is, at least, an explanation. My explanation.

We lunched with the Guinnesses at the Savoy today. Among the guests were Lord Glenconner, son of Lord and Lady Gray, Lord and Lady Birkenhead and their daughter, Lady Pamela Smith.

Lady Pamela is twelve. And she is one of my sweetest London memories. A fair, lovely little thing, she interested me at once, as all little girls do. But I felt a momentary wonder as to what I could find to talk to her about that would really interest her. With her charm of manner to be found in all well brought up English children, I knew that she would have pretended interest, but to really and vitally arouse it would be, I thought, another matter.

I always like to talk to children on their own plane. If I have nothing to say that I think will mean something to them, I try to keep silence out of respect for them, not to talk down to them



A LOVE SCENE IN THE GARDEN  
Valentino with Doris Kenyon as *Lady Mary* in the film "Peau d'Âne".



The "King of Romance" again triumphant in the royal game of love!  
Scene from "Monsieur Beaucaire".

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with silly mouthings that make them despise you, secretly, if not openly, in the prideful depths of their dignified little souls.

I love children. And I would like, some day, to have a large family of them. People speak of romance . . . well, but the heart of romance lies, a lovely, tremendous bud, in the heart of a child—in the hearts of all the children of the world. Children *are* romance. They are the beginning and they are the end. They are romance, before the white wings are clipped, before ever they have trailed in the dry dust of disillusion.

All this musing has come from the frail and fragrant memory of the little Lady Pamela, whom I found regarding me with such intent and modest eyes. What was she thinking? Was she wondering about me? Did she, perhaps by hearsay, know who I was?

Imagine my amazement when I found her a rabid picture fan, with a decided "flair," as the Americans say, for my humble self, and next in order as a favorite, John Bowers. Which certainly goes to show the catholicity of a child's taste! She informs me with perfect composure that she had especially liked me in "Blood and Sand" and proceeded to discuss my work and career with me in terms of thorough understanding and camaraderie. It was one of the most interesting talks I had in London.

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After luncheon, Natacha and I motored down to the Kennels of Mrs. Ashton Cross. They are world-famous kennels, and they were one of the many things Natacha was most anxious to see.

We really hadn't planned to buy a Peke, though I had had a sneaking notion that we would not only buy one, but would probably not stop at one. I had gone "kenneling" with Natacha before.

I am sure that Mrs. Ashton Cross never had more enthusiastic visitors, I may even add, buyers. Natacha and I oh'd and ah'd over the beautiful little things, talked baby talk to them, petted them and fondled them with all the ecstasy and exuberance of children in a long denied doll-shop.

And, of course, we bought three. I weakened from the moment of my entry, and was only able, very feeble, to remind Natacha that we were motoring and aeroplaning for the remainder of our voyage and that we would have no suitable place for Pokes to lay their heads until we came to Nice, where Natacha's mother and father have their chateau. But to leave those kennels without the three doggies which Natacha had found indispensable to her happiness would have been to resort to sheer cruelty, and thus, as I write here tonight, I hear in the chamber behind me, to paraphrase, Natacha cooing over the three addi-

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tions to our family. We now have four Pekes to bear us travel-company. But the journey isn't finished.

When we returned from the kennels and the three Pekes and the one we already had with us had been delicately and carefully fed on delicate and careful tid-bits, Natacha and I dressed to dine with Mr. and Mrs. George Arliss.

We had a charming dinner and saw one of the best Londoners still remaining in town "after the season."

Then to the theatre to see Sir Gerald du Maurier in "The Dancers." After the theatre we went back-stage and met Sir Gerald. I found him an exceedingly interesting man, full of anecdotes, full of curiosity about the "American Cinema" as they refer to it here in London. He is of a surprisingly jovial and merry disposition.

I don't know just why, but I imagined him a slightly melancholy soul. I found him quite the opposite, friendly and gay. We were both charmed.

Tomorrow night we go to see Miss Gladys Cooper in "Kiki." That will interest me, because I saw "Kiki" with Miss Ulrich in America, and the contrast may be intriguing. It is curious to note how different people will get different things from an impersonation. That is why the fine old roles of Shakespeare and other



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dramatists may be done again and again, without fear of monotony. Each new artist brings a new blood, a new soul to the ancient character.

### *Two Days Later*

Our time in London is growing all too brief. And I find that I haven't even the time that I need to write in my dairy. I am sure I don't know what we should have done if we had not pre-arranged a certain amount of quietude on this trip. Douglas Fairbanks once said that a trip abroad, for him, constituted of an unending series of hand-shakings, and I can well imagine what he means.

This morning, I need hardly observe, was given over to twenty members of the astounding Press. They are dwindling, but they are still with me.

This afternoon Mr. Howard, in charge of the English Museum, an art critic and a thoroughly well-informed and delightful sort of a chap, took us through Hampton Court.

I was especially interested in the apartment of Henry VIII of England.

Ever since I saw Emil Jannings impersonate the merry monarch on the screen, I have felt an intimate sense of knowledge of him. I have felt as though I knew him, truly, as I never felt it when I was obliged to read about him in my

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rather dull historic tomes.

That is yet another interest I have in the screen. History can live for us in celluloid. Before our very eyes can parade, authentically and magnificently, the characters and the events that we have pored over, none too thrilled, as children in the school room. Who wouldn't rather see Henry the Eighth gnaw a monstrous chop than memorize the date of his marriage to his first, second or third wife? Who wouldn't rather see him kiss Ann Boleyn in the Court stairway, than con by heart the date on which the official ceremony was consummated?

I have said that I have a child-like trend to thought at times. And that trend of thought makes me shiver with joy when I think how picturesque and enduring knowledge is going to be for the generations of little ones that are to come.

Natacha said that she could not draw me away from those rooms of the notorious Henry. I said that I felt much as though I were in the well known suite of an equally well-known friend.

And what I didn't see and feel and think, Mr. Howard told me.

Last night we dined with friends and thence to see Miss Cooper as "Kiki." I reserve comment. I think it is that Lenore Ulrich was

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"Kiki" to me. After her, there wasn't anymore. Anymore "Kiki," I mean.

Tonight we are dining again with Mr. Benjamin Guinness and in two days more we leave for France.

London will have become a memory, strangely blended, of the Tower of London and Westminster, Ascot and Mrs. Ashton Cross, the London theatres, the London slums through which I threaded my way, hearing the detailed voice of Dickens at every tortuous twist and turn. Windsor Castle, which we saw only from the outside, having arrived too late to go within, the Strand and Picadilly, the shops with their gently bred custodians . . . a crucible of memory, pleasant to stow away.

If France and Italy give me so much, this trip will have been in no wise in vain.

I feel as though I am putting away new reserves of courage for whatever may be in store for me when I go back to America. If it is that I must go back to fight again, I shall have new powers to back me up. If I go back to work by some happenstance, then, too, I shall be able to give to that work a great renewal. I have dreamed new dreams in an old country. I have struck new contacts that have emboldened me. I have laid away new lore and the stuff of dreams that can only be spun in the work.

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We plan to leave for France by aeroplane. Natacha fears that the four Pokes will be ill, and I must admit that that is a consideration. My first fear of aviating lies in that dog-like direction.

### *Three Days Later, France*

I felt that "vague, sweet melancholy" that pervades one when one says good-bye to a very old friend, when I left London. We were become old friends, London and I. A bond had been established. Sometime in the very long, long ago, English blood had stirred, by happenstance, in my veins. Sometime in the long ago one of my ancestors had trod English soil, only to be merged again into Italy. But none the less, I felt what the students of heredity would call the "throw back" moving in my veins. We knew one another of old, London and I.

The day before we left was largely taken up in farewells to the friends who had made our stay so pleasant. "One day soon we shall come back," we kept saying. Not in the hollow tone of the polite social phrase, but with our hearts in every word. We had loved London.

We left London by motor, and made head for Croyden, the aviation field. I had done considerable aviating before the war, and so it was, in a sense, no new experience for me. Excepting that I had never used the closed machine, as it were.

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I mean, I like sitting out with the pilot, the winds of all the heavens blowing on you, free, disembodied, as near a flighted bird as man can be. Sitting as we did on this trip, in the stuffy enclosure of a tonneau effect with some eight or ten other people (not to mention the four dogs) took the very essence of the sport out of the flight for me. Now and then some of the passengers would be affected with a degree, mild or otherwise, of air-sickness, and *that* took a great part of the romance out of the trip as well.

Natacha and I had wondered how the little Pekes would take the strange and unusual excursion, but they took it with the very sublimity of fatalism, stronger in animals than it is in Man. They didn't even seem to know that they were flying, and if they did know it, their composure and sleep proclivities were absolute.

On the whole, we had a pleasant enough trip, and Natacha, for one, enjoyed it better, I think, than she would have done in an open plane. This one was kinder to her hat and hair.

We landed, gracefully and without accident, at Le Bourget. To be frank, no one of us was sorry.

Before we had left, several telegrams had come to us from France. One was from Jaques Hebertot, owner of the Theatre des Champs Elysees and editor of le Theatre et Comedie

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Illustrated and several other magazines and newspapers. He had told us that he would meet us and that a dinner had been scheduled for us the night after our arrival.

When we alighted at Le Bourget, there must have been four hundred people there to meet us.

In one sense I was more touched than I was even at the reception accorded me in London. For, after all, in London my films were fairly well-known. They were more in touch with what I had been doing, with the film world in general is doing, here in America. But in France I had anticipated no such recognition.

I think it was that reception that gave me, or emphasized, at any rate, the feeling I now have of warm love for all the countries in the world. Thus far on my trip I have been made to feel, so pleasantly, that much talked of state of beatitude, the Brotherhood of Man. All peoples are my friends, and what most tremendous thing could happen to a man than this?

We all know how precious friendship is. We all, or most of us, know how *rare* it is, when it is real. When it is true. We have heard, and thought, that if a man has one friend upon whom he can rely, or, at best, two or three, he is indeed blessed among men.

These thoughts, not coherent or detailed, but the essence of these thoughts, rushed in grate-

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fully upon me, as I alighted upon French soil, with Hebertot grasping me by the hand and four hundred of his countrymen and women grouped around, light of warmth and welcome upon their faces.

Vive la France is the most ringing phrase upon which I can end this first page of my diary written in France . . . tomorrow, more of what happened that first day!

### *Hotel Plaza-Athenée, August 1st*

France has always seemed to me to be symbolized best by a proud and beautiful woman. A woman with light laughs; yes, maybe, but with the blood of an undying courage running in her veins. And France despoiled is, to me like a beautiful woman, despoiled by vandal hands. A desecration.

I said to Natacha before we reached France that I might be evading what I should face, but I felt that I did not care to see the battlefields of France, and as few of the ruins as I could gaze upon. To me, the wounds of the earth, the despoilation of all that architectural and ancestral beauty would be like gashes in fair flesh. Vandalism.

I suppose, and I don't know quite why, but I suppose that every one is slightly sentimental about France. We think of the La France Rose

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when we think of France. We think of a tinkling effervescent frivolity when we think of Paris. We think of champagne and little, twinkling red heels, the stories of Maupassant, the gay "chansons," beauty and bravery—red gashes of wounds.

So many people said to me: "Rudy, the war is over and so is Paris. France will never be the same."

I felt almost superstitious about alighting upon French soil. I am sensitive to pre-impressions such as these. My imagination runs on ahead of my body, creating images, imagining things that, almost always, fortunately, I am never called upon to actually witness.

I told Natacha some of these dreads, and she told me not to fear for France, for the gay insouciance of the country, masking with motley and bells a beautiful silver courage, would never waver, nor break down.

And so it seemed to me, as, a bird in the air, I alighted upon French soil.

So, I think, perhaps too poetically, *should* one alight upon France. Not blunderingly with the dirt of heavy smoke and hideous grind of wheels, but delicately, poised, aloof from the mundane, a bird in the nethermost regions of height.

And there were the four hundred people waving their handkerchiefs at us as we began the



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landing. Natacha and I, looking out, could dimly discern them as we swooped eastward. And they looked at me like the up-fluttering wings of white little birds, gay little birds, brave little birds, French little birds, bidding us merry welcome as we came down.

"This," I said to Natacha, enraptured, "is both the way one should land in France and the way one should be received."

As I have written, I did not expect my ovation, nor indeed, any token of recognition in particular while in Paris. I had imagined myself practically an unknown on French soil. But it is, I think, also characteristic of the French people that no one who has achieved, however slightly, in whatever line, whether familiar to them or otherwise, is an unknown. Their spontaneous hearts, their hearts that are so many cups eager for beauty, reach out to all of us who attempt the Arts.

Hébertot, hand outstretched, first greeted me. And then I shook hands with as many as could reach me before we were whirled away in Hébertot's car to the Hotel Plaza-Athenee, the best Hotel in Paris.

On the ride over, Hébertot told me that a great dinner had been planned for us the same night, at which would be the most of the editors, actors, authors and other celebrities in or about Paris at

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that time. He told me that they are all intensely interested in the cinema of America, and how we work, and all about studio conditions and production activities and the like.

I told him that I was never so happy as when discussing with interested and intelligent persons, the questions nearest to my heart, and that I would be only too happy to answer their questions, I hope as intelligently as they would be put on me.

And this is indeed the truth. I am never so happy in conversation with others as when I am discussing the future of the screen—the opportunity that exists to make it one of the great arts in the world today. It's a sort of passion with me. I love to discuss it and I don't believe any task could be too big—any amount of time too great, for me to undertake or devote in making pictures better than in many instances we find them today.

The dinner was a brilliant affair. Like most of the French gatherings, I imagine, there was an air of glitter and gaiety about it all that stimulates even without the aid of wine. As a matter of fact, unlike America, the French do not precede their meals with the drinking of cocktails. They drink wines and cordials, but the cocktails which are an integral part of almost every American dinner, are absent here in

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France. It gives, I think, a clearer and more brilliant atmosphere.

Most of the talk ran to picture. The editors and actors who were present, alike, wanted to know "all about it."

In fact, one of the things that has most impressed me both in London and in Paris about the questions I have been asked about the Screen, has been their intelligence. I have been asked questions, both personally and by mail, because the questioners really wanted information; not out of purely personal and sometimes indelicate curiosity about me as a person. No one has asked me whether I ate chops or eggs for breakfast, nor what kind of tooth paste I indulge in, nor how I treat my wife; but they concern themselves exclusively with my ideas and ideals regarding motion pictures, which shows, I think, good taste as well as intelligence.

I do believe in a certain degree of publicity. I do *not* believe in going about as a shrouded, mysterious and inaccessible figure; but there is a limit to all things. And I have been occasionally asked questions which transcend that limit. Questions that would tear every veil of reticence away and leave me without any private life whatsoever. It may be wrong of me to think so, but after all I am only thinking aloud and may contradict myself anon, but it really seems to me

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that such questions, if answered, would not only be embarrassing to me as an individual who does lead, after all, a life off the screen, but also would it be bad for me as an artist.

Once the general public began to go into the studios and watched the mechanical processes of the making of pictures, just then was some of the illusion necessarily destroyed for them. And how can man live by bread alone?

It would be, to use a homely parallel, like a small boy divesting his favorite, brightly painted clown, of the clown suit and gaudy paint, and finding underneath just a very human man with a family and family cares. He could never laugh, this little boy, quite so hard again. He would be "seeing the wheels go 'round." And while some artists lead lives fully as colorful and as romantic as the roles they give to the public via the screen, none of us can be "Julias" and "Hamlets" and "Robin Hoods" perpetually.

Beauty was never meant to be probed. Illusion must wear a veil. Art must conceal Art if it is to please and allure.

Still farther along the same line, both in Paris and London I was not only questioned intelligently and interestedly, but I was also *quoted correctly*. No single one of them took "poetic license" or any license at all with what I told them. It was an enormous satisfaction and one

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for which I am immensely grateful.

At the dinner and the reception following, Hébertot mentioned to me the fact that we could have several brilliant functions of the same kind, but I told him that while I appreciated them immensely and enjoyed every instant of it, I wouldn't be able to go in for it in any extensive way. I explained to him that our trip was really for a twofold purpose; one for rest, and secondly that I was homeward bound to see my people and the "town I was born in". To paraphrase an American song.

Hébertot understood perfectly. The tact of the French is as perfect as their hospitality.

He said that we must do some sightseeing and to that pleasurable thought we agreed with enthusiasm.

It was a gorgeous and unforgettable evening.

Think that these days in Paris are to be like bright beads, strung on the thread of memory, one after the other. Each one translucent and glittering. Each one perfect and many-faceted.

Natacha agrees with me. Paris is like the light wine of the country to women. It tinges them with romance and expectation. If I should ever be called upon to give advice to a plain woman, I should advise her to spend some time in Paris. Even post-war Paris. It lays upon the feminine shoulders a delicate lace of poesy.



Rudy and Natacha at "*Juan los Pins*", the historic Hadnot Chateau on the Riviera.



Valentino demonstrates in "Belle nuit" that he possessed a splendid physique as well as a remarkable screen personality. Shown with Andre Daven (left) his screen *chic*.

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

*Paris, August 5th*

The first thing that I had to do here in Paris was to get an automobile, because the rest of our route lays by way of the motor-method.

From here we plan to motor to Nice, where Natacha's mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Hudnut, have purchased the Chateau Juan Les Pins.

They are making the chateau their permanent home and are having a marvelous time remodeling and decorating to suit their own tastes.

I looked at seventeen different makes of cars and finally I went to see the Voisin people and ordered two cars from them. I intend to keep them over here to use when I come back, as I shall some day inbetween pictures. I ordered an open car for my own use and a closed car for Natacha. The Voisin people were very charming to us and put a car at my disposal to go through Italy in, and another one to use while I remain in Paris.

Natacha remained patient with a marvelous degree of fortitude during "The travail of the cars" as we called it, but when we were finally fixed at Voisin, she sighed, "Now for Poiret!"

It flatters me that Natacha, with her exquisite and unfailing good taste and discrimination, would not go to Poiret without me, "No, Rudy," she said to me "I want you to choose my gowns."



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When she said that I thought to myself that *that* pretty well proves the frequently argued fact as to whether women dress for men—or for other women. If women are truly feminine, I believe that they dress for men.

At last we were ready to visit M. Poiret. He is the one costumier in Paris best suited to Natacha's style, even temperament. We went to one or two other places and looked at their models, but for the most part they were wishy-washy things of pastel shades, with oddments of flowers here and there.

Natacha cannot wear that sort of thing. She is not at all the type. She looks best in vivid colors, no one color over another, but all colors that are violent and definite. Scarlets. Vermilions. Strong blues. Emphatic greens. Loud-voiced yellows. Blazoning purples. Pastels and dull shades are not becoming to her. Or, if she doesn't wear the violent colors then she must have something most severe in line, in cut, black or else a dead, gardenia white. Simplicity of line. Daring. Chic. Poiret is the only one who can do that.

I shall not give Natacha away even in the private page of my diary by saying what time, how much of it, we spent with M. Poiret. But I will admit it was quite as fascinating to me as I knew it was to Natacha. Perhaps part of the

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fascination for me consisted in the light in Natacha's eyes when she "hit upon something," as they say in America, that she knew, unerringly, belonged to her. M. Poiret commended us both upon our selections and told us he would have selected quite the same himself, had the matter been left wholly in his hands.

To me, it is like seeing a beautiful woman in a garden of beautiful flowers, when I watch one selecting gowns in a shop such as M. Poiret's. They linger over the fabric, over the colors, with the delicate deliberation, the consummate skill, the scented instinct of a woman bending over flowers, uttering soft exclamations of a soft delight when one particular one meets and enchants her eye.

It is a talent, a genius, or the cultivation of an instinct that all women who desire to be beautiful (and what woman living does not?) should have.

So many times my letters from fans ask me what I would suggest by way of "beauty hints." I smile a little at these. Such funny things to ask a man. And yet not so funny, either, for after all, it is true that a man in my profession must train his eye and his taste for the discerning of what is beautiful and what is not in women. He must know, I must know, whether a woman is fitly gowned or not. A picture might well be thrown out of focus, artistically and poetically, at least,

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if there are unbecomingly gowned women in it. I have never answered any of these questions on beauty, hints or otherwise, because I felt that, after all, there are so many so much better equipped than I to answer them. But merely from a man's point of view, a man who has observed women closely and much, I should say that at least four-fifths of the battle, if I may employ a term for the brave to fit the fair, is in knowing *how* to dress. Knowing what to buy. And knowing how to wear it after it is bought. It isn't so much a matter of money. Mind you, I am not one of the unthinking men who say, "Oh, a woman doesn't need much money to look well." I know that it does take money for the women of today to "keep up". Costumes are more intricate than they used to be, so short a while, even, as ten years ago. Nowadays, there are hats and shoes and stockings, purse, veil, gloves and trinkets to go with every costume. It isn't merely a matter of the gown a woman wears; it is also a matter of the accessories that go with it. But I do say, that all the money available would avail little indeed if discrimination and good taste were not in back of it, guiding. . .

Every woman has a type of her own. One of the things the movies have done is to help women in their selection of the type of clothes

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she should wear. A woman of the Nita Naldi type, let us say, will see Nita Naldi in a particular evening gown or street costume, and an idea will come to her that might never have occurred to her before. The same would apply to people of the general types of Mary Pickford, Bebe Daniels, Claire Windsor and so forth.

Of course, there is one danger in this, and that is that some women do not know their own types. Or if they do know them, at heart, they like to delude themselves into believing that they are the type they would, contrarily like to be. For instance, a girl with the general outline of Elsie Ferguson might wish to look like Nazimova, and in imitating the wrong type, might make of herself, well, a-nothing-at-all. That is why I say that the fundamentally important thing for a woman to know, or to learn, if she doesn't know, is **HOW** to dress. And that includes, is based on, indeed, her knowledge of her own type.

Well, Natacha tells me that I have been writing an hour and more and some of her gowns have just arrived from Poiret. Who am I that I should write if I can see Natacha "modeling" for me in the new and ravishing Poiret frocks?

More of this tomorrow.

Hébertot 'phoned today and has invited us to the Grand Prix at Deauville. He has engaged a

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whole Villa for three days, he said, because there is to be such a tremendous crowd. Little, stuffy back rooms are going at six hundred francs a day. Something fantastic it seems to me. Natacha and I accepted with pleasure and excitement.

I said, "I hope it won't rain, I'd like to bathe."

And Natacha said, "I am so glad I have the Poiret gowns."

Here we are in Deauville.

Outside my window the rain washes down in torrents. Such a rain as I expected in London and didn't get, and never dreamed of it in Deauville and here it is! Travelling is a capricious business. A thing of many moods.

When I made this philosophical (?) observation to Natacha, she said that I doubtlessly compared it to women . . . but I told her that I never compared anything to women . . . anything, that is, save flowers and France and song. . .

We had a rather amusing trip down. I suppose it was more amusing to me than it was to Natacha.

In the morning, Jacques Hébertot called at our Hotel in his car, and, with some flurry and pleasant stir and bustle, Natacha and I got into the open car, the closed one being loaded up as intended.

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We were taking in the countryside with such veritable gulps of enjoyment that we omitted indications overhead and the first thing we knew, we were driving in a pelting rain. It must have looked funny, if there had been anyone to look, to see our blithely going little procession of three cars (and three people properly speaking) begin to do rather distressed spirals around and about, not quite knowing whether to go on, to change cars or what to do.

Natacha finally settled the point by refusing to drive with me longer in the open car, pleading the Poiret creation she was wearing as sufficient reason for the change.

The result was that Natacha got out of the open car, into the closed car with the luggage, and Hébertot changed cars and got in with me —when he caught up to us, leaving his car to the solitary occupancy of his chauffeur.

Eventually another change was made, and Natacha got into Hébertot's car and the third car brought up the rear with the luggage as solitary occupants.

We finally arrived here at Deauville at eleven o'clock at night.

All the ride down, Hébertot had been reassuring me against the rain and general discomfort. He reiterated that the villa he had engaged was a little model of warmth, comfort and ease and

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that both Natacha and I would speedily forget the dust, the ensuing rain and the general inconvenience of the ride down once we had arrived.

"Pauvre Monsieur Hébertot!"

He meant so well with his villa, but when we arrived, damp, disconsolate, tired and craving the creature comforts as we had probably never craved them before, we found "the little model" with no telephone, the fires out and an indifferent housekeeper to receive us.

Well, we managed to go to bed. It must have been our sense of humor that saved us, for first we were angry when we discovered that the fires were out. Then we were amazed when, upon trying to 'phone for a man or someone to help us out, we discovered the 'phone to be conspicuous by its absence and then, when a woman came down the stairs and announced herself as our house-keeper and inquired if we were tired, we bursted into simultaneous and irrepressible shrieks of laughter in which the person merrily joined us.

"Well," I said to Natacha, optimistically, "after all, it is just as well that it rained today, for now tomorrow will be fine and we can get some good bathing. I am glad I brought my bathing suits and flannels and things like that. It's really what I came to Deauville for."

I was awakened the next morning by hear-

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ing Natacha say mischievously, "*What* did you come to Deauville for, Rudy?"

I opened my eyes to a world shivering under blankets of cold mist and oppressive chill. Foggy. Rainy. Cold.

I had the grace to laugh. But it was an effort. I suppose I am a child about small disappointments. I think I can stand up, smiling, under big shocks, big troubles, major trials and tribulations; but I like the small affairs of my life, the small events of my days and nights to run along smoothly, as I have planned them and—anticipated them. I had planned sunshine and bathing in Deauville, and I felt unreasonably cheated and deprived when I saw that for one day, at least, I was not going to have them.

"I should have brought a fur lined bathing suit," I said to Natacha "and you should have left your white Poiret suits and sunshades and such things safely back in Paris."

I may add that here, tonight, the last of our stay in Deauville, I have not been in the water, nor felt the desire to go in.

That first morning we breakfasted late and about ten o'clock a thin watery sort of sun came reluctantly forth as if to say, "Well, I am here but I am going only to tease you, not please you."

Hébertot suggested that we take a ride and



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see some of the country, and that is what we did.

We had a marvelous ride through that incomparable, picturesque, historic Normandy countryside, so highly and diversely hymned in poetry and prose by the many and the great who have known and loved it.

At noon we came to a roadhouse perched on the top of a mountain, from which point of vantage we could see the whole panorama of the coast and that particular spot where Rouen the Nordic conqueror came to Normandy and from which spot, William the Conqueror left.

We had luncheon there, lingering, with wine of the country and delicious food, especially delicious to us, because we were tiring of Hotel cookery and then we motored back to be in time for dinner at the celebrated Casino.

I think I'll stop here for tonight, trusting that this pleasant moment, to pause, will bring us fair weather for the morrow. I am still bemoaning my lost plunge in the surf.

I shall write about the Casino and what we thought of it tomorrow.

*Deauville, August 9th*

Natacha and I were quite thrilled about going to the Casino.

Natacha arrayed herself in her most gorgeous

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Poiret creation. A "Poiret Paradox", I call them, because their simplicity is so confounded with their quality of seductiveness. Which is the *n*th degree of perfection to which a woman's gown can go—or anything else for the matter of that.

To allure, to attract, without seeming to do so, without resorting to that favorite American word, the "Obvious," what greater Art is there than that? Poiret fashions, *fascinations* out of textures and colors. He makes chimeras of the concrete. He places a soul in silk. And he does the final and consummate thing of making beautiful women even more beautiful than they were before they went to him. That is not only Art. It is a benefaction to the Race.

Well, and so, thus arrayed, we betook ourselves to the Casino, thinking to be dazzled by the fair women and exquisitely tailored men.

It was most uninteresting!

The people were most uninteresting!

There were no smart women. Literally none at all. There were no smart men. There was not even that aura, that atmosphere of the ultra-sophisticated, the ultra-smart that we had so confidently looked forward to seeing.

The people were mostly tourists, who had come there, no doubt, on the same mission of curiosity that had brought our disappointed

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selves. They were talking and laughing in loud voices, trying to make for themselves the gay and abandoned time they had thought to find ready-made for them. Any day, on Fifth Avenue, any evening in any Cafe in London, Paris or New York, strolling in by the sheerest coincidence, I have found smarter-looking women and more correct and "at-ease" looking men.

And the cuisine was worse than the people. Poor Hébertot seemed to feel that he was somehow responsible for the badly dressed women and the poorly-served food. He explained that most of the really smart people were at distances away, and that, anyway, Deauville was not what it had once been.

Doubtless, Deauville is much like the places in New York. One winter the Ritz will be the place, where, at tea time, and at dinner foregather the orchid-gathering of New York. Another winter it will be the Biltmore, the Ambassador, the smaller places such as Pierre and the Avignon and so on. People are much like sheep. One goes and the others follow. That has been said before concerning a number of different things, but it is equally true of places, where people dress to eat, and eat to dress.

I sometimes wonder, by way of a slight though not irrelevant digression, why people who do not *have* to think so much of dress, who ought

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not to think so much of dress, and who do not achieve results when they dress, spend so much heart-breaking time and money on it. So many men, good men, to, have gone down into debt and disgrace to please some woman who would have looked far more charming in a simple gingham frock than in the silks and jewels her misplaced vanity demanded for her.

There is virtue in a weed quite as much as in an orchid. And there is beauty in a weed, too, if it is growing, rank and sweet, in its own surroundings and not trying to insert itself into some priceless Cloisonne, where an orchid should be placed. If you have the Cloisonne, well and good. Then if you will dwell in it gracefully and rightfully, fulfilling your destiny in the place appointed for you. But if you were born by the country roadside and circumstances have not environed you differently, why break your heart about it, with the result that you are neither the sweet-smelling garden weed, nor yet the aristocratic orchid?

Sometimes, when I have spent an evening in such a place as the Casino here at Deauville, when I have seen the spent and wearied and tragedy-smitten faces of the men; the hardened, painted, pitifully striving faces of the women, I think how much better it really is to be the hum-

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ble blade of grass that know the pulse of the earth, the warmth and nourishment of natural surroundings, that ask so little and give so much, rather than a transplanted flower that is growing unhealthfully out of its native soil.

Rather life, I think, than a semblance of life!

Rather poverty accepted gracefully, than riches at the price of health and happiness!

For, after all, money is a hollow thing unless it is buying a dream. And dreams are so priceless that when one is living a dream, money ceases to figure. Dreams cannot be bought.

Most of this wandering thought comes to me as I sit here and think of the faces that I saw in the Casino.

The faces of some of the women; painted and hardened, set in lines of laughter, forced and unnatural to them. Women who would have been far happier, had they but known it, at home in some simple place tending their plants and flowers, watching their babies grow up, gossiping with their neighbors for the sake of the fillip of excitement. Women who didn't belong there at Deauville—and who were trying so desperately hard to make believe that they did, and to make others think that they did, and merely being miserable. Perhaps some of them were acting so to please some man. Or because they *thought* that they were pleasing some man. Some of

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them had money—and no dream. And they thought, they had been told that this was the thing to do, when one has money. If people could only be taught to read their own hearts. To know what is in their hearts. One of the saddest and truest cries in all the world is the cry of the Arab when he says, "Only God and I know what is in my heart!"

And the men there. Dead dreams staring from their hollow eyes, like so many ravaged ghosts. Tired men. Desperate men. Men at that very moment contemplating suicide. Men to whom life could have been sound and sweet, who had soured it and embittered it for the lust of gold.

< One man there tonight was pointed out to me as having lost 60,000,000 francs during the season. In the half hour that I was there, looking on he lost 3,000,000 more. His face looked to me as though he had lost his immortal soul. And all, I thought watching him, for the sake of the delirious fever that ran in his veins and would not be slaked saved by gold. Gold that left him for all the frantic effort he gave to it. For all that he gave it to his life. Hollow, mocking gold!

I didn't stay long enough to know. I don't think I should want to know, but doubtless that poor soul has gone now, by his own hand, to

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the place where there is not the treasure that corrupts. Where, if he cannot gain it, neither can he lose it, and that is a merciful thing.

I remained an onlooker, more interested, really, in the tragic human pantomimes that were being unconsciously enacted for me than I was in the gaming itself. I didn't join the play, for the chief reason that gambling doesn't interest me. It never has, and I dare say now, that it never will. It is one of the fevers of man that I have happily escaped. It has never attacked me even in a mild form, and I suppose that I should be thankful for it. It has always seemed to me so pitiful a thing to see a man mastered by a thing, rather than a master of things. Surely no man would give his life, his hopes, no doubt his love, to the running race of gold on gaming tables if he were able to control himself. There must be a taint in his unfortunate blood that will not be gain-said. And that so many of these big gamesters die suicide deaths, points the more directly to the tragedy back of it all.

Natacha took the same interest in the gaming rooms as I did; the human drama being there enacted. Men without their masks. Women with their masks of paint and powder too pitifully transparent. Toys. Victims. Money-mummers. Tragedies. . .

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

*Deauville, August 10th*

Today we have spent in motoring about the country with Hébertot. They are about the most pleasant hours we have spent since we left American shores.

It has long been a part of my dreams, so variously described and to be, I suppose, so variously described again and again, to see the Normandy country. Tales of Normandy had, ever, an unaccountable fascination for me, seeing that there is, so far as I know, no Norman blood running in my veins . . . and yet how do I know? That very point is another theory I have often played with in my mind. People say to me, to one another: "What is an artist?" What is it that makes a man or a woman an artist? Is it not birth and breeding, for frequently they spring, these artists, these geniuses, full grown from the barren breasts of poverty; from hovels for homes, from crudity and ugliness and want. It is not country, for the artist arises in darkest Africa and in subtle India. In England and in France. In Germany and in Italy. Everywhere. It isn't training, for many an artist works blindly with his hands and his knowledge, if divinely with his instinct. It isn't luxury; it isn't force of circumstances. It isn't even opportunity. Then what is it? Of what clay is the artist made? What is the spark that kindles



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him to a flame at which the world may warm its hands?

It may be that the artist is accidentally, oddly, compounded of *all bloods*. It may be that the artist, tracing back and ever back, would find within his veins a diffusion of all traditions; traditions of all lands, heritages of a commingled ancestry, so that he is not merely *one* man, an entity, an individual, with a few subdivisions of ancestry and a few traditions here and there, but the derived essence of all lands and all peoples, hearing the savage tom-tom of the African at the same time as his blood records the symphonies of Boston. He is world-wide, this artist, perhaps; he is the child of the Ages and in him and through him the Ages speak, and all men understand.

A fancy, or a fact. It is merely a random thought to be taken or left as the whim dictates.

But, as we motored with swift ease over the level roads of Normandy, viewing the quaint Norman cottages, catching glimpses of the Normandy peasants, the old sailor type of Normandy peasant, I felt very much akin to them, very near . . . and curiously responsive. I wanted to wave my hat in my hand, to shout out to them "Why, how do you do there . . . here I am . . . back again . . . after . . . how long a while . . . no matter . . . here I am!"

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

I think I did wave my hand a little and Hébertot thought I had recognized someone I knew. I had, but he wouldn't quite have got my point of view without considerable explanation, and I wanted to drink in sensation, not expound in abstract theory.

The most interesting part in the ride, really, was an ancient Normandy farmhouse to which Hébertot took me. The old, lovely traditional place had belonged to his family, a very ancient Norman family, it is too, by the way, for generations upon generations, and in the old place he showed us the very bedroom in which William the Conqueror had slept before he went to England.

On the ride home, I took some pictures here and there along the way, of some of the old Norman types. It was most enoyable, Natacha makes fun of my photography and told when we started home in earnest, after I had proclaimed the fact that I had had my fill of photography for the day, that she didn't know *what* type of man would appear on my film, since I had doubtless taken three or four on the same negative. . .

I have since, proudly proved her wrong . . . in some cases.

Natacha asked me tonight if I were worrying over my affairs at home, my film affairs, she meant. We both know that when we go back we

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are again to face the legal procedures. Of which we are both very tired and weary. But I told her no, that I wasn't worried just now. Somehow the vastness of sea and air and change through which I have been, have given me the different and fresher perspective I need if I am to go back and again take back the cudgels.

Life to me, back there, had become a pressing series of involvedness. But now that I have put the sea between me and my affairs; now that I have seen London with all its ancient cares and griefs so beautifully outworn and lived down; now that I have seen France smiling with the old *insouciance* back to her bloody wounds . . . I feel differently. Things still matter. But *I* matter, too. I have got my hand on the reins and, as I tell Natacha, I know now, know again with fresh vigour and renewed ardour that I shall drive the steed of success to an ultimate Victory.

More of this tomorrow.

*Deauville, August 11th*

More motoring today. Luncheon at a charming little inn overlooking the sea. Wine of the country. Normandy women serving us. Smell of milk and butter and fresh eggs and mounds of sweetly smelling bread. Comfort. Rest. Tranquillity. Contentment. A Normandy

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

peasant . . . with the luscious country rolling back of him and the smitten sea sprawling at feet . . . what more could the heart of a man desire? Why travel farther to find Nirvana?

Tonight, the Casino again.

Normandy shall not mean the Casino to me; no, nor the *Grand Prix*, which is supposed to be such an event of events. Normandy shall mean the countryside, the atmosphere of those who have gone before, the fragrant simplicity, a fine-breathing of old standards . . . this is Normandy.

Tonight the night of the *Grand Prix* at the Casino, is supposed to be the most interesting of all the scheduled events. There may be some sense of appreciation lacking in me, but it wasn't any more interesting to me than any of the other nights, and I feel that I am really fairly easy to amuse. Fairly easy to interest and capture.

Some friends of ours from Paris, the owner of the Swedish ballet and a motion picture director, joined us and with this and that we managed to stay up until two or three in the morning.

Oh, I forgot to say that on our motoring trip this morning, we visited an ancient monastery in the pure Gothic style. It is now a farmhouse, as so many of the ancient missions and so forth

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are. Before being a monastery it was a castle and now in its reduced state (or isn't it a reduced state after all?) the huge sunken guardroom or Salle des Guardes, is used as a sheep-run during the night. Thus does Time transform all things and all places with ghostly, mocking finger tips, and the alchemy of traditional touch. The archways are still standing, and a little way from there are the ruins of the ancient mortuary chapel, where the mother of William the Conqueror is purported to be buried. We were told a legend to the effect that this lady retired into a convent at some time during her later maturity and was there interred.

Tomorrow we start back to Paris, and I shall be partly sorry—partly very glad. It is not the Casino and all of the so-called gaieties there that I shall regret leaving, but the sea that did not, this time, receive my eager form, the delicious wine of the country, the omelettes they serve, that are a specialty of the country; the bread hot from the "*fourneau*" and the smiling Normandy faces, made real to me after so many years of reading and dreaming of them.

*Paris, August 14th*

We have gone to very few theatres here. And as for the well-known and much advertised "night life of Paris," we have seen little or

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nothing.

Before I left America, many of my younger friends tapped me on the shoulder, cocked wicked, knowing eyes and said, "Ah, Rudy, wait until you get to Paris . . . such nights . . . such girls! . . . la, la!"

Well, but the beautiful French women one sees in the pages of "la Parisienne" do not exist. They simply do not exist in the actualities of flesh and blood. That is all. They are myths. Floating fancies. Make-believe houris from the brain of a simpler Baudelaire.

And the chorus girls of Paris come under the same heading, in my estimation.

We went to the *Folies Bergeres* for instance, and it was utterly passé. The production, the chorus girls I have mentioned, the whole ensemble was fearfully disappointing. The French chorus girls cannot begin to compete with the American chorus girls. They are simply not in the same class after all. The costumes at the *Folies* are gorgeous . . . but, after all, who cares to fasten his eyes and rivet one's attention upon a costume, if the girl within the costume is not worthy the eye-strain. And they were not worth it at the *Folies*.

Then, too, the stages are tiny. Nothing, *nothing* in the French theatre, from the girls up (or down, as you may care to put it), is done on

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the luxurious plan that it is in America. Of course, I may have been a poor one to judge, coming as I did fresh from the theatre life of New York, with its munificence, its display, its luxuriance, its vast expenditure of time, money, space and beauty. My last impression, when I was in Europe ten years ago, my last impression of the European stage was marvelous. But that was before I had been in America. After one has seen how things are done in America, anything else would appear poor and inadequate by contrast.

Most of the girls for instance, are fat. That surprised me, and I think it would surprise a great many persons who, like myself, doubtless, imagine the French *Folies* girls as slim and sprightly sylphs, with flower-like limbs and porcelain throats. I *was* surprised. These girls were fat—and half naked.

Nakedness, nudity, is the most beautiful thing in the world—when it *is* beautiful. But when you see rolls of fat . . . ugly lines . . . then you see a parody of exquisiteness. You cannot defy ugliness because it has a counterpart of beauty. It is like cartooning a beautiful painting, etching, print. You may sigh and marvel over the print, and you may recognize that the cartoon comes from the print, but, alas, you can only laugh at

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the cartoon.

I think, perhaps I should say more humbly that I *hope* that I see beauty when and where beauty is to be found. And certainly I know that where and when I find beauty I worship it. Whether it be the beauty of woman, the beauty of nature, of the beauty of mind and soul. But I am not a sentimentalist. Just because a sunset is a sunset, I do not always find it beautiful. I do not always go into raptures and rhapsodies over it. Just because a poem is a poem or a song a song, I do not constantly fold my hands over my chest and sigh, "How marvelous!" And just because a woman is a woman I do not acclaim her with beating heart as a masterpiece from God, a divine acolyte of Venus, a lotus of love. When a woman is beautiful she is a miracle. When she is not beautiful—she is a woman. And her lack is her misfortune. I pity and respect her, but I do not sing Hosannas to her surpassing charm. Truth has beauty, too, it seems to me. Truth of seeing, truth of hearing. Truth of thought.

Well, we went to the *Folies Bergere* and we went to Montmartre. I have recorded my impressions of the *Folies* and my impression of Montmartre was—tourists. And tourists of the most virulent variety. I suppose poor, well-meaning souls that they were trying to get their fill of



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Paris; they wanted to go back home to Oskaloosa, to Kankakee, or wherever they came from, and tell the little neighbors "next door" that they had seen "life". The night life of Paris. The way to do it, they figured was to go to Montmartre, about which they had read so many naughty, naughty stories, in so many naughty, naughty magazines. I wonder if, under their masks of fun and frolic, they were as secretly disappointed as we were! And didn't like to show it. Didn't think, perhaps, that it would be quite the "thing to do".

They were typical tourists. And they were all disgustingly drunk. Which probably, they also felt necessary to their environment and their trip of sightseeing. If in Montmartre, why not be drunk? Surely, they might have argued, that would be THE thing of things to do!

They were shouting noisily all over the place and were generally objectionable. There were none of the nice Americans there, nor did we see any of the nice French people. Buyers, traveling salesmen and so forth. We swore we would not go back to Montmartre again. And we didn't. And we won't.

We went to Ciro's, but it was dead.

Ciro's is *the* place where the nicest people go, when they are in town. It is the rendezvous of the elite. But on account of its being late sum-

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mer, almost no one is in Paris, and the place resembled a sprawled and wilted flower waiting for gay, familiar hands to pick it up again and revive it.

Between there being no nice people and so many of the other kind in Paris, we haven't done much going about at night. What I have recorded in my diary is a faithful transcription of the night life I have seen in Paris, and as our stay is drawing to a close, I shall probably see a little more of it. No doubt it will be a disappointment to some of my young friends at home who have said to me that if I cannot "find out Paris," then who can?

I wonder if I have failed . . . or have I just grown up and out of somethings, somethings that might have given me a momentary thrill ten years ago, but that thrill me no longer. It is much as we outgrow cheap and tawdry toys, when we leave first, indiscriminating childhood. We come to know that trashy gew-gaws as just so much bad wood and poor paint and discard them for finer, more carefully planned and calculated things. I like to think I have merely "suffered a development of good taste".

And besides, we had many errands to attend to, of one kind or another, some of them boring enough to do and too boring to bothering

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writing them all down.

I don't specially care to remember errands. Errands are the little pin-pricks of the days we live. The petty annoyances that mar the perfect whole.

Mrs. Valentino had things to do at Poiret. I spent considerable time with the Voisin people and now, tomorrow, the last of our Paris visit will be at an end.

One very charming thing happened to me this morning. One of the very many things Hébertot has done for me since I have been in Paris. I admired tremendously a marvelous Dauberman-Pincher dog of his and this morning he sent his chauffeur to me with another dog of the same species, an equally beautiful specimen. He came in person a little later and asked me how I liked him. I told him that I was quite mad about the animal and would like to buy him. Hébertot told me that I must accept him "as a present, a souvenir" and now I am the proud possessor of Kabar. Natacha and I named him after considerable eager discussion. You might have thought that it was the christening of a child, so particular we were about the suitability of the name to the beast. Another member of our family to travel with us!

And tomorrow we start on our journey. We have planned to make Avignon our first stop en

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route to Nice and Natacha's parents.

We leave Paris. We leave by road who did arrive by air! I left London with a sort of sombre joy of regret, if that is quite clear. A heavy melancholy shot with a heavy joy that I had walked the London pavements and breathed the London air . . . I shall leave Paris jauntily, with a smile and a wave, even, as jauntily and happily, Paris saluted me upon my arrival. Even as she has made my visit memorable with gracious gifts and charming acts of courtesy and hospitality and interest and welcome. I shall leave her with an even greater admiration than was mine when I arrived. Paris ten years ago was a city of light-someness and beauty. But then she had every right to be wearing flowers in her hair and bangles on her limbs. Today, now, she still wears flowers in her hair, though they have been plucked by undaunted hands from thousands and thousands of graves. She still wears bangles on her limbs, though they have walked to the Funeral Dirge. She is not only as beautiful as she is brave, but she as brave as she is beautiful—that is saying a great deal.

One can pick flaws here and there with everything. With everyone, if it comes to that. Perfection has not yet shown her shining, miraculous face to any man in any form, or place, or thing. But, after all is said and done, it is the

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spirit back of a person, a city, a book, a song, that immortalizes it and leaves its essence with you. The spirit of Paris is young and triumphant over heartbreak and despair.

*Vive la France! Vive la France!*

And tomorrow we turn our faces to the South!

*Nice, August 18th*

Our first night in Nice, at the Chateau Juan Les Pins, was a wonderfully restful one, following, as it did, the fatigue of the motor trip from Paris. We were both glad to get there.

We left Paris with one extra dog, the Dauberman-Pincher given us by M. Hébertot; with extra "bits" of baggage containing, mostly, Natacha's Poiret gowns, with a heart full of regret and with as many good wishes and invitations to return as we could absorb. We had come to court Paris as a half-shy stranger. We left her as a warm friend to whom we hope soon to return.

Our first stop was at Avignon. We stopped there and had a most delicious luncheon. The Inns in France are the places where you get the best food. Small towns. Small inns. Unforgettable spots, the wine of the region is Chablis and it is served in carafes instead of in bottles. Since we left America we have not had a cock-

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tail. I have said before that the French do not go in for what is commonly known as "strong drink". The strong drinking one hears about in Paris is not done by Frenchmen but by tourists who have their own shakers and use 'em if they want a good one!

The country we rode through en route to Nice was simply a town with beautiful castles. They stood here, there and everywhere, like gigantic flowers of stone, flowers of an age foregone, but scarce forgotten. Almost every hill, peaking against the low-leaning sky, has some chateau, some beautiful country places. Places where you feel as though you should linger, should absorb, so that, going on, you would surely not forget.

We put up for the night at Bourges and the next morning we took the road to Nice.

Most of our route I had planned carefully ahead of time, charting our eating places and resting places as nearly as might be. But now and then I would be behind schedule or ahead of schedule and we would have to go adventuring for the spot whereon to rest our weary heads. It was rather fun—not knowing where we might sleep or eat. Wondering if the next turn of the road would bring us to some enchanted spot where we would rest for the night or fare in the middle of the way. Adventure.

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I thoroughly enjoyed it all, but I think that that was, perhaps more than a little bit selfish of me. For it was rather too much for Natacha.

The coming up and going down incessantly on serpentine mountain paths. The fact that we went a matter of some 850 kilometers in that brief time, and the further fact, joyful to me, but not so joyful to her, that they have no speed laws here. You can go as fast as you want to go, and the consequences are on your head and no one else's. Naturally, in the town, you have to slow down a bit, but on the country roads you can go top speed—up to the very limit of your motor's capacity. My motor's capacity, I may say was exceedingly good.

Of course, if you do have an accident, they will arrest you, and that is a very serious offense, but, as a matter of fact, there are singularly few accidents. Not nearly so many as there are in Westchester and Long Island places around and about New York. It may be because each motorist is upon his own, a sort of an honour system, and knows it and lives up to it. Or it may be because there isn't very much road traffic, owing largely, I think, to the fact there are very few Fords. Very few, indeed. Most of the cars are the high-priced, high-powered cars, and there are not a great many of these.

Just the same, I went too fast for Natacha, and the combination of speed and distance was

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beginning to be too much for her. Not to mention the disagreeable facts of dust and disarray, which bother men so little that they frequently forget or neglect to consider how much they do bother women.

Bourges, I must say, is where Phillipe the Beautiful and his Italian wife, an "Este" or a "Medici," I forget which, lie buried. The Cathedral was closed as we speeded by, and as we wanted to make Nice in the evening, we kept on going.

We had to go through Grenoble. There are two roads to Nice. One goes through Lyons; the other goes through Grenoble and Dijon. Of course it can be used only in summer. In winter it is full of snow and quite impassable. Realizing that I had quite a spin ahead of me, I went right on "regardless," as Natacha would doubtless describe it, were she writing my diary for me. And I described, I will admit against myself, a series of hair-raising turns on two wheels—and sometimes on one. I have declared myself immune from the gambling fever, but I must admit that I have a distinct "flair" for speed. So much so that I drove Natacha nearly frantic. She told me that she expected every revolution of the wheel would be the last one, for the wheel, for her and for myself.



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But the Gods being with us, we finally arrived in Nice at nine o'clock in the evening—and no thanks to me, either, I was told in rather wobbly accents by Natacha.

Perhaps she was right. As a matter of fact, not only the Gods but the roads were with me on my trip to Nice. The roads were exceptionally good and in each town there were huge posters where one can see the names and the directions without the bothersome slowing down and inquiring here and there, there and everywhere. The characters on the posters are fully six inches high, so that you can easily decipher them going ninety miles an hour—which is practically if not literally what I did.

Oh, yes, and I had another help, too, a very great one. I flatter myself on my sense of direction, but perhaps I should first of all flatter the Royal Auto Club of Paris this commendable organization made me a chart of the town and roads. Each separate and individual road, has a separate and individual number. Each separate and individual town has a red stone with the number of the road in black thereon, thus dramatically and definitely marking it, even the roads play the "Rouge et Noir!". For instance, the cities from Bourges to Grenoble number the road No. 6. So even if you pass the sign unseeing, if you take the wrong road, say No. 7

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and look at the chart, you see that you are wrong and are guided back to the right crossing.

When I indulge in a slight fit of boastfulness about the eminent and dexterous fashion in which I navigated and circumnavigated the roads, if I may use a nautical term for motoring, I am gently but firmly reminded of the many ingenious devices placed along the way to keep "a young man from going wrong." And honesty compels me to admit that I didn't deserve a great deal of credit. Only for the fact that I did not keep the car on the road when it had every appearance leaving it, wheel by wheel.

Natacha is nervous enough. All women, all beautiful women, surely are highly delicately and very finely organized. They are strung like a priceless Stradivarius. They respond as an apple tree responds to April breezes. But if Natacha had not had, as well, a nerve of steel and so genuine an appreciation of what she could see of the scenery as we sped through it, no doubt she would have been ever more unstrung than she was.

It is trying to think that every revolution of the wheel is going to be the last. I know, I suppose I always have thought, that I am more or less especially protected by the Gods. Swept, as it were, by their wings, for I have taken, many

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and many a time, my life between my two careless hands and have flung it earthward, skyward, seaward, only to have it return to me, laughing, intact and unafraid.

Natacha says she thinks the Gods have nothing to do with motoring—and less to do with motorists of my particular genius, or specie, or whatever you call them.

But the point of this night's writing is that we finally and securely arrived at the Chateau Juan Les Pins tonight at nine o'clock. The stir and welcome, the giving and taking of the story of our trip, the solicitude and mutual talk and excitement, I will tell when I write my diary tomorrow.

It has been all that I could do to write what I have written here tonight. Natacha says that I seem to be possessed of and by this diary of mine; that no doubt with my last expiring breath I would inscribe some theory, some philosophy or some detail, of the trip we are taking. For I have written this instalment tonight not only practically but literally writing with pain. My hands practically and literally refuse to close, my index fingers are all but paralyzed. Natacha pricked my hand with a pin and I will swear that I couldn't feel it . . . all from grasping the wheel as I have been grasping it on our ride from Avignon and Paris.

I have callouses all over both hands, and my

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shoulder and arm-muscles are horribly out of commission from the terrific pumping up and down in the narrow mountain passes. Somehow, I don't complain, the trip was joyously worth the pain, I feel now—and so is writing in this diary.

Whenever I arrive in a new spot, or whenever a certain lapse of the journey has reached its end, I am impelled by a furious desire to get it all down in black and white. I must have been bitten by the phobia of the autobiographer. I think it comes largely from my love of this trip and my desire to immortalize it, to give it permanence and lasting life. As if, by writing it all down, without forgetting so much as a thought, I may be able to distill a certain essence from it to remind me of it all in other days. Or as if I can take Paris and Deauville, London and Normandy, Avignon and Juan Les Pins and keep them all with me, wherever I am, wherever I go, concrete, intact, mine as I found them.

But now I shall go to bed. And surely, surely, I shall sleep tonight if never I have slept before. I can feel sleep drugging my weary eyes, until the lids close of their own accord and I have to open them again by a sheer force of will. I can feel sleep creeping up, up, covering my limbs, my arms, my tired head, as though a warm garment were being drawn over me, softly, al-

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most imperceptibly, obscuring me.

*Juan Les Pins, Nice, August 19th*

We have had a delicious first day.

One of the really pleasurable excitements of life is getting together in a family group after the group has been separated and dispersed for a considerable period of time.

Natacha's mother and father, "Muzzie" and "Uncle Dick" (Mr. and Mrs. Hudnut), came to Nice a year ago to rebuild and do over the chateau which Uncle Dick had given over to the Government as a hospital during the war. When he retired from business, they came to Nice to settled down largely because it had long been a dream with them to do this very thing.

They had lived on the Riviera off and on for years and always said that when Uncle Dick should have retired from business, they would make Nice their permanent home.

It seems to me a fascinating, no, a very satisfactory, an eminently satisfactory thing, to have known so well as they did what they wanted to do, where they wanted to go and then to see that dream take size and shape before their very eyes, a dream hewn out of granite and made to live for all who pass to see.

Uncle Dick bought the villa from a Russian prince who had played at Monte Carlo and had

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lost all of his money. Natacha and I claimed, as we roamed about the lovely, peaceful sloping grounds, that the fact of this still lingered with the chateau. One could feel somehow about it that tragedies had been lived there, made a little lighter, a little easier to bear because of the sheer beauty of the place. It has marvelous grounds and the sun and air, the sense of peace and beauty must have, I think, calmed the sick terror and distortion in many a poor fellow's riddled heart. I like to think so, at any rate.

After the War was over, Muzzie and Uncle Dick put the place back in shape. Of course it needed a lot of alteration and remodelling and doing over after five years, and strenuous years at that.

Muzzie didn't like the interior and so they did that all over again. It was originally a sort of Moorish design, which is all right for a Russian Prince, but doesn't as a rule suit the American taste so well. Muzzie particularly favors Louis XVI, and it has taken them an entire year to make the chateau into a Louis XVI palace. As a matter of fact, they still have two or three rooms to do.

Well, of course, they had to hear from our own lips all that had happened to us during the past year, despite the fact that our letters and

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the papers had carried veritable bundles of these important happenings back and forth between us. It is so much more exciting to say, "such and such a thing took place on such and such a day," and then to have the family "Oh" and "Ah" exclamatorily before your very eyes.

We had to tell them where we were living and whom we had been seeing and what we were planning, and how we felt about this and how we felt about that. We answered numerous inquiries about mutual friends and the friends of friends, and all we knew about this or that birth, death or scandal. All of the customary family gossip was exchanged and interchanged again.

We went over all the details of our trip with extras added on. It was great fun. A constant round of "Natacha, do tell me about this," or "Rudy, I hear so and so, do tell me is it true?"

I told Natacha that while Muzzie and Uncle Dick might live on the continent, an inalienable part of their hearts and interests would never rest on American soil. I doubt that anyone can literally expatriate himself or herself. A part of your country remains with you forever, even if the more external signs are never visible. For instance, with me, I look Italian, of course. That is true. But I have more characteristics of Italy than that, even. I don't particularly relish cold

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weather, for instance. For me, shivering and chilling will be, if it ever comes to me, an acquired taste. This is because, I believe, I am born in a tropical climate. For generations, hot suns and fierce suns have penetrated the blood of my forefathers and it has come down to me, still alien to cold.

On the morrow we become acquainted with the countryside.

And so this day has passed. We had written ahead, begging them not to go in for any entertaining on our behalf, pleading that we wanted to be and talk with them and have some time for solitude and ourselves before going on with our trip.

And so this first day has been spent in the well known bosom of the family, talking of familiar topics and persons, telling Auntie, whom we rejoined with "much pleasure," as the formality has it, all that had transpired between the time she left us at Cherbourg and here, and exhibiting the particular and beautiful points of our large family of dogs, comprising at the date of our arrival here, six pekingese besides my Dauberman. As we are all dog fanciers, we had a marvelous time with the family plus the dog menage at the chateau itself.

My hands are still stiff and my shoulder mus-



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cles refuse to move with their old supple efficiency. Natacha says that it is well for me that I am vacationing and not working. I would make a stiff, unwieldy subject for a director's baton at the present rate.

However, I think I am improving, for when Natacha suggested with some enthusiasm this evening, before retiring, that she try the pin-sticking test again, I acceded, but her efforts were rewarded by a faint yowl of protest from me.

I told her that this volition on her part aroused in me the oft pondered theory as to whether or not women are really inherently cruel or inherently kind.

One hears much ado about the hand that rocks a cradle, but one also hears considerable about the hand that wrecks a home.

It seems to me that the mother in women is kind, but the female in woman is of the tigress-cat variety, and delights in subtle cruelties, in testing power, in watching the opposite species suffer at her hands.

For it is quite well known that if the maternal in woman be lacking, a sort of monstrosity is the result. Women may not have any children of their own, perhaps not . . . but the maternal instinct . . . the maternal element may be in them very tenderly and very strongly. On the other

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hand, I have seen women who had children of their own and in whom, I yet missed, felt the lack of the maternal instinct.

Women are not charming unless they have that maternal instinct. They are somehow strangely and lamentably lacking. One misses a vital core to them, which is the only way I can put what I mean. . . .

Women who cannot be tender, are women to avoid, I believe. . . . They may be kind to you in the flush of success, or while they care about you, but once the emotional afflatus has died down they will turn, snarling and requite you. . . . For tenderness is lacking, . . . the fire is built on no sheltering hearth of protectiveness.

I like the Madonna in women . . . the most beautiful women in Italy are the Madonna type . . . serene faces . . . calm, soft eyes . . . calm, overlying something deeper and stronger . . . mother-women going their ways of beauty and light. . . . Perhaps my sub-conscious mind, as the psychologists say, received some sort of an impact in early childhood from seeing the Madonna type of beauty in my own land . . . but I do know that I hark back to it whenever I discuss beauty . . . whenever I think of the women of Italy. . . . Another night of sound and blessed sleep. I

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sleep so well here, almost dreamlessly.

*Juan Les Pins, Nice, August 20th*

The third benignant sunny day. Luncheon guests. Talk. It is so nice to feel that so many people are interested in what I do, what I think. I shall never, I believe, recover from the amazement that so many people want to know what I think, what I plan, what I do from day to day, from week to week. . . . It is the most stimulating flattery in the world.

As for the Riviera itself, there is practically no one here. In summer it is absolutely dead.

The same old idea of "smartness"—a term which I am growing to particularly detest because, it means the doing of so many smug little things at so frequent and so great a sacrifice of beauty, pleasure and comfort.

For instance, here on the Riviera, it is most perfectly beautiful during the summer months. Roses. Ultramarine blue sky. Matching and matchless sea. Air floating like thin veils of beauty over all.

But the ultra-smart people trying to be original, perhaps, go to the Riviera during the winter, when it is cold and rainy, and when the fine weather comes here they go up to Chamonix to get the winter sports during the summer time.

It is a perversion of seasons and places that

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I cannot quite understand, I can understand that few following a few about, because after all, one wants to go where one's friends go, but I cannot imagine the reasonableness of the very few, like sheep, leading the many the pace that leads in the wrong direction at the wrong time.

During the winter on the Riviera you get cold, damp weather, mixed in with some days of sunshine here and there, but for the most part it is quite precisely like what the Riviera is NOT supposed to be. Involved, but I make myself clear—to myself, at all events, and I hope to you.

Personally, I think the thing to do is to have an all year around home somewhere, as near to ideality as you can find any place. I should like to have such a place, done somewhat in the medieval style. I am not particularly keen for modernity, either in house, dress or woman. I like a touch of the Old World. A flavor of tradition. A hint of other lands and other times . . . old golds . . . sombre reds . . . dulled blues . . . grays that are like smoke drifting. . . . And I should like to live in such a place, year by year, season following season, so that I should come to know the place, absorb it into myself and be, in turn absorbed into the place.

I have no desire for this flitting from house to house, from estate to estate, never really making

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a home, an abiding place of anyone of them. Never building a tradition.

I should like to *know* my house, to make a shrine of it, where all the beautiful things I am able to garner from the four corners of the globe would find abiding places. Where my friends might come to remember me, as permanently fixed on a "set" at last, and where I might die, at last, after the storm and stress.

Natacha and I had great joy in wandering about the chateau and admiring and discussing and asking such questions as only members of the same family may ask. Muzzzie was thoroughly proficient on Louis XVI, and Natacha revelled in the decorations and plans.

It has been a happy interlude.

Tomorrow we shall give over to planning the onward move.

### *Juan Les Pins, Nice, August 21st*

Natacha was reading over my diary this morning, as we breakfasted in bed, the sun flooding in upon us, the smell of flowers in the air, birds speaking to one another outside the half-opened windows. Summer in a summer world . . . it seemed hard to believe that there had ever been a land or a time of rain and trouble and dissension. . . .

It came over me then, in one of those over-

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whelming moments we are all, I suppose, prone to now and then, how sad it is that the race of man lives as they do live. With a world, sun flooded and sweet with flowers, with garden spots and what the Americans call "the great open spaces" stretching like Edens around and about us, why do we huddle and struggle in cities, wearing our brains and bodies out in the endless struggle for bread and rent and raiment and the pleasures that are like fitful fevers in the end?

I suppose it is because we are all more or less gregarious. It harks back of the days of old, when there were nomad races and the far more frequent tribes that got together and formed the first villages, the even more former cliff dwellers. Man likes to dwell by man and out of that liking, that desire, cities have arisen.

Even I, I suppose, would sooner or later shake off the pleasure of dream and wish to be back in the crucible with my fellow-men, striving mightily, and doubtless out of all proportion, for my little place in the sun.

And perhaps again it is the height of wisdom to struggle so. When we do, these interludes of sun, and air and flowers come to us with even a more poignant happiness. We love them all the more because we do not have them all the while. The air is like wine to us, intoxicating us. The

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sun becomes a mantel of gold, covering us with coveted touch. The flowers breathe an incense rarer because infrequent.

But if ever my belief in myself should utterly fail me. If the day should come when my struggle for my individual Right should wear me threadbare of further effort, then I should come to a garden place where the sky would ever be blue above me, where my feet would press soil as vernal and virgin as I could find, where, below me, under white cliffs, the sea could sing me its immemorial lullaby.

I think, there must, at one time or another, have been sailors in my family. For the sea pounds in my veins with a tune I still remember . . . and I know that I could not have remembered it in this life I have lived.

One of the most fascinating speculations I know of is the fact that no one of us inherits directly from our parents. That is why so often a child is born into a family and seems to have no direct, or even indirect affiliation with that family at all. Rather, the blood of some far away, remote ancestor flows in his or her veins. Or the commingled blood of many ancestors comes again to life in this scion of the race. Aliens from their immediate families, they claim kinship with some old buccaneer, some dream-

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ing poet, some isolated lady or some cavalier knight of whom they have probably never heard, but whose long ago story they are re-living, none the less.

Some day when I have time, I am going to go back over my family "tree," I believe they call it, and see if I can find the one to whom I feel most intimately related. Then I shall, no doubt, understand myself as I have not been able to do thus far. To know one's self, thoroughly, finally, in every way, what more complete education could one possibly desire?

But I must get back. After all, I am supposed to be recording events and not the random thoughts that come to me now and then. Still, thoughts are more fascinating than actions, after all. Thoughts give birth to actions and are, in turn, the offspring of the deeds we do.

Natacha was reading my diary . . . now and then a smile would cross her face . . . I knew she knew what I had been thinking when I wrote such and such a thing . . . women have intimate knowledge of the thoughts of men . . . they read us like so many volumes, each bound in our different way . . . we are like children to women . . . to women who love us . . . they indulge us . . . reprimand us . . . and always, always see through us. . . .



## MY PRIVATE DIARY

"Have I omitted anything?" I asked Natacha, "Left anything out you think?"

"From the amount of scribbling you have done since we left, Rudy," Natacha smiled, "it would seem to me to be impossible for you to have omitted anything. You *may* have left out a thought or so, but"—Natacha indicated with a wave of the hand that that seemed to her to be unlikely—"but," she repeated, you *have* left out any mention of meeting Andre Daven in Paris. Don't you think you ought to put him in the next time you write in your diary? He may figure in later events, you know—and then you will wish that you had recorded his—inception—shall I say?"

I told Natacha she was right. Odd that I should have omitted one of the most interesting events of our Paris stay.

While we were in Paris, among the interviewers who came to see me was a young man named Andre Daven.

The minute he came to the room I spotted him as a "type." I am constantly on the lookout for types, because I know them to be so very important to the screen, to each individual picture.

Young Daven is an extraordinarily good-looking chap, of my own country, with amazing eyes, fine physique and general bearing out of

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the ordinary and of a compelling attraction.

Natacha says that this is one trait of mine quite out of the common in men. Almost any man can "spot" a beautiful woman, or an extraordinary type of woman. Unique. Individual. Unusual. But very few men, so Natacha tells me, can recognize the unusual or attractive in another man. Perhaps it is because we men are not looking for attractiveness in other men. Men take other men a great deal for granted, I find. Hail-fellow-well-met, and if that element is there the personal appearance does not count for a great deal. But I *am* different in that respect. Perhaps it is because I have so long been interested in the casting of pictures in which men figure as prominently as women. I have watched other men rise in screen fame; Barthelmess, Novarro, Glenn Hunter, chaps like that, and, of course, have given some thought to the part type plays in a man's screen success.

For myself, for instance, I know that my foreign blood showing in my face and bearing has a great deal to do with the kind reception I had by the American public. The Anglo-Saxon has a distinct "flair" for the Latin. It is the call of strangeness. The allure of the alien. The call of the Unknown. The pique of interest in what we are not ourselves.

Pondering over all of this, has made me acute

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in my observation of my fellow-men as well as my fellow-women. So that, now, it has become almost an instinct with me. My mind automatically discards screen undesirables, and as automatically and instantaneously recognizes and seizes upon the potential film material. "Film fodder" instead of "cannon fodder," if I may employ a slight vulgarism.

Perhaps judging so many contests, has been part of my training. I would make a fine casting director if I were not an actor—and if I did not have a wife with even acuter and finer capabilities than mine in this particular field.

At any rate, this day in Paris several days ago, I was sitting in our suite awaiting for the interviewers. Some six or seven came in together and they were photographers and one or two other people about.

Immediately Andre Daven entered, I "spotted" him, as they say in New York. And I was not wrong, I had confirmation of that by the fact that Natacha's eyes met mine on the instant and we nodded as if to say, "Ah, you recognize him too. . . ."

I began to interview, instead of being interviewed.

I asked him his name, his occupation, his ambitions and various other questions of a like nature, which doubtless took him considerably by

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surprise, seeing as he had come to do the same thing to me.

He told me his name and said that he was writing for "Bonsoir," "Theatre et Comedia Illustrée," and the "Paris Journal."

I immediately came back at him with the suggestion that he go into pictures.

He replied that it was unthinkable, that he couldn't think of it, that it was kind of me to be interested, but that he couldn't see it that way at all.

My obstinancy was aroused, along with my raising belief in young Daven as a screen possibility. I set up to convince him that he should give up the art of writing for the art of the screen.

I told him my own plans and assured him that if he would accompany me back to the United States on my return, I would give him a part in my next picture, whatever it might be. I told him that I was hoping to do "Monsieur Beaucaire," and that if I did, there would certainly be a good part in it for him. At least, one that would put him on terra firma, and not leave him to the desolate fate of extra's beginning.

I had to talk a long while. I don't suppose any other screen beginner in the annals of the screen ever had to have so much pressure brought

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to bear upon him (or her) as did the "distrain" Monsieur Daven. But he finally gave me his word that he would be with me when I should set sail for America again, and even before he left, began to wax enthusiastic about a screen career. He asked me so many questions that he went as well informed on technique and the allied arts, as I could make him out of my own knowledge.

I left him beginning his study of English, plus his study of all phases of screen art, with as much assiduity as he had formerly been against it. That is an advantage the student has over the delittance. They will master a subject or an art—students will, I mean. And a *master is always a superior*. He holds the whip hand.

Natacha said that she thought I had left out very little else, save for the description of one or two theatres, but if they did not impress me, why should I have recorded them? After all, I want to mark the shining hours (as the sun dials say) and the dull moments may as well be consigned to the fortuitous oblivion of the mind. Freud claims that nothing is forgotten; that all things go into the waste basket of the subconscious mind, eventually, come to light again. Especially if one is psycho-analyzed.

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But I think I shall never be psycho-analyzed. I have no inhibitions that I know of. I have neither neuroses nor complexes. And if I have I do not suffer from them. Sufficient unto the day. . . .

Enough of the realm of thought. . . . I extricate myself with some difficulty from this musing in the sun . . . a place in the sun . . . a place in the sun . . . a place in the sun. I have always rather loved the sound of that phrase—it seems to me to sum up in a few words the ultimate philosophy of happiness and peace. What could, after all, be more desirable? Not castle walls nor turreted mansions, nor the velvet-shod ways of the rich . . . a place in the sun is the birthright of every man and every woman . . . it is the heritage of the race . . . and each of us could gain it if he would but keep in mind that hope is a grail and a goal. . . .

Today we were packing again for the onward move.

It has been a pleasant interlude. Natacha has got rested again, I think, and, though I dare not say so, I am again ready for the spinning race on one, two or three wheels, as the speed laws will permit.

Natacha and Mr. and Mrs. Hudnut and Auntie, who is again to accompany us to the

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rest of our journey, have severally extracted promises from me to have some respect for our necks, if none for the laws of gravitation, and I have given those promises with sternly compressed lips, drawn brows and utter solemnity. But what is a man to do when the dream of speed possesses him . . . ah, then. . . .

Tomorrow we shall be on our way. We had planned to get away today, but what with drowsing in the sun and listening to Mr. Hudnut's plea that we remain over one more day . . . and being nothing loath to do so . . . we are still here tonight . . . tomorrow we go . . . Italy!

*August 24th*

I have another Genoan night in which to write in my diary. I had expected to go on, but Natacha is feeling rather badly. I begin to fear that she will not be able to "make the grade" with us all of the way.

Auntie and I laugh at her and tell her she should have *our* strength and nerve, but when it comes to the aforementioned dirt, dust and dishevelment, PLUS my driving, which I am sure Natacha would describe as "reprehensible," it is a little too much for Natacha's sense of humor.

I suppose each one of us has the special thing we cannot stand. The proverbial straw that

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breaks the traditional camel's back. This sort of a trip is that straw to Natacha. Not that I think it would be if she had started out on the journey feeling fit, but the last year or two have been trying and difficult ones to her. And because she has met them with high courage, the calm, the earnest belief in the eventual rightness of our cause, it has told upon her endurance.

I have noted about women that they can stand up under the most tremendous strains, the most devastating calamities, and will break under some slight thing—such as motoring on one wheel, for instance!

My own mother, one of the bravest women I ever knew, was an illustration of this observation.

I remembered today, with a sharply-etched distinctness, the time of my father's death.

There was something very close and beautiful, very dear and intimate between my mother and father. I think it was one of the true loves of the world, one of the dearest married loves it has ever been my privilege to see. In fact, if I have any idealism concerning marriage, and the one, the great, the lasting love (and I have), I owe it to that early example of the existence of such a thing.

If I had been told beforehand, that my father was to die I would have prophesized that it would



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break, kill, annihilate my mother. I would have declared that she would have never survived it, never stand up under the loss.

It would have been *the* destroying grief not to be endured. But my father did die, and when he died my mother was one of the Spartan women, tearless and upright. Grief, she knew, of course. But in her grief I had the feeling that she was sustained by some inner thing that no one else would know. Some secret and beautiful knowledge of a bond between my father and herself that even death had no power to sever. They were still *together*—and she knew it.

There are some few marriages like that. Two individualities come together, maintain their separate individualities if they have the proper spirit, but their life streams, merge, become one, and are never divisible again, even when death seems to strike them asunder.

It was, I believe, this lovely and tender and mystical spirit that gave my mother the proud and beautiful strength she had when my father's earthly presence, passed away from her. *She knew what she knew.*

Woman's holy courage was first revealed to me in my mother. I saw it first at my father's death-bed, even as I saw his part in it when he called my brother Alberto and myself to his bed

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side, turned his face, already pale and fixed in the final lineaments of death, held out the crucifix and said to us, "My boys, love your mother and above all—love your country."

I saw it later on, at the impressive Italian funeral, with the dark trappings of the funeral coach drawn by the six black horses, the horseman in his Charon-like uniform of silver and black, the four nearest of my father's friends walking beside the hearse, holding in their hands the solemn tassels of black that depended from it. The tall cathedral candles . . . the flowers massed in symbolic designs . . . my sister sobbing softly by my side . . . my brother pale and with compressed lips . . . I, myself, sobbing, too, though trying to restrain myself . . . and, seeming to be the centre of it all . . . the pale, frail, silent and indomitable figure of my mother, bearing her grief as an acolyte bears the trappings of some sacramental task.

Later on, after the funeral had become a solemn part of a distant past, I can remember her kneeling before the altar candles of the cathedral, not so much praying as holding commune with him who had but preceded her. Still loving him. Still feeling that sense of togetherness.

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Love can never be a light thing with me with such memories. My boyish heart was thus, early impressed, sealed, by the enduringness of love. I shall never forget it. Never come from under that first profound seriousness and beauty of the right love of the one man for the one woman and vice-versa.

I often think that such endurance as came to me in my later trials, my days of starvation and privation in New York, may have come to me direct from that brave and gallant little figure of my mother. For she had learned a stern lesson in the class-room of courage and fortitude. Even her early life was a preparation, for she had gone through the terrors and privations of the siege of Paris. She was the daughter of Pierre Filibert Balbin, who was an erudite Parisian doctor and had fallen in love with Giovanni Guglielmi, then a dashing figure of Italian cavalry. A captain, in fact. She married him in the flood tide of romance, and he took her to his home town, the little village of Castellaneta, to live. But I shall come to that later on. There, on the very scene of my birth and boyhood, little memories shall come crowding that now I can glimpse in retrospect.

After all, wherever else we may go, however many other places be sweet or bitter or adventurous with associations, the place of one's birth

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is ever the shrine to which one turns one's feet. One goes back . . . and one can go no farther back than the place where one first saw the sun . . . awakened to the world of sound and sentiment, through the hearing of a mother's voice gentle in lullaby . . . I am going back. . . .

All of this digression began through my anxiety for Natacha. I fear that she is not as strong as she might be and that perhaps this trip is going to be too much for her. At first I had hoped, (tried to believe) that her nervousness was a purely feminine thing, a whim of lust and discomfort, but I feel now that I should have known Natacha better than to suppose that she would indulge herself in anything only of the imagination. I shall watch her more carefully from this time forth.

Does one ever know women? One learns the ways of their hearts and finds that, after all, one has learned only a part. I think I shall profess ignorance which will doubtless be the beginning of my real knowledge. Ignorance so often is, *when* we acknowledge it. . . .

But to go back and take up my story where I left it last night, at that first Italian luncheon table. I was about to recount an amusing incident that happened to us there:

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You see, I had been away ten years. I didn't know whether the cigarettes were as good as they had used to be. And they had used to be, I thought, very good, indeed. Since I landed at Cherbourg, I have learned how many American things are superior to European ones; the chorus girls, the women in "toto," the theatre, the food, et cetera. I had conceived the notion of disappointment. I have come to be prepared for disappointment. And this philosophy of disappointment included cigarettes, which are so much a part of the smaller pleasures of my daily life.

Well, we had brought with us some cigarettes. As I crossed the frontier, I, of course, declared them—and the duty is something frightful. I paid 600 lire for 600 cigarettes—a lire a piece. At the rate of 24 lire for one dollar, this would figure out about five cents apiece.

Of course the Macedonian tobacco sold in Italy, is marvelous. The best tobacco in France is Egyptian, Maryland or Virginian. The Maryland brand is terrifically strong. For people not used to it, it all but chokes you. Very strong. But Italy has its marvelous Turkish tobacco. It is a Government monopoly and, like all monopolies—American jewels and gowns for instance—is taxed.

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Well, at luncheon I ordered some Italian cigarettes just for the curiosity of the thing, and when I started smoking them, I found them even better than before. Oh, much better! Really *very* much better than my favorite cigarette I had so precariously and so expensively procured for my consumption. Natacha had a marvelous time kidding me about my bringing them into the country.

Another funny incident occurred as we crossed the frontier. As we crossed, the first thing I had to do was to have my passport looked over by a carabinieri, then by the Custom House Guard, who in Italy belongs to a unit of the Regular Militia. When the carabinieri had looked at my papers, he asked me in Italian how long it was since I had been in Italy. I told him ten years. "You married an American," he said with a very knowing look, as if quite accustomed and slightly amused at this order of things, "you made your fortune and you have come home now!"

"No," I said getting "on" to him. "Not quite what you think, my friend. I worked for my money."

He looked kindly but scarcely convinced. Wasn't Natacha sitting by me, beautifully dressed, an American? Hadn't I been away for ten years? Wasn't I returning in a partially

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triumphant and luxurious manner? What more did he need to know? Hadn't he seen "this sort of thing" before?

My name meant nothing to him, less than nothing. A rural carabinieri.

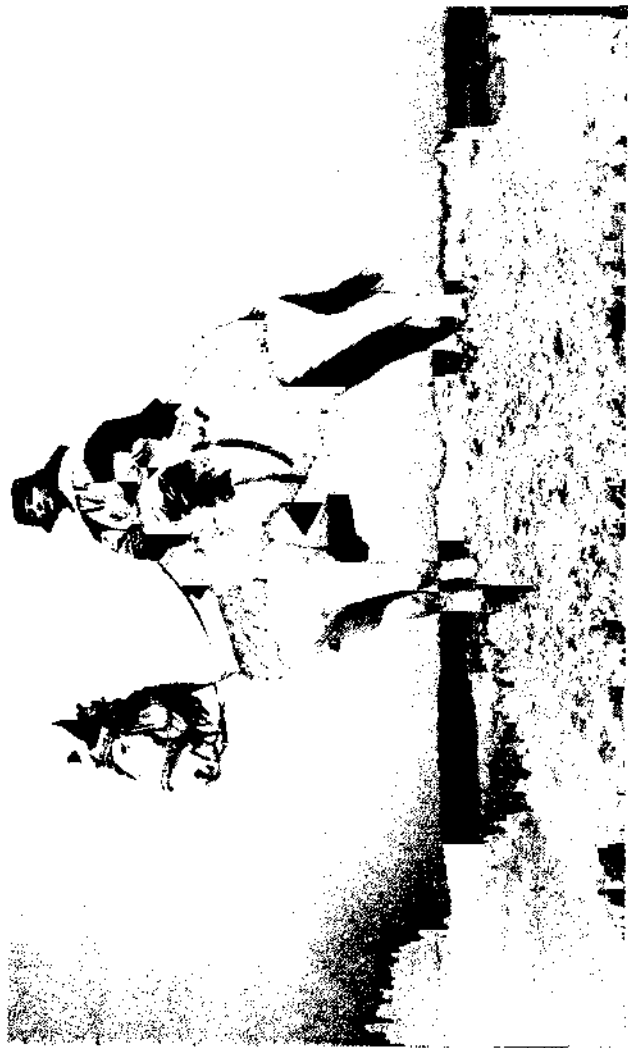
He wouldn't have seen my pictures. Hardly any of the pictures in which I have appeared have been shown in Italy. I knew that much before I arrived here, but so great and wide spread is picture publicity in America, yes, and in London, too, that while I knew the facts of the case, it seemed hard to believe that no word of it all had reached parts of Italy. I knew from letters that my sister had not even seen "The Four Horsemen," and I am determined that when I reach Milan, I shall arrange to have it shown to her. Even *she* must have a sketchy idea of what I have done and what it means . . . to me, at any rate. Letters are imperfect transcriptions of this particular kind of achievement. It is one of the things that must be seen to be believed in.

However, the lack of recognition doesn't trouble me much. On the contrary, it pleases me immensely that no one knows me. For, after all, I am come home for a rest and not for personal appearances. In this guise of strangeness I can the better observe than be observed



The Famous Lover as *The Duke of Chartres* with Belle Daniels *The Princess*  
in "Monsieur Beauchêne".





Valentino as *The Shiek* on Jadan, the thoroughbred Arabian loaned by Mr. Kellogg  
of Battle Creek fame, for this one scene in Valentino's last picture  
"The Son of The Shiek".

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myself.

Well, it was six o'clock when we got through with the authorities. Growing late. It was later still when luncheon was over and we were ready to take to the open road once more.

We were fairly near Genoa; had only 250 kilometers still to go. But the 250 kilometers were over a tortuous road following the coast. A gorgeous road in the matter of scenery, but terrible to drive through.

It is nearing September. Summer is dying in a prolonged ecstasy of glory. And the Italian scenery seemed almost conscious of this splendid death, so magnificently did it unfold before us.

The road seemed to be the only factor of the landscape unaware of the glory of the season. Dirt! Dirt! Dirt! We thought we had come through dust and dirt before, but now that we are in Italy, we realize that we were but amateurs before.

About a foot of dirt came up from the road as we went through. Stones, too! The Italian government, you see, has no money to keep the roads in good condition since the war. People on the side of the roads crack the stones. Then they throw these cracked stones into the roads and let the automobiles and carts chip them and the rain smooth them down. No steam rollers. An ingenious economy—for the government.

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But not so good for the unfortunate motorists, who are not, perhaps, as eager as they might be to improve the government roads at their tire's expense. Not to mention their countenances, their clothes and their nerves.

And when you add to the above items, the fact that the road winds like so many writhing serpents, you have a sum total that you may well daunt the most adventurous motorist.

When we finally got into Genoa, it was midnight.

And here in Genoa, at midnight, Natacha had a nervous breakdown. Between the dust, the rumbling of the motor, the sense of impending and immediate danger, she was absolutely fagged out. The strain that has been telling on her all along, came to an end. A collapse. It was just the last straw. This is why we have remained over the other day.

To see Natacha so, was a shock to me, too. For I have never seen her so before. She sobbed and wept like a child, and could not be quieted. I was up with her most of the night, doing all the soothing and calming things I could think of doing. Toward morning she fell asleep and awoke this morning, nearer noon than early morning, feeling refreshed and quieted and insisting that she was quite all right to go on as

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we had planned.

Shortly after luncheon, which I insisted upon Natacha taking alone in her room, we went out and looked at Genoa a little. Not so much as we might have if Natacha had not had the collapse the previous evening, however. We spent about an hour roaming about. Then I made Natacha rest for a half an hour, and after that we drove out to the Agricultural College where I had spent part of my youth.

Most of my old professors were away on their vacations and I did not have as many to reminiscence with us as I might have had at another season of the year. But the old gentleman who had had charge of the cattle in my time was still there—and still in charge. He was in charge of the *Suisserie*, where only the thoroughbreds are kept. Luigi is his name. We called him Gigi. And he remembered me well.

I told him that I had been in pictures—and found that he knew nothing whatever about it, or about me. But he did pay me the compliment of observing with some acidity, that since my time, the boys who had been there were “a pack of cowards and fools,” and that he often said to them “If Guglielmi were here, he’d show you how to handle a bull! He could handle them well and never was afraid of them.”

I quite preened under this compliment. There

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is enough of the small boy in me still to feel the swelling delight, a sense of prowess at this particular form of flattery.

It is true that I was, always have been and still am, crazy about cattle. Some day . . . but that is another story!

However, and here is something I think that Gigi did not know, I had another reason than cattle for hanging so closely about the stables as I did in my school days. And this reason was not a bull—but a girl!

The cook of the school had in my day, a very pretty daughter. At least, *I* thought she was pretty. At that sentimental age, I was in the state of rhapsidizing a dairy maid into a Lorelia, with little or no strain upon my imagination. It was for this reason that I haunted the stables, over which the girl lived, although, I used, as a doubtless flimsy pretext, the fact that I was interested in a Swiss bull, a very fine breed kept by the government. The country people there make olive oil, raise flowers and sell milk drawn from the little mountain cows—and very good milk, indeed. These are the industries of the country. Naturally, they can't afford to buy thoroughbreds for themselves, and they avail themselves of the thoroughbreds of the schools

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to cross their breeds and get a better kind of cattle. But to get back to the girl . . . the first maiden who inflamed my adolescent fancy. Perhaps, not to discredit the doubtless fascinating lady, because she was the first to cross my amative path since I had been enrolled a student at the Royal Academy of Agriculture. Also, before that time, I had been a little young for such romantic encounters. Although I *did* have a love affair at the age of six. But that sweet episode belongs to my Castellaneta days and shall be recorded in proper time and place.

I made some mention of the cook, and very casually, her pretty daughter—and found that Gigi, *did* know about it after all. ALL about it, too. Thus do the young ever delude themselves with chimeras of their exceeding cleverness. They play with naive consistency, a sort of ostrich game and are as consistently amazed when they are discovered.

In fact, Gigi not only had known all about my impassionate state, but, as I talked with him, was able to reconstruct far more of the youthful incident that I was able to do. He reminded me of the night I stepped out of the dormitory, came into the study hall, climbed out of the window by the light of a huge lantern and clambered down there down to the main hall. The big door was made of stones with corrugations in

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between. I put my bare feet (romantic touch!) into them as though they had been stairs and walked tip-toe to the casement of my love!

Hanging rather precariously beneath the window to my Amaryllis, I warbled a low, sweet Neapolitan air, a love sonnet, until she appeared to my enraptured vision. As Gigi talked. I could see myself, indeed, trying to maintain my position with the jaunty grace I felt the occasion demanded, gazing upwards with great moon eyes, humming my burdened tune.

I felt that I was getting along famously, when I heard an awful racket against the stable door. Fearful and thunderous, I couldn't imagine what it was, but all at once the stable door went wide open and—a young calf ran out!

I, perforce, ran after him—for I knew what would happen if he went loose. Even then agriculture conquered my amorousness. It couldn't I think, in the light of later years, have been very fervid. I know what I would do to-day if I had to choose between the lady of my affections and a calf!

But that night I dropped from my ledge and gave barefooted chase. I got the bare feet all cut up, but I did catch the marauding calf and shut him up in the stable again, from where he had so importunately burst forth.

By this time my romantic ardours were some-

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what cooled down. I ran back to the school with scarce a glance behind me and managed to climb back into my bed. And I also recall that I fell immediately to sleep to dream . . . not of the summarily deserted maiden but of hordes of calves, all pursued by love-sick Lotharios with bare and bleeding feet!

I awoke the next day with a desire to make good on my deficiency of the night before. At the first opportunity I betook myself to a tree beneath the desirable window and stood there arms folded, brows bent, looking up . . . Suddenly I heard a gruff voice saying, "What are you doing there?"

It was one of the professors!

After that I was sent to the stables only once a week. And the cook was told to tell her daughter to *keep her window closed* and not dare come out, or there would be trouble. I found a remedy for *that*. On top of the manger where the famous bull was kept, there was a little window with an iron grating. I used to go in sideways to avoid the bull's horns and would attempt to distract his attention with the bribery of choice morsels to eat. When I had him munching and looking the other way, I jumped onto the little window sill, crouched there, slightly cramped as to position, but nothing else, and talked all of the afternoon. Talked to my Elisa, which, I



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remember, was her name. She was a slip of a girl, but she seemed to me at that time to incarnate all of the poetic loveliness of woman of which I had thus far, only dreamed and read.

After that episode, I may remark in passing. I was constantly and all of the time in love, after the manner of my race. Italy is the veritable land of love, with every breeze a caress and every color of sea and earth a token of some lovely woman's hair or jeweled eyes.

It is some satisfaction to me, upon looking back and remembering what a love-sick stage I was in, the love-sick stage and age that attacks every youth, I suppose, to recall that I really did achieve some success at the agricultural school, and was graduated with the highest honors, my class could confer. This meant so much to my mother! And it meant, if possible, more to me, because I hadn't done so well at my previous educational efforts.

Luigi and I rambled on and on. I asked after this and that classmate, getting as one does, a variety of stories, some happy and full of honors, some bitter with disappointment, a death or two, some tragedies that made me very sad, as I recalled the carefree, ambitious, gay youngsters we had really been at the time, in spite of how we thought ourselves so mature. So much men! So much, even, men of the world!

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As to Elisa and her admirable mother, the cook, Luigi told me that the cook is still there, though away on her doubtless well-earned vacation at the time. Well-earned, certainly, if the boys today ate as prodigiously as the boys of my time.

As for Elisa, she, I learned is married to one of her countrymen, has two children, and is, though, Luigi did not tell me this probably a matron inclined to avoirdupois and bearing no resemblance to the slim, dreamy-eyed girl who caused me so many palpitations in my younger days!

*Vale*, Elisa! You did more for me than either you or I could think at the time. I wish you well, for now you are a memory, sweet-smelling and very young. It would destroy one of the fragile and precious memories that make youth the fragile and precious thing it ought to be.

I don't know how long Luigi and I reminiscenced there on the familiar college piazza. After we had got through with the Past, I told him all that I had been doing, my struggles, my successes, and my hopes for the future, and found the dear man one of the most interested listeners I have ever talked with. He made me know more than anything thus far, that I had, indeed, come home.

Doubtless, it was not very interesting for

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Natacha and Auntie, considering the fact that they could not understand one word of Gigi's dialect. And the cold of the Italian night coming on swiftly, almost froze them.

I think I shall have to arise early in the morning to finish this. I can't keep Natacha awake by my scribbling, and so many things come into my mind to say that I could keep on indefinitely. More in the early dawn, when I shall arise quietly and sit in the rising gold sun of Italy and write. . .

*Genoa, August 25th*

Each day a new leaf turned with always the possibility of finding the reign of some new, some rare, some lovely thing.

Or, perhaps, some terrific thing. But what then? A philosophy, I have always tried to insist in myself and live up to has been the philosophy of fearing nothing in life, of accepting all the things that are a part of living. If we do not suffer, if we never know the pain of body, the pain of heart and mind and soul, if we have never wept over a bier or crushed out bitter breaths against a vanquished hope, then we have never really lived at all. We have simply played through life. Made of it a perpetual carnival. Never stripped the motley masks to gaze upon the strained and pitiful faces underneath.

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I believe in accepting suffering as a component part of living. As a part, even a necessary part, of this journey through the vast country of life.

If I ever become the artist I hope to be, I shall owe it not so much to my hours of song and dance, as to the many, many hours I have sat alone, friendless, hopeless, hungry of soul as well God knows, as hungry of body.

There is I believe a silver lining to every cloud. But first to our gaze must appear the leaden, lowering cloud in order that we may be the more joyously dazzled by the shining silver underneath.

If we could all realize, *really* realize suffering as, not a thing apart, a thing to be avoided and run from as from isolated thing, a pestilential plague, we would be able not only to endure pain more stoically, but we would also grow in nature, mentally and spiritually.

Life is a great travail. Like the flowers who push their valiant way through the dark, encumbering earth, often bruised, often, I venture to say, despairing, finally to reach perfection and sweetness under the sun by day and the silver moon by night so most humans push and force their several ways through the dark, encumbering hours before they may attain their measure's growth. . . .

## MY PRIVATE DIARY

I wax philosophic in the morning. . .

Perhaps I should have as a maxim, "Give the morn to meditation, give the night to joy"!

To get back to narrative. . .

On our way back from the School of Agriculture, which I left with a slight moisture of the eyes, and a promise to come back again one day when the other professors and some of the new pupils should be there, we got under way. Natacha said, "You had a wonderful time, didn't you, Rudy?"

And I laughed and said that in such moments as I had lived through, one was able to regain and recapture boyhood again. Reliving a thing on the scene of its action is almost as good to the imaginative mind as actually living it.

Better, perhaps, for looking backwards cast a tender glow over things that were not, perhaps as tender at the time. And looking backward is robbed of the fear, the difference that one feels when one, perforce, looks *forward*. The past is *known* to us. It has no further terrors. It has done its best—or its worst. But which ever it is, it has been done anyway. But the future . . . ah, there indeed is the Bottomless Pit over which only such a bridge of philosophy as I have so weakly sketched may make it bearable.

On our way homeward I suggested, optimis-

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tically, as it transpired, that we stop at Lido d'Albaro for a bit of supper.

As we drove through the little town, what should I see but an advertisement of "The Conquering Power" called here, "The Human Comedy." Of course "The Human Comedy" is the name of the series of Balzac's novel from one of which, "Eugenie Grandet," "The Conquering Power" was adapted. But there is no connection between the two in the public mind, and when I asked people if they had seen "The Conquering Power", they invariably replied that they had not.

As further instance of the up-and-doing picture régime in this part of Italy, when we passed the most pretentious picture house of Italy, we saw advertised there as follows: "For the first time in Italy: *Joan the Woman*." The picture with Geraldine Farrar.

Then, on the other side, in a less pretentious house, an advertisement of Bill Hart in something he must have made the Lord knows how far back!

I think a Triangle picture. These were first-run houses.

And I said to myself, silently but with great inner emphasis, "Ten years from now I will be popular in Italy, *perhaps*, **BUT** they don't know

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*me now."*

That much was certain. From the chance wayfarer along the road, to the first and second run picture houses, I was as I had been when I left Italy, as unknown to films as films were unknown and unexpected to me.

And so we went back to our hotel.

*Milan, August 28th*

Ah, now I feel that I should sit here for as many weeks as I shall probably spend hours, in order to get in all that has happened to us.

The trip to Milan with its delays and complications!

The meeting with my sister, the effusions! The tears of joy! The reminiscences which I shall recount later on in due sequence of events, like a conscientious and technical story-teller. The overwhelmingness of seeing one of my own again . . . after so many years!

I have been stirred by the profound emotions that go to show one, when one may sometimes have doubted how much thicker, after all, though time and oceans come between, is blood than water!

I had wired Milan, because my sister had expected me earlier in the week, saying that we would be delayed.

But telegraph service in Italy is the worst the

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world has ever seen, and I trust, for the sake of all travelers and messages of import, the worst the world will ever see.

You send by way of illustration, a telegram today. You are lucky, more than lucky, you are blessed of the Gods if the telegram arrives at its destination in twenty-four hours.

I sent one to my sister, and then, being aware of conditions along this line, I sent another—and then I sent another. They got the second wire ahead of the first one, but too late to serve its purpose.

My Valet, whom I had sent on ahead, was already at the hotel with my sister. They had had no word of the delay at the time, and they sat themselves down and waited from eleven in the morning until ten at night.

There is probably no worse ordeal given to the long-suffering race of man than the ordeal of waiting. Especially when you are waiting for someone long and eagerly anticipated. Someone whom you have particularly longed to see. Each minute is an hour. Each hour a day. Each day a small eternity.

Apprehensions make the dragging hours tedious. This may have happened, or this . . . or that . . . by the time the waiting is well on its way, the one who is waiting, has the expected



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party dead and buried, and is really in the dour weeds of mourning.

Meanwhile, of course, we were on the road from Genoa to Milan.

It was raining with a driving, gray persistence, and we couldn't make very good time.

When nine-thirty or ten arrived, my poor distracted sister didn't know what on earth to do.

She imagined, by then, the very worst. She couldn't endure the inertia of sitting there. Just sitting hands folded, heart thundering with impatience and fear, one instant longer.

As I have said, as every one knows, no doubt, the emotions of the Italians are easily aroused. One can imagine the results when something occurs really calculated to arouse them.

My sister had all she could do to subdue the hysteria she felt rising within her.

She was so nervous that inactivity finally became insupportable, and she said, "I am going to Genoa to see what has happened!"

She found out that a train was leaving in twenty minutes and on that train she jumped and went to Genoa.

She arrived there two hours later, still frantic with apprehensions.

By that time we were in Milan.

I eventually got her on the long distance tele-



"I love you so much", says the dancer in "*A Sainted Devil*" to *Don Alonso*, played by Rudy, "that I will reveal the whereabouts of your stolen bride *Julietta*".



Valentino as *Don Alonzo* in "A Sainted Devil", with his bride *Julietta*, just before the abduction scene on their wedding night.

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phone and told her where we were, what had happened to us, how I had wired her and that, in short, we were safe and sound and quite all right, and only suffering from the disappointment of not seeing her at once.

The poor girl took a six o'clock train the next morning, arriving in Milan at ten.

We were having breakfast when she knocked at the door.

Ah, well, we didn't say anything!

After all, at such time, what is there to *say*? Words appear, but tired, used-up things that have too frequently said the same things on more trivial occasions.

But each knew how the other felt, and that, after all, is the great thing.

We just embraced and then embraced again. We were crying and everyone else was crying. It resembled somewhat the day I crossed the frontier. It savored of the same type of emotion. For, once again, I *had* crossed a frontier. A frontier of a different kind, but a frontier just the same. A frontier of human emotion. A frontier of suspended relationship.

Any man, or any woman, who has been long away from one who has been very near and very dear to them in childhood, will know how I felt.

There is something about the ties of early

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childhood that pull at the strings of the heart as no later relationships have the power of doing. For it is not only the person, but the whole setting of old, familiar days that arises to comfort one.

I saw not only my dear sister, Maria, but all of our childish scenes together, pranks and larks, quarrels and makings-up.

I saw Maria and my brother; I saw the house where we played, and I saw again my mother and my father, was still more securely and surely back in my childhood. That childhood which no one shared with me quite so completely as this dear Maria.

There had once been four of us children in my father's house; but it was with Maria that I conspired and connived, got into and out of mischief and generally conferred with on all of our little enterprises.

I thought then, that I was a very valiant leading spirit, and Maria, my willing slave and servile accomplice. But in the wisdom of later years, upon looking back, I am beleaguered with the hankering suspicion that it was Maria who did the leading and I who did the the slaving.

For instance, the episode that came most sharply to my mind was the generous occasion upon which I initiated Maria into the charm of

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smoking corn silk. I thought myself very grand and grown-up, quite the peer of Alberto or any of the other older lads. And I strove mightly to impress Maria with my magnificence.

I didn't succeed very well, she quite disdained my corn-silk manoeuvres. And, even when I had been able to save up five centimes and bought some Virginia cigarettes to puff off splendidly before her in the dim and remote recesses of the barn, even then I failed of the impression I so ardently desired to make.

If a male fails to fascinate a woman with his prowess, he will go to any ends however desperate to attain results. I verily believe that there is no stimulus to a man quite as potent as the desire to have some especial member of the opposite sex quite speechless with awe and admiration for him.

Men commend him and the commendation is warm and pleasant. But a man's most coveted audience is a woman. Her approbation, the ultimate laurel wreath.

And so with me, as a boy, Maria was the audience I strove to invoke. It was my desire to appear great before her that led me into one of my renowned pranks.

The corn-silk and the dearly bought Virginia cigarettes both having failed, I bethought me of a daring move.

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By way of a preliminary explanation, I must record that my father's study was a sacred and inviolate spot. My mother had early instilled into all of us, a quite wholesome awe and respect of this requested spot.

My father's study must be respected and no intrusive foot set within it, unbid.

In this study, seen only on formal occasions, there was, among other curious objects, a long-stemmed, imposing looking *pipe*. Such a pipe, surely as only a man of undisputed parts, might smoke. To smoke that pipe, nonchalantly and at ease, inhaling prodigious mouthfuls and lungfuls of dense smoke, slowly expelling them as I had seen my father do, not without reverence, there, most emphatically, most certainly, would be a feat that would bring me the unyielding Maria objectly to my kingly feet.

Then, certainly, would I have asserted my dominance, my right to allegiance, respect and even servility. I would become, on a stroke, the master of my small following.

I schemed with cunning and also, I will now admit, with considerable foreboding. Well, I knew what *my* lot would be if I were discovered in this double sin!

But the delicious thought of the capitulation of Maria was stronger than my fear of consequences. If I had had to walk past the most

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hideous dragons of the Italian fairy tales, I believe that I would have done so in the strength of my desire.

I told Maria what I was about to do.

She didn't believe me. She even derided me a little, as who should say that I would never dare!

The tinder to the spark!

I awaited the day when my father should have gone out, and my mother be safely occupied in some quite other portion of the house.

That day came—and, dragging the reluctantly admiring Maria back of me, I invaded the study.

There, as if for the specific purpose of temptation, lay the long and sinister-appearing pipe on my father's study table.

I picked it up, found it ready for lighting, lit, and lolled back in the chair by the table, in the most approved and masculine of fashions.

All was going as I had dreamed and planned. I inhaled the prodigious lungfuls of smoke, I expelled them again, half closing my eyes the while, as if this little act was but a usual interlude with me in an otherwise importantly busy day. I had the transfiguring pleasure of knowing that Maria's eyes were upon me the while, intently, begrudgingly according me a slowly forming admiration.



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I began evolving sundry small tryannies which I would put into effect the instant I should have quitted this room . . . when . . . but more anon . . . Natacha tells me that we have a caller. . .

*Milan, September 1st*

Upon re-reading the last words jotted down in my diary, I find myself, tongue in cheek, gleefully recounting a childhood prank, shared, as was the immemorial childish custom, with my sister, Maria

I left myself in grandiloquent pose, smoking my father's forbidden pipe, and trying to be very much the man of parts and of the world.

Maria was regarding me, the slow light of a new interest and respect dawning in her eyes. I who had striven so mightily, so many times in vain, to achieve just that look!

And then . . . and then . . . a ghastly pallor began to overspread my erstwhile defiant visage. My stomach, that traitorous organ of the most valiant system, proceeded to betray me. I knew that again a malignant fate was about to prove my undoing. I saw Maria's eyes waver and leave my face with that little look of mingled superiority, contempt and compassion that said, "Oh, you can't do it, after all, can you?" and just as miserable, I carefully proceeded to replace the pipe upon the desk, I felt, rather than

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saw, the stern black eyes of my father riveted upon me from the doorway.

I made an attempt to insouciance, inclining my head pleasantly and trying to gulp out a few casual words. What I managed to say was, "I don't think I feel very well. I ——." But I needn't have troubled, for my father's eyes of a physician had already diagnosed my misdemeanor and the resultant plight. Even if my face had not given me away, the cussed pipe kept emitting tell-tale wreaths of smoke that curled up to the ceiling in what seemed to me to be the most gigantic spirals I had ever witnessed.

Well, needless for me to jog my memory farther. It serves me all too well. Instead of being the hero of a daring bit of "business," as we say in films, I became the central figure of a most distressing comedy. A comedy to all save me. But it was sufficient to save me from the caning I should otherwise have been the just recipient of. My father seemed to feel that my miserable contortions were punishment enough, and doubtless felt that his pipe was safe from me from that time forth. He was quite right!

I abandoned smoking as the "grande gesture" for some years to come!

I consoled myself by remembering that Maria, when all was said and done, was only my sister, and that an opportunity to distinguish myself

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would doubtless present itself when I should have a more discerning and appreciative audience.

But my youth philanderings never met with very much success. Rather, putting the cart before the horse, I have shown how frequently ignominious I was made to appear before the eyes of Elisa, the cook's daughter, at the Agricultural College. What with calves bursting out of barn doors, hiding in mangers the better to proclaim my love, and such-like things! And when, at six, my very first love entered my heart and life, I didn't fare much better.

The name of this fair charmer I recall very well indeed. It was such music to my infant lips that it has tinkled in my mind ever since, faint and sweet and far away. Teolinda! Teolinda! What more charming name to teach the embryo man the whole musical score of love!

Teolinda was older than I. I had a *penchant* for "older women." She was nine when I was six. And she was carved out of warm ivory, with long, flowing black hair and corresponding eyes. Teolinda had a sister who was as ugly as Teolinda was beautiful. And they were always and inevitably together.

When I first fell in love with Teolinda, I was a timid swan, content to live my love at a

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remote distance, merely feast my eyes upon the fair one's face.

But time wears away the patience of six years with astonishing rapidity. And there came the time when I desired to put my love to the touch, as to speak.

I began to haunt Teolinda's house. One day, after several days of such hauntings, I was enchanted to observe my Amaryllis shyly coming toward me from her front doorstep. I brazenly and rather too loudly pronounced her magic name. She gave me one affrighted look, turned from me, dashed up the steps and, before I quite knew what it was all about, the ugly sister had pounced upon me and gave me such a pummelling and trouncing and scratching as quite battered my premature passion out of me.

I crept away, scarred and disillusioned. I would have no more of love, forsooth! I was done with women! I would stick to eminently more satisfactory company of my own kind, my own sex!

All these things and many more of them came back to me in those first few moments with Maria. We kept up a constant battery of "Do you remember this?" and "Oh, do *you* remember *that*?" Now and then the equally ready tears would come, because of a memory shared in madness.

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Since my mother passed away, Maria has gone through a lot of suffering. She was left quite alone at my mother's death. My brother is married and living quite a distance from her and such relatives as we have in Italy are distant connections and not especially congenial with Maria.

Maria was in France when the War broke out. Before her death, quite a little while before, my mother had gone to France for her health. Three years later she passed away and my sister, only twenty years of age at the time, was left there alone, with everything to attend to.

All that loneliness and trouble had changed her a great deal. She was a kid when I left her, and I found her a serious young woman with some of the light quenched in her dark eyes.

Maria and Natacha and I finally settled down to a long talk, involving plans for Maria's future. We decided that she must go to Nice, to Mr. and Mrs. Hudnut, and rest for a year, at least. While she is with them, she will go up to the mountains for another change. She is not very strong in constitution and I told her firmly that she must not think of working again, for a year at least.

She has been holding down the job of general secretary to a large firm of silk and cotton manu-

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facturers, and it was quite a position of trust, responsibility and hard work for a girl of twenty-four. She is a hard worker, and with that and the damp climate, her health has suffered terribly. Now that I am in a position to help her, I am going to see that she gets on her feet again, so to speak, before she undertakes to do anything again.

She told me that she *wants* to do something; that she would loathe being idle; and in that I agreed with her. She is much like the American girls in her desire to be doing something, something on her own account. However comfortable I might make her, she wouldn't feel the same as if she were doing something for herself. By her own efforts. A girl is like a man in that respect, nowadays. After she has worked for six years, she would never be content sitting around in idleness.

Natacha and I told her to think it all over during this coming year of idleness and rest, and try to decide what she would most like to do in order to be independent and busy. Then I want her to rely on herself. I want her to be self-sufficient. I believe in that for women. Quite in the same light as I believe in it for men. But the first thing she has got to do is to get her health in shape. One works on a shaky foundation when one works with an enfeebled body.

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There is no economy in that.

There are so many things that Maria can do: She does the most beautiful embroidery of all kinds. Even knitted embroidery. Laces. *Filets*. In France that was all she had to do, and she perfected that, certainly.

She learned shorthand and typewriting all by herself. She studied the violin at the same time. The shorthand came in very nicely because after six months she got the position of private secretary to the owner of this big, industrial firm, and after a year, the higher job of general secretary. The owner hardly went to the office at all. She had the responsibility of the whole thing on her shoulders.

With so many vocations and avocations to choose from, I told her that I thought she should concentrate on some one of them, the one she felt most keenly like doing, the one that would bring her, at one and the same time, the money and the most pleasure into her life.

We finally concluded that part of the conversation by the decision for Maria to stay a year with the Hudnuts, resting and vacationing, and at the end of that time I would help her, if necessary, to get into the kind of work she should eventually decide upon.

Of course, she asked me all kinds of questions about my work, and I told again the story of my

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arrival in America, the days of starvation and discouragement, the beginnings that seemed to get nowhere, the final landing upon my feet. She wanted to know all about how pictures are made, about the other stars, the directors, the studios. She wanted to hear all about June Mathis and the part she had played and played so definitely in my "discovery," and then told me that she had never seen a picture of mine, but had gained all her knowledge of my activities through the fan magazines and newspapers I had sent her, and from my letters. She intimated that she got most of her knowledge from the magazines and papers. Like most of my sex, I am, I suppose, neither a very frequent nor a very prolific letter writer.

The third day we were in Milan, I arranged to have my sister see "The Four Horsemen." I asked an official connected with the industry to have a copy of the film shown her, and through his courtesy it was run for her. But the projection room had no light, and the picture was so badly cut that my Aunt, who was with us, said she was glad that *she* had seen it in Rome.

But my sister, none too critical, of course, was enchanted. She had, she naively informed me, no idea that I was "as good as that!"

I felt that after all the years I had struggled



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to win from her that look of admiration and respect, "The Four Horsemen" had finally done the trick for me, where my early smoking and other feats has dismally failed. . .

We have had three days of Milan. And we have gone about and have seen as much as we could see. We didn't attempt to do a very great deal in the town. Milan would take the most casual tourist at least a month. The same, somewhat, as Florence and Rome.

But we did see the surrounding country. Motoring, of course. Which is the only way to see a country. And we saw gorgeous scenery. Beautiful sunsets and sunrises and moonlights.

Our hotel, incidentally, would have shocked the habitue of New York or London hotels into ague. Or even the smaller and supposedly less pretentious hotels of those cities. Or, for the matter of that, the hotels in Rome, which are marvelous. But here, at Milan, we had the "Royal Suite" at the Hotel Cavour. Once again, we needed such sense of humor as we could work up. When one travels, one should never leave one's sense of humor behind! This "Royal Suite" was utterly minus carpets of any kind. Bare boards were our floor and fare. The telephone was not working and showed neither sign or inclination of ever doing so. And the corners of the rooms were

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frescoed with cobwebs of antiquity and grace!

Of course, when one comes more or less direct from America, the land of efficiency and expertness and service, one is apt to find everything slow. People, service, events themselves, take on the aspects of snails. And one forgets that it is all likelihood only by contrast to activity that is too rapid, if anything.

But, for instance, I'd ask for a bottle of mineral water. There is no ice and the water is served in bottles, which require that you search about for a bottle opener, if you do not happen (which *I* do not), to have one hanging on your fob! Then, after you do open the bottle, you find it almost hot. And bad. Very bad. Result: It has taken about an hour to get the water bad, with no ice, and hot as it can be. They have no idea at all of speed, comfort and service. Don't know the meaning of it.

I have often pondered upon the beauty of leisureliness. But I find that leisureliness, like most things, is comparative. It is all right when you want it, and quite the damnable reverse when you don't want it. And one of the times when you most decidedly don't want it is when you are summoning to your side food or drink.

On the whole, my country is a beautiful country if you *are* at leisure. But if you are nervous or in a hurry, if you are busy and want things

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done expeditiously and well, it is not the country for you. Nor is it the country for any kind of work, especially motion pictures.

When I think of the studio work in America, the many, many times that one is told to report in make-up, and does report in make-up, say at ten in the morning, or earlier, and is still standing in make-up at three in the afternoon, still not having done a stroke of work, I shudder to think of what one might have to do here in Italy. In fact, the most provoking part, the only provoking part of picture-making, is the waiting that is occasionally necessary. I have not had to do so very much of it myself, fortunately for me, but I have seen others do it, and I marvel at the art that is required to throw one into an emotional crescendo, or perhaps, a moment of abandoned farce, after standing about, inert, for hours at a time. Nothing is more dulling to the faculties and emotions than listless waiting. Waiting. Nothing is more tiring. It is simple enough to come to the studio in the morning, all keyed up for a big scene, and plunge directly into it, heart and soul. At least, it is simple compared to the ordeal of standing about for weary hours and then be expected to show the flair and fire of an early start.

In Italy the studios are the most antiquated things I ever saw. They haven't begun to

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“modernize.” And if you should want to build interiors . . . my imagination balks. . .

We have enjoyed Milan. Of course, *I* enjoyed it, because it held my sister for me. And Natacha got a fair amount of rest. I tinkered with the car and we took marvelous rides, and tomorrow we start on our way again.

*Florence, September 4th*

We left Milan in the early morning.

This time we had quite a lovely road. When I can put in a good word for the roads of my country, I want to do so. There are so many times when I must put in words quite the reverse.

On this road, it had rained and the inevitable dust had settled down in peace and quietude. The road was practically a straight line, 300 or 350 kilometers from Milan to Bologna, on the Via Emilia. This is one of the old Roman roads. Of course, it is nothing like the concrete roads we have in America, but those old Roman roads are good roads for all that, and you can make good time on them. Naturally, too, there is not the traffic on them that makes motoring over the good roads in America so tedious and difficult.

We stopped near Parma for luncheon. Whenever we struck a town, we sped through it. We didn't want to stop at any regulation hotels. Both of us are so tired of hotel food. We

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stopped, instead, at little wayside inns, where we got fresh spring chickens, marvelous bread, marvelous butter and marvelous wine.

The peasants in Italy eat surprisingly well. Better than the townfolk, it seems to me. Their food is wholesome and pure. Spiced and heavy, of course, but wholesome. I am tired of French "cuisine". Then, at these wayside inns, there were the pergolas covered and laden with grapes. Of course, you must look out for flies. Every sort of poetry, it seems, has its leaven of not-so-charming reality. But it is intensely interesting, none the less, and if you overlook the smaller and more annoying details, you find yourself pervaded by a charm to be found nowhere so potently as in Italy. This is not partiality on my part, for, after all, I do admit the flies!

We saw some very beautiful peasant types of women through this country. But in the cities, as I have said in various ways before, neither in France nor in Italy, did I see *one beautiful woman*. And so, once again, Natacha and Auntie agreeing with me, we came to the conclusion that all of the best-looking women are in America. No one can beat the American girls. Not only in looks and carriage, but the way they dress, the knack they have of fixing themselves. Awfully pretty, and if they are not actually pretty, then they are awfully cute. Or smart.

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Or something. Whatever the details may be, the effects are quite utterly charming.

Italian women are blonde or brunette, depending on what part of the country they come from. This is a point I have often had asked me in American. So many men have said to me, "All the Italian women are decided brunettes, eh, Rudy?" But they are not all brunettes. The territory they spring from decides that to a great extent.

A beautiful Italian woman is absolutely Madonna-like, but there are very few nowadays. Even in Italy, the Madonna type is becoming what you call "out of style". And also, here in Italy, the women do not know how to dress. They are antiquated, out of date.

Natacha was immensely admired wherever we went. But I became rather angry about that. In one of the cafes we stopped at for supper, there was a group of officers present. And they sat there, boldly, without attempt at camouflage, looking her up and down. I was just about getting ready for a good fight. Then it came to me that I probably did the same thing before I left Italy. I had forgotten that it is almost a custom of the country a habit. But I felt resentment, because it really wasn't a look of curiosity, polite or otherwise. It was a sort of mental un-

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dressings. The very boldness with which they did it should have disarmed me. For all the boldness of it, *because* of the boldness of it, I suppose, there was also a sort of naive innocence. It was stripped of all subterfuge, all attempt at concealment. In America, decidedly, had such an event taken place, I would have risen and smashed the offenders in their several jaws.

But in this case, it was so palpably the thing they did when they were interested in it, was so obviously a custom of the country and of the Italian men, that they would doubtless have not known what it was all about, what I *meant*, had I taken umbrage and offense.

No one paid any attention to *me* whatsoever. I was not known. There are hundreds of Valentinos in Italy far more handsome than I can ever hope to be. I was absolutely in the background. In America, I think, my type stands out somewhat. But in my own country I am simply one of many—most of the many with greater claim to physical distinction than any I might hope to make.

After all, it only goes to prove what a vast difference frontiers can make. In one country, a thing is a slur and an insult. In other country, it is but the habit of the day. In one country, a thing is immoral. In other country, it is ethical. In one country, beauty is a matter of

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black skin and oil hair. In another country, black skin and oiled hair are heathen and fit only for purposes of freak exhibition. Standards of morality, standards of courtesy, standards of beauty and charm, all are subject to the crossing of frontiers, to the embrasure of territory.

In Bologna, I had my first accident. Fortunately for me, it turned out to be humorous rather than serious. When we got to Bologna, we went through the town, and it was just at sunset that we arrived at the piazza. There was a telegraph pole there, and the telegraph pole was in the shade. The pole was painted a grayish color, the same as the ground, and I was just crawling along (for a change), looking around, when Natacha said loudly, "LOOK OUT! LOOK OUT!"

I said blankly, "WHERE?"

And so saying, *I was into the pole!*

I only bent the fender, but I got sore because it was my only accident, and what with all the criticism of my driving, I was sort of pridefully bent upon achieving a record for myself. A record without blemish, all the fearful talk to the contrary. If I could have arrived at my journey's end with a triumphant flourish, and a "There, what have you all been talking about? Not a scratch! Not a flurry!" But I hadn't that opportunity to boast. It never rains but it



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pours. I had another little accident the same day. I must have been more than ordinarily day-dreaming, or scenery-blind. For, as we were going along one of the country roads, I ran right into a little car with an ancient crone driving it. She was as mad as a hornet. Literally paralyzed with anger, such of her as hadn't been previously paralyzed by age. I did no harm at all, as a matter of fact. And in common justice to myself and my own skill at the wheel, I must record that this especial circumstance was the fault of another autoist, and not mine. He came steaming along behind me. I tried to avoid him sharply, skidded, and ran into the old lady's small cart. I hit the side of the cart with my first wheel. The old woman started cursing me in Italian. For all I know, she may be standing there cursing me yet. And if her vocabulary of profanity and ferocity of her anger are any omens, she probably is. From what she said, I could imagine that what I had done was the supreme outrage and insult of her life. It will doubtless give her something wherewith to enliven her evenings for the remainder of her infuriated life.

One of the delights of motoring in Italy is that the country changes with every province you enter. The customs change, the types of people change, the way they dress changes, even the

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breed of animals changes. Everything. As we entered Tuscany, we noted these things particularly. I am ever on the lookout for animals, which so nearly became my life work, and here I pointed out a bull with very long horns and of a peculiar, grayish-white coloring. We met a cart with two of these bulls on the road and I stopped and had my picture made between the two of them.

It was growing late by this time and we kept going steadily after this brief stop, because I had to cross the Appenines. They are even worse than the Alps. Not so high of course, but the roads are more serpentine and one needs a really greater amount of dexterity at the wheel. In the Alps there are not the short hairpin turns that one finds in the Appenines. I couldn't enjoy very much of the scenery at this point of the trip. My scenery consisted in the wheel of the car and in keeping my eye strictly upon the stretch of road immediately before me.

We finally arrived in Florence at eleven o'clock at night, covered with layers of thick, white dust and utterly exhausted.

Of Florence, city of lovers and Art, I shall write tomorrow!

My arrival in Florence was not what one would describe as living up to that beautiful city.

It is another spot on this earth where one

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should arrive either on wings, so to speak, or glide gracefully in in a scenic attitude.

One has no idea how difficult it is to be scenic with fourteen pieces of luggage strapped (rather precariously) to a dusty car. I had upon my arrival in Florence two automobile trunks on each side of the fender, on the top of the car were six valises, two hat boxes and then a huge leather steamer trunk, three cameras and all the utensils I might have required (but really didn't very much) to tinker with the car, if tinkering became a dire necessity.

I had the unloading and the care of the luggage to attend to myself, the disposal of it, etc. There is no night service in the hotel in Florence as there is in New York hotels. It may not be quite so poetic as the air of desertion and solitude about some of the European hostelrys, but a man is not a poet when he is dusty and tired and in need of food, rest and attention. Poetry is for one's hours of leisure, not for one's hours of exhaustion.

We managed the best way we could that first night in Florence, and in the morning, with a gusty sigh of relief. I had the car thoroughly washed, greased and so on. I must say that I attended to necessary details before I gave any attention whatsoever to the beauties of the beautiful, feminine city. I even stood around and

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supervised the car's grooming, and couldn't help preening myself a bit before the mechanics by telling them the trip we had made, the rate of speed we had made it at, and the comparatively little trouble I had had. Except for four punctures, all of them in the one day, I had had none of the ailments of which most motorists so copiously complain. Those four punctures I have forgotten to record. They happened in Southern Italy and I had, preforce, to put on the ready overall and gloves, squeeze under the car and change the defective tires then and there on the open road. Luckily, I had anticipated just such happenstances, knowing that it never rains but it pours even when it comes to punctures, and so I had enough tires with which to make the changes. Also, I did break a spring en route to Nice, but as I didn't know it until I arrived I really didn't consider it worth mentioning. I wish to have a record of these minor mishaps in case I should, upon my return, find my motor-ing Goddess unjustly maligned.

In Bologna we put up at the Grande Hotel Vaglione.

And while in Bologna, too, I missed a marvelous opportunity on account of the telegraph service, the reprehensibility of which pursues the traveller through my country.

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The opportunity was this: Baron Cassinni, a prominent Italian, both socially and politically, a great friend of Mussolini and also (if I may say so!), a friend of mine, owns a marvelous castle fifteen miles from Bologna, Castello Vincigliata. It is old, very, very old. So old that the ruins are reconstructed from the drawings of the original period—the eleventh century.

What is still more intriguing, or what was especially intriguing to Natacha and myself, at least, was the fact that the Baron has a marvelous collection of paintings, and one of the best collections of furniture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Pure Italian. Most of the old Italian masters are represented in that collection of paintings. Botticellos, Rafaellos, Pinturicchios, Peruginis, all of the great and gifted company whose brushes are vested in immortality are in that rare gallery. The eye could plunge into paint, no longer paint thus transfigured; into line so pure as to be breath-taking. It would be to have an orgy of art.

In that old castle there are, besides, rare books, dim old volumes breathing the golden dust of antiquity. Frail vellums and octavos. Words spun into thoughts now one with the archives of Time itself. Precious documents for the lover of words and the collector of the thoughts and scripts and creeds of men long

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gathered to their fathers.

Old armour, too. Vestments of warriors whose bright heads are in the dust and whose ghosts, mayhap, steal forth from mouldering tombs by night to rattle again within their brave array.

All of this is a tremendously interesting period to me, I have always had a fancy for the books, the objects d'art that made that span of the world's existence so sombrely rich with colour.

Well, I would have given much to have wandered through this storied, fabled place. I would have given at least one-quarter of the rest of my trip to have had the opportunity to seep that atmosphere into my veins. Such places, rare enough in this rushing modern age, where one builds for today forgetting Yesterday and only half believing in Tomorrow, are the most that is left of the real Europe. One can rush through cities, skimming their surfaces and get not a tithe of what one would feel in such a place as the Castello Vincigliata.

The telegraph, the modern invention, did for me in that respect. It would be a product of modernity that would shut out the opportunity of agelessness and age.

It transpired that the Baron had sent a telegram to me at my hotel saying that he had also

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wired to the Castello and that the place was at my disposal for as long as I should care to use it. He was, he said, leaving for his apartment on the Riviera. He has, also, another castle in Nettune and keeps the places open and supplied with servants all of the time. I got the telegram just at the moment when I was about to go, having completed my arrangements.

All I could do was to bemoan the fate that had come between me and this place I should have liked so much to see. Natacha was equally disappointed. It is precisely the sort of thing we would both be interested in doing, interested above other things. Vincigliata is one of the most historic places around Florence. Once a fortress it figured prominently in all the feudal wars of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the history of Florence.

We tried to be philosophic about it, figuring that after all one cannot take in everything, and our disappointment was at least partially assuaged, when a day or two later, we visited the castle at Nettune, built by the architect San Gallo and remodelled by Alessandro Six, the Borgia. The castle at Nettuno, by the way, is where Alessandro and Cesare Borgia had their wild parties, which still run through the pages of history like lurid conflagrations.

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It is a fascinating place. There are underground passages, secret dungeons, trabochette, prisons. It is built right on the edge of the sea and below the castle, when the ebb tide is low, you can see the pillars. Down there on the floor of the sea are six rooms of a huge Pompeian villa that was there before the sea rose up and covered that ground. It was a Roman villa anciently used by the Roman Emperors who came there for their *villegiatura*.

Natacha and I had a wonderful time exploring and allowing our imaginations to run riot. What stories could be written, or re-written, perhaps, dictated by the influences that still steal along those damp underground passages, slip in and out of the secret, sliding panels, moan in their prolonged captivity in the dungeons fronting the sea? It would be, I think, an enormously interesting thing to do a story some day that would make an ancient place such as this one live again, with its patterning of blood and bravery, of treachery and love, dark as wine, even as it so vitally lived centuries ago.

While in Florence we went about and did some shopping that we needed. Not the romantic thing to do in Florence, I fear, but even as with poetry so it is with the allied mistress, Romance. One puts them off and on like bright vestments only to be donned at certain hours for



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particular occasions. Natacha tells me that I can be the most practical man under the sun, and I well remember that one of the things she first liked me for was my handiness about the house. The way I can connect electric wires, mend furniture, hang pictures, and do other odd and useful jobs. My mother believed that a man should learn first of all to be able to use his hands. And I agree with her. It harks back, no doubt, to the olden days when a man worked only with his hands and builded, indeed, our civilization largely with these useful, indispensable servitors of the body. The delicate evolution of the brain backed the hands and sometimes substituted for the hands . . . back of the dreamer there is always the schemer making the dreams come true. . . words that come back to me.

What we really shopped for in Florence more than any other things, were books. Costume books. We had heard that there were rare finds to be had down in that section of the town known as Lungarno.

That, by the way is where Dante used to parade in days gone by. The well-known tableau picture of the meeting of Dante and Beatrice took place on just that spot. On the cold stones we tread today an immortal love had birth. I felt as though my feet were pressing the rich aromas from the very stones.

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We are always on the look-out for costume books, because you never can tell when you are going to need them. In picture work, where, with any picture one may be called upon to dip back into periods only too little familiar to have a collection of these books is, I think, invaluable. Both Natacha and I feel very strongly about authentic detail. Many a whole is marred because of incongruities that peer out and strike one like wrong notes struck in a symphony.

We found, in Lungarno, one particular book first published in 1500, with sketches of oriental costumes of that period. A very rare book. Almost impossible to find. This particular thing we found only after a really exhaustive search.

Some day we are coming back to spend a considerable period of time in Florence. It would be like paying a beautiful woman a curt compliment and then turning one's back, to say anything about Florence unless one could say a great deal. Leisure is needed for Florence. To hurry through the city is to annihilate the impressions one should get.

On the morning of September fifth, we left Florence early for the ride to Rome.

That is, we tried to get an early start. But it was raining, an anomolous and really an unkind thing for Florence to do to us. I felt it to be a sort of a punishment for our casual

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survey of her beauties. And what with the rain and the fact that we had to have the car oiled, greased, et cetera, it was eleven o'clock in the morning before we finally made off. Our admirable intention having been to start about seven-thirty or eight. Studio work, by the by, opinions of the leisure of the stars to the contrary, breaks one to early hours.

It was raining like blazes, if there is such a thing. And in such a state we started off, stopping for luncheon at one of those small villages right in the province where Chianti is made. It was one very fortuitous touch!

From there, warmed by the Chianti, we roceeded. I wanted to make Rome by afternoon, but I couldn't do it on that road. There were too many turns, and while I might have achieved the feat had I been alone, Auntie and Natacha had me pretty well trained and amenable by this time.

I facetiously observed that Rome was not reached in a day, and Natacha said that she very devoutly hoped NOT.

And so, about ten o'clock at night, we drove up to the very best hotel in a small village and then I set about finding a garage. One of the most difficult and intricate things to do, in a spot of the earth where the motor car streams through



*Photo by Mabel Sykes.*

### JUST RUDY

"Take me just as I am—don't doll me up!" said Valentino as this picture was photographed. The scar on his right cheek was received when he was a child of 5, playing with a razor. The slave bracelet on his wrist, a gift from Natacha, was for a long time a subject of international discussion.



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*Photo by Mabel Sykes.*  
Valentino, taken in Chicago, at the height of his fame.

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too seldom to make a garage one of the daily necessities.

I had a time of my own finding that garage! What I first found after a search, which I thought must have taken in the entire dimensions of the place was an ancient stable and then discovered that the door was not wide enough for the car to enter. The dismal, odoriferous old place seemed to stand there in the stilly night holding its antique sides and mocking at my discomfort. I, the car, the search itself, felt singularly out of place in that spot. I felt that I was an intruder for a hospitality out of time and date.

Finally, after a long search, and after waking up three or four families (ten o'clock is the middle of the night there) we found a stable, a little larger than the others, and so we could put the car up.

Oh, yes, before putting up for the night, we went by Siena, and as we went by we saw an antique shop which somewhat attracted our attention, as antique things (and persons) always do. We stopped, went inside, and were lucky enough to find at this place and at a ridiculous price a marvelous period copy of Anne of Cleves by Holbein. There are only two originals extant and this is one of them. All the others were burned in the collection at Windsor Castle at

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the time of the fire there. Our copy is almost quite priceless. We were as gleeful as small children would be if, digging one day some small insignificant beach, they should suddenly happen upon the treasure of Captain Kidd! I have often thought, in passing, how much mystery, thrill and fun would go out of the lives of American children if that fabulous treasure should ever, indeed, turn up to view. It is much like that, too, with Europe. How much fun will be gone when the Ages have given over all their treasure, when the bowels of the centuries have yielded up their secrets and their holdings to the perpetually curious and delving pickax and science and research of modern man. What, then, shall become of our thrills? When there are no more uncharted seas to sail? When darkest India and blackest Africa have been staked out, mapped and railroaded? When even the air shall have nothing further to reveal and the depths of the sea shall have been plumbed? Then, no doubt, we shall literally as we have always metaphorically, hitch our scientific wagons to the stars and attempt the sasconnading of the Heavens.

Also, in this same shop, I saw a marvelous saddle tree of the thirteenth century, all hand carved ivory with the coat of arms of the Scaligeri family. But they wanted too much money for that, and with much sorrow and much regret

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I decided that I couldn't buy it. I believe I shall regret my prudence rather than be pleased at it. But if I didn't get the saddle I did get the Holbein and also the very real thrill of delving about in this musty, rich little shop just as twilight was coming on, so that time didn't seem to press in that place of timeless things, and the fine old objects took on a dignity all the rarer for the dimness. An antique shop should be dim. One should see to it that one seeks for antiques at the twilight of the day. It belongs to them, and they belong to it.

Of course that shop in Siena lost us more time and I had to pay for the pleasure by seeking out the unknown quantity of a garage by the reluctant light of a moon all but unavailingly struggling with the rain.

The next morning, early, we left our rather ambiguous quarters, got the car and drove straight, and without mishap, to the Excelsior Hotel in Rome.

When we arrived there we just rested.

We were tired from the long journey, the hotel was comfortable and we reclined through most of the afternoon, having both luncheon and tea served in our rooms.

In the evening I had dinner at the hotel with Baron Fassini, who was very much interested in



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motion pictures years ago, before the ones who are interested in them now had made them what they are.

Baron Fassini was formerly President of the *Unione Cinematografica, Italiana*. With Baron Fassini was Count Cine, Secretary of the *Unione*.

We had dinner and talked about pictures, art, that sort of thing. Naturally, they were tremendously interested in how we do things in America, and asked innumerable questions about studio production, the scenario end of it all, the star system, the exhibitor, cameras, everything. They were also interested in my career and once again I told the story of my beginning with its subsequent falls and rises. A great many falls, too!

We made a date to go the next day to see the "Quo Vadis" sets, and so, this morning, we went to Fassini's apartment in the *Palazzo Titoni*, where he has the first floor. Mussolini, by the way, lives on the second floor and they are great friends.

Fassini was too busy to go to see the sets with us, but Count Cine came for us and we drove over to the *Villa Borghese* where most of their big, open-air sets are made. Their studios are too small to contain the sets they need for big productions. They were shooting some scenes

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when we arrived and the sets were very lovely. I saw some of the big mob scenes made and really, it made my mouth water! I felt as they say an old time actor feels when, after a long period of inactivity, he gets the smell of grease-paint in his nostrils again. Or as a race horse feels when the smooth run of the track is once again under his restive feet. The click of the camera, the vernacular of the studio world even, though in a language I had never heard it in, made my blood tingle and my palms itch. I felt like turning right about face and rushing back to America shouting "I am ready! I am ready! Let's go!"

On my way back from the full survey, Emil Jannings was there and we had some pictures taken with him and with Commendatore Ambrosio who owns the film company, and who produced "Cabiria," and later merged with the Unione.

We met Mrs. Jannings, who speaks excellent English. Jannings does not speak English. Not one word of it. He was born in America, but was taken to Berlin when only six. His wife is English, and notwithstanding that he speaks German and I not one word of it, we got along famously.

Everything we wanted to say to one another we managed to say and be mutually and per-

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fectly understood. Everyone was surprised at the fluent conversation and the interchange of ideas, theories, opinions and questions we were able to make. We were talking away, jabbering . . . I was trying to recall some German words and he was trying to recall some Italian ones. But they were of slight avail. What did get us by, was the fact that his mimicry helped him and my mimicry helped me. That was perfectly proper. We were both actors of the silent drama. Why shouldn't we understand one another? It was like and a little unlike two deaf-mutes carrying on a rapid fire talk. What difference would it make whether one was German and the other Italian, their tongue would, after all, be the sign-tongue and would be the same.

After we had had the pictures taken we went all over the sets with Jannings. Then we went to the restaurant right on the Villa Borghese and had luncheon, the Commendatore Ambrosia, Mr. and Mrs. Jannings, and two directors who are directing "Quo Vadis," Signor Jacobi and Gabriele d'Annunzio, son of the famous romancer and poet. d'Annunzio, the father, by the way is in seclusion I was told. No one can go near him.

Among other things that took place during this conversation between Jannings and I, was

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Jannings asking me if \$2,000 a week, was a good price for a character actor in America. I said, "Between \$2,000 and \$2,500, they are fair figures and a good man ought to get about that."

"For God's sake, shut up!" begged Ambrosia, "don't tell Jannings that!"

But I replied that actors always stick together, it is part of the ethics of this so ethical profession!

Jannings was very enthusiastic about America. He wanted to find out all about it, and I told him, among other things, how popular he is there. I told him how splendidly "Passion" had gone over, and also "Deception." He was as pleased as a child. He quite beamed with pleasure and delight and it was nice to see that delight so mirrored on the face of Mrs. Jannings, the tribute might well have been made direct to her.

Then I asked him how he had visualized that splendid make-up for Henry the Eighth. He told me that he had got hold of the Holbein painting of Henry the Eighth, put it on his dressing table, and made up accordingly. He became, he said, as familiar with that famous painted figure as he might be with an intimate friend, whose every detail of costume, whose every shading of colour and line of expression was habitual and familiar to him.

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I know that many people wonder, and ask, whether screen actors are the same off the screen as they appear to be on the screen. I think it is like most questions, largely a matter of the individual. Some of us are the same off the screen as we seem to be on, and others are quite surprising. Jannings I would call surprising. Really quite surprising. Off the screen, he is entirely different from what I, personally, had imagined. Quite unassuming. Very good-natured. A man of about 42 or 43. Very big and husky. But looking at him without his makeup you would never realize that he is the splendid actor you have seen playing Louis Fifteenth, Henry Eighth and Peter the Great. He has none of that dash he has so admirably and unforgettably on the screen. His outstanding characteristic seemed to me to be his good nature and a great sense of humor.

I told him that in America they call him "King of Motion Pictures." He couldn't quite understand me, for the first time, and Mrs. Jannings explained it to him. He told his wife that what I was telling him was the greatest compliment he had ever received in his life and he made the most perfect "retort courteous" by having her tell me that he was immensely pleased to have received this compliment from the "King of Screen Lovers!"

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Gallant, too, you see. I must write more about him tomorrow.

*Rome, September 8th*

There is probably nothing in the world more interesting than talking "shop" with a man who is in the same "shop" with oneself. Women so frequently say, "What do you men talk about when you are together?" I imagine that women would be disappointed if they could hear the "dry as dust" talk that men do engage upon with one another. Women, I think, imagine that we talk about *them*. If two men meet who are engaged in the same profession, the odds are ten to one that it is their profession they discuss at length. Personal matters are almost entirely left out. Even when a man is facing some particular personal issue in his life, he seldom goes into it with another man. Nothing like the amount of time women consume in discussing their private, even intimate lives.

Thus it was that Emil Jannings and I talked Screen. . . Screen . . . Screen. . .

He had seen "The Four Horsemen," although he has never been in America. As I recall it, I think he said that he saw it in Paris. He was tremendously interested in the making of the film, in the remarkable way in which the film made me, and in all the details that led to my

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obtaining the part, my interpretation of the part once I did obtain it, etc. I told him how I read the book by Ibanez, and then simply lived the character for the weeks preceding the actual filming of the story. We agreed that the finest results are obtained by an actor entering into the very skin of the role he is about to interpret. Thinking, philosophizing, acting just as the character would act were he actually flesh and blood. In such wise, one can almost take on the physical habiliments, the lineaments of the personality. And only in such wise can one really be convincing in a part that would otherwise be an extemporaneous bit of acting.

I try, have always tried, NOT to be Rudolph Valentino in the various roles I have played. To do that would be like playing the same tune over and over on the same instrument. However marvelous the piano, or the violin, however exquisite and consummate the tune played, an audience would soon tire of it. Adaptability. . . versatility . . . pliability . . . sensitivity . . . all of these things are important in the make-up of the artist who must give birth to successive personalities.

It was a delightful luncheon that we had with Jannings and the others.

The restaurant is in the ancient villa and from where we sat we could see the whole panorama

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of Rome, a most gorgeous sight from that vantage point.

After luncheon, Jannings had to get to work and so he left us to the care of Ambrosio, who took us around to see the interiors.

They have ten or twelve studios in Rome, all very small saving the Cinese studio. The others do not amount to anything at all, judged from our American standpoint, or, indeed, any standpoint at all. They have no lighting to speak of. They have no equipment. Their laboratories are very bad indeed, and there is, in fact, none of the modern equipment we have in America at all.

Ambrosio himself said to me that what they lack most of all is not only improved studio conditions, but directors. "If," he said, "we only had the directors you have in America. Our directors are nothing. It hampers us more, really, than anything else in developing such talent as we have."

On the way back to our hotel, we drove a bit through Rome, and learned that in the past thirty years or more, many important changes have been effected, especially from the point of view of health and sanitation.

There are new thoroughfares, wider streets almost everywhere, and there has been quite a general demolition of the old-time slums. This, in



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conjunction with the general, modernized sanitation, has caused Rome to be one of the most sanitary, one of the healthiest cities in Europe.

I asked about the so-called Roman fevers, of which we hear so much in America. Sometimes it was malaria and sometimes it was typhoid, but it exists now only as a tradition, which will be laid in time along with many other clanking chains of superstition and tradition. As a matter of fact, the annual death-rate of the city has dropped from an average of over 30 per 1,000 to 19.2 per 1,000.

The famed and famous Tiber River, which now flows between magnificent stone embankments, no longer inundates the lower quarters of the city with the one-time periodicity. Occasionally, I understand, there has been a protest from the "aesthetes" that the imprisoning of the river has done away with its artistic value, but apparently there is no question that the artistic loss has been the healthful gain.

Also, Rome has an inexhaustible supply of pure water brought from neighboring districts by aqueducts, which were once regarded as among the wonders of the world.

The air of Rome is singularly pure, we thought. The city is really isolated in a sparsely inhabited district, and there are none of the

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smoke-spouting factory chimneys which make so many American cities veritable hotbeds of soot and grime. Nor is there very much consumption of fuel in homes, with the result that the windows in Roman households are left wide open a great part of the time, and the air that comes freely through them is quite without impurities or dirt.

The climate in Rome is genial and pleasant, and hasn't the enervating quality some people think it has. The cold weather lasts only about six weeks, and the only drawback to the climate that is at all serious is the fact that the changes in temperature are apt to be rather sudden. One has to be prepared, but forewarned is forearmed, and for the prudent person there is little bother in that.

We had read somewhere that to get the best idea of Rome and its topographical situation, the thing to do is to take a carriage and drive for some three hours through the principal streets.

Ordinarily, as I have said elsewhere in my diary, I don't believe in organized or systematized sightseeing. I think it kills the "divine afflatus." I had rather wander about the streets of a city, myself, at random, missing a great deal that tourists "should see," perhaps, but absorbing color and atmosphere in my own way, as best suited to my particular capacities. A chance encounter with a person on one of the side

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streets, a chance happening upon some odd little shop tucked away in dusty, picturesque obscurity, the sudden vision of a group of buildings seen by oneself, these make a city more your own, more unforgettable than all the routine sight-seeing in the world. In such a manner one learns a city for oneself, not as those who have gone before and those who will come after learn it.

It is like knowing a person. I detest to be told about a person before I meet him, or her. I want to form my own impressions, fresh and first hand. I want to be plastic clay upon which an original impression is made. Or it is like being told about a book, a play, or a part. I dislike having my own chance at first impressions taken from me. It is the taking of the edge from off a gleaming knife.

But I had reasons for wanting to see Rome again in a methodical rather routine way. After all, I am of the Romans, and the atmosphere is already in my blood. In that way, I can learn little more. What I wanted to do in this case was "get" the city from the topographical point of view. I wanted to have a new, revised, up-to-date map of it in my mind.

And so, this afternoon, we took the prescribed carriage and drove . . . and drove . . .

Up and down and about such streets as the Via Babuina, the Via Sistina, the Via Quirinale,

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stopping there in the Square for the view. The Via Nazionale and up to the left as far as the Via Agnostine Depretis and so taking in the Via Garibaldi, the Via Condotti and numerous others, arriving again at the starting point, the Piazza di Spagna, after one of the most interesting drives in the world.

I felt somehow, strangely familiar with all of these streets and piazzas and views. The people I saw on them, were, after all, mine own people. I had no sense of the returned stranger glancing over once-familiar territory, but rather as if I were home again with no absence in between.

Tonight we had dinner with the Baron Fassini and went to the Circa Monza, where the automobile races were. From there we took a drive to the Piazza San Pietro in front of the Vatican. It is a gorgeous sight. You see this tremendous pile, made more tremendous and more impressive by the marbling of the moonlight. On each side is a quadruple arcade, and if you stand, as we did, in one particular spot, you can see, in one glance, all of these colonnades diverging.

And then we saw the Coliseum by moonlight!

I suppose that there is nowhere in the world where there are students and where there are lovers, too, that the thought, the dream of seeing the Coliseum by moonlight has not played its great or little part. It is one of the spots of the

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earth of which lovers dream the most. It is storied and thick-laid, with legend and with colors, and it is *not* disappointing. Nor is it mythical, that it should be seen by moonlight. It should. The Coliseum wears the garment of the moon by divine right, by the right of the ages. And by the right of beauty.

Fassini, who knows Rome like a well-thumbed, beloved book, told us of incidents that had taken place in the different places.

Where the imperial lodge or box used to be, and the two opposite doors, the Porta Vivaria and the Porta Mortuaria, the first where the hapless victims entered alive, and the second where they were borne out—dead.

He showed us all the different places where the Christians were brought in; where the animals or “bestiariae” were brought in; the gladiators’ dressing rooms; the part where the water came from because, for their mimic naval battles, they used to flood the arena with water and the great drain where the water for these battles was drained off.

Of course the Coliseum is in ruins, but by the ageless light of the moon and by the exercise of not very strained imagination, I could imagine it as it had been in those by-gone days of unbelievable cruelties, wanton spilling of red blood,



Nita Naldi, as *Dona Sol*, makes her most powerful appeal to retain Valentino, as *Gaetano*, in "Blood and Sand".



Valentino as Galardo in "Blood and Sand" being vamped by Niti Naldi who played *Dona Sol*, the famous adventuress of the Spanish Court.

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spectacles that, today, would turn the strongest stomach and upset the most sedative nerves.

It led me to wonder about cruelty. What is it, after all? A matter of comparison like so many other things. Was the crowd that flocked about Nero to see the Christian youths and maidens flung to wild and starving beasts any more cruel at heart than the more refined and less spectacular cruelties of today; cruelties that make young girls work their youths away over whirling machines and dusty garments; cruelties that chain men and women to uncongenial toil year in and year out, until the Hour Glass empties and turns the other way? The one was a devastating cruelty, a sudden, splurging bath of blood and tearing; then the roar of the applause, the plaudits of the crowd, licking the blood-flecked foam from their bitten lips. Now we shut our eyes, put our hands over our ears and refuse to know that cruelties exist. We no longer applaud suffering. We simply ignore it. Well, who shall say which is the greater wrong?

To get back to the Coliseum of bygone splendor, which all the white moonlight cannot divest of the red blood that stained it so gloriously and so ingloriously, the facades are all in marbles, bronzes and gilded bronze. Then on top and all around is a huge tent that Roman sailors used to spread to protect the spectators from the



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intrusion of the sun. Still you can see the traces of where this tent was hung and still there are the charred spots where the vestals kept the fires burning.

The Coliseum was still occupied by these marbles and bronzes up to the medieval times. Then the popes decided that the Coliseum was a Pagan monument and that it was worthy of the Church to take away all of the bronzes, et cetera. These statues and adornment were, in consequence, removed and made into church bells. Then most of the marble statues were carried away like those around the Castello San Angelo. The bronzes were also melted down and made into cannon balls. Done in the name of Christianity because they were Pagan monuments. (As though they were obscene!)

There is a story told in connection with this vandalism. Rome has been invaded many times, as doubtless everyone knows, by Goths, Visigoths, Huns and so on, and sacked by them. And it is said that this particular order was given to take all the beautiful marbles from the Coliseum under the Pope who happened to belong to the Barberini family—by a play on words the Italians used to say “What the Barbieri (the barbers) did not do to Rome, the Barberini did.”

In the last century, however, as we all know, too, Benedict IV dedicated the Coliseum to the

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memory of the Early Christians who here suffered martyrdom and as a result further spoliation was prevented, and in 1805 and in 1828, two great buttresses were erected for the support of the building.

Fassini was relating all of these stories, some we had known and forgotten, others we had never known at all, as we stood there, heads bared, bathed in the moonlight, that seemed, somehow to belong only to the Coliseum this night and to have no part with the rest of the world at all.

Fassini also showed us part of the floor that has been built in. It seems that in the fifteenth century two families were fighting. One of these families retired into the Coliseum, fortified it and stayed there during the fight. I forget the name exactly, but I think he said the Orsini family. You can still see where they made an opening for the water. Of course they were routed out and the Government later tried to repair the ravages they had made, in the original way.

Fassini also showed us the passage through which the Emperor was wont to come down from his palace, which was further away on the Palatine Hill, so that no one could get him and he could enter, in a state of privacy, his imperial box.

Fassini asked one of the guards if we could see

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the cells of the prisoners.

He said, very definitely, "No."

It seems that up to a hundred years ago the Coliseum was a very dangerous place to come at night. Not only Romance lurked there in the moonlight, but Death. Death, turning the samite moon into a gory shroud for the intrepid adventurers. Brigands used to lurk there, and more recently, escaped convicts, cut throats, assassins, highwaymen and other criminals would hide there and they had murder on top of murder every week.

Watchmen are posted there now, by day and by night, not so much because of the criminals, for they are well aware of the fact that the place is guarded, but because of the would-be suicides, who select the Coliseum as the fitting place to bid a dramatic farewell to a life that has become unendurable. It is comicotragically like the New Yorker's election of Brooklyn Bridge or the East River as jumping-off places.

The guard told us that only two weeks before our arrival in Rome a German climbed to the top of the Coliseum and just plunged right down to a shattering death. Also, about two days ago, a young Italian, ostensibly merely wandering about, suddenly whipped out a revolver and shot himself. The guard showed us the very spot of this most recent tragedy and the blood was still

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on the stone, an angry stain there in the white moonlight.

I asked the guard what he thought the fascination of death was, and he said that he didn't know; there was some peculiarity about it.

I don't know either, but somehow it doesn't seem to me to be so very peculiar. If one, in Rome, sought death by one's own hand a kind of instinct would lead one to the Coliseum where so many suffering deaths have taken place. It is the place where blood has been spilled. Perhaps that suffering blood cries out and is assuaged only by the spilling of new blood.

I must close for tonight. Much as I shudder at leaving myself, even on the pages of my diary, alone in the Coliseum all through the night . . . brooding over stains that are new and stains that not even time can ever wash away.

*Rome, September 9th*

Still in the Coliseum, that venerable edifice that looms so significantly in history's pages.

I was, pondering the mystery, not so very mysterious after all, that draws men to the Coliseum to die by their own hand. After all, almost everything is association. The association of ideas.

The psychologists, Freud and the other eminent pioneers in the realm of the subconscious,

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believe that even is largely associative. They claim that if a small boy has, at one time or another, been deeply though unconsciously impressed by, say the image of his mother in a white gown under a rose lamp, he is quite likely some twenty odd years later, to fall instantaneously in love with a girl he may see standing, dressed in white, under a ruddy glow. He may not know, may have no idea that this is the reason for his attraction. He may attribute this to different emotional causes, her beauty, her talents, or her intelligence. But all the while it has been his subconscious memory rousing itself from out of the past to glorify the present.

It is somewhat difficult to grasp the significance of analysis as it is applied to the motive of thought, and yet there is an element of fascination in trying to decipher the messages that people our minds. For instance, how imposing it must have been in Rome, far back in that by-gone era of world domination and supremacy, to have been part of the worshipping throngs that heralded the home-coming of a great and conquering general of mighty armies, and showered adulation upon him. To have sat at the feet of the great statesmen and silver-tongued Latin orators, and heard their utterances first hand and from their own lips.

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How much soundness there is in this reasoning I have never had time, nor even the interest to examine. I have been too busy working and living to probe into analysis and the relative fields. But I dare say there is logic in it all, if nothing else.

And this all applies, certainly, to those poor wretches who go to the Coliseum to die. Death. The association of death. This and nothing else lures them to the Coliseum to court the Last Adventure. They die where others have died before them.

Death has no place in the sunlight, where the busy housewives and ladies of pleasure ply their several ways. Death must be isolated and alone. Death takes place, like that lighter drug, of sleep, in a darkened room!

Right below the Coliseum there is a tremendous drop called, fitly, the Place of Suicides, because of the fact that so many of these fatalities have occurred there.

The protagonist in D'Annunzio's "Triumph of Death," fell to his death over this 1,200-foot drop. It is vertiginous, hence, I suppose, the physical part of the fascination.

It seemed to me an unspeakably ghost-ridden spot. Unpleasantly ghost-ridden. As if those long departed spirits were filing by us with averted faces. Ghastly faces. All of them

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averted faces. The faces they had averted by their own hands from the world.

It makes one pause to think when this consideration is brought home to one: That there have been so many persons who have so suffered that life has become unendurable to them. Life, that is so strong! So many of them must have feared, too, what Death would bring, since most of us believe that self-death is a mortal sin, to be immortally punished. And that is the core of the pity of it all; that fearing death, as many of them must have feared it, did they pause to think about it, they yet feared *Life more*. Whatever this is to which we go, they thought, at least it will not be *life*! What pain must have twisted them to bring them to this maimed conclusion.

So much of all this morbidity, I have frequently thought, has to do with health. I could wager that there has never been a suicide who has been in physical shape. Their sick minds have been but the products of sick bodies. I know, though only in a very slight way, that when I first went to America and was having the worst of my bad luck, I would sit in a small hall room, in vitiated air, unexercised, inert, and feel that the gloom of the ages was pressing upon my soul—and body. And then, desperate, I would go out and walk, walk for long, deep-breathing

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miles about the city, drink a quart of milk and get a full night's sleep and my misery would be so lessened that I didn't even feel like the same person. My body was fit—and so, by the same token, was my point of view.

The sight of fancied and colorful monuments of the past have a tendency to invigorate and excite an imaginative person such as I, and as I mused on my surroundings, my fancies assumed myriad and varied proportions. I realize now how much I was influenced and affected by this environment of a mighty past. I felt, in a minor way, how transitory and unintelligible are our greatest boasts and accomplishments to a different day and age.

Of course the Coliseum didn't bring me only thoughts of death, although we did seem to dwell considerably on that aspect of it.

There is, apart from all that, the sum total of grandeur that is, after all, its strongest and most lasting impression. And there is, too, especially in the sunlight, as we saw it this morning, the prevailing sense of life. We felt that here was something that would endure inviolate. Before the red blood spurted, there was conflict, there was grandeur. The Roman crowds, with their cries, the gladiators, with their magnificent bodies, the stench and roars of the wild beasts . . . life. Raw life.



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And the other blood spilled. The other lives lived their old dramatic episodes. The lives and deaths of martyrdom. Martyrs who died the deaths of the body that their immortal souls might live. There is, too, in the Coliseum the odor of sanctity.

It is a good thing to see the Coliseum after one has lived life away. For only then, I think, can the pageantry of the place come home to one.

*Rome, September 10th*

Last night we had another fascinating evening. We dined with the Baron Fassini in his apartment in the Plazzo Titoni, and from there we motored to his castle at Nettuno.

It is an hour and a half drive from Rome, right along the sea coast. The sea coast of Italy! And the castle is rebuilt from the original plans found in the original ruins.

I walked through the moonlight.

And a creepy feeling came over me. I felt that these walls, if they could only speak, could tell tremendous tales, still fascinating.

Stories of love. Stories of lust. Stories of murder, swift, treacherous and unexpected. Especially if gentlemen like Caesar Borgia could rise up and talk. . . if they would talk.

I think that it would fascinate me to live in such a place. Perhaps I have very steady nerves,

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or, even, an imagination that needs such stimuli. But I have always felt strangely akin and at home in places of this kind.

I am not afraid of the dead, or of ghosts. The whole store and lore of grisly fears that have shaken the human race at thought or apprehension of meeting with the dead, is quite foreign to me. I am not afraid of anything pertaining to the life beyond.

And it isn't because I don't believe in it. It is because I *do*. *I believe in the supernatural*. But I don't believe that there is anything I would, or could, be afraid of.

It seems to me that we have more cause to be afraid of the living than of those who have gone on, shaking off, as they go, the lusts and cruelties of the body.

I believe extraordinarily in supernatural manifestations, although I, personally, have never seen any. I am a great believer in the immortality of the soul. That is absolutely beyond any doubt. There must be some ultimate destination or purpose for us.

I know that there has been a lot said and done that has been proven to be hokum and altogether fallacious. Full of holes, as we say in America.

I know that there has been a lot of fake surrounding Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's experi-

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ments, but undoubtedly and all the same, it is a fact that there is something within ourselves, not an organ, which we call a soul, and which cannot cease to live simply because our bodies cease to be active.

What this is we can't tell—until we reach there. And why should we tell? We don't *know* that there is any Tomorrow. Yet we believe that there is, implicitly. And we go on planning for it, although we have no tangible proof that the intangible fact of another Dawn will ever amaze the world, let alone our individual selves.

Our bodies are merely shells, in which we can hear, if we listen with ears attuned, the everlasting murmur of the sea.

What the average man calls Death, I believe to be merely the beginning of Life itself. We simply live beyond the shell. We emerge from out of its narrow confines like a chrysalis. Why call it Death? Or, if we give it the name of Death, why surround it with dark fears and sick imaginings?

I am not afraid of the Unknown.

If you live according to your conscience (if you have one, that is), and you go on through life living according to the dictates of that conscience, in other words, never doing anything which you might yourself be forced to question in

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discomfort, what is there to fear? What else, what more, can you do? By this I do not mean so much living in the religious sense of the word as living rightfully, living squarely. Not only so far as other people are concerned, but so far as you, yourself, are concerned.

A life lived in this way has no dark corners in which ghosts can hide. And a life lived like this would need to have no fear of ghosts seen, then, by the strong, free light of the day. There would be no reason then to fear ghosts any more than the man who is living rightfully has any fear of a policeman. It is only the criminal who is afraid of the policeman. He is afraid, the criminal, because the policeman represents the Law, and in a way the criminal doesn't know what the Law is going to do to him, what it is capable of doing to him. He imagines all sort of things that he wouldn't and couldn't imagine if his conscience were clear.

I suppose that if I saw a ghost walking about I would be momentarily nervous, not so much because I had seen a ghost, as because I had seen something surprising and new. Something concerning which I have heard, as all have, so many shuddering things. But I feel sure that after the first shock it wouldn't frighten me. It would surprise me as anything would that comes as a shock, but after the shock had worn off, I would

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get used to it. I might even be able to engage in a pleasant and interested conversation!

Because what would I have to fear from it? Why should I fear? Why should I not rejoice, rather, that I had been privileged to see the ultimate evidence of some life to come after this one has passed away? I'd be a darn sight more afraid of meeting some live person, like an assassin or thief, or something of the sort, in a dark corner, than I would a ghost. I would know the assassin's bad intentions. He would mean to do me harm, and would probably succeed.

We had a delightful supper at the castle. Certainly the possibility of ghosts didn't affect my appetite, nor Natacha's either. That much I *can* testify to, with positiveness. It is a marvelous spot, and one to which Mussolini often goes for a rest. The Baron showed us the room where Mussolini sleeps when he goes there.

The castle is ideal in that it is built with every modern convenience, while yet reserving the ancient atmosphere. I have never been in a place where the old and the new have been so perfectly blended without the one in any sense detracting from the other.

The baron told me that any time I might care to make pictures there, he would be happy to let me use the whole castle if I needed it for sets. It is rebuilt precisely as it was in the Eleventh

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century.

It was a delightful evening, steeped in atmosphere and the aroma of reminiscence that made the ancient splendors live again, almost as though the peoples who had been there were come back again. Secret doors and dungeon fastnesses, dim, ghostly corridors and vaulted dining halls. . . . baronial splendors brought to date without the sacrifice of the dead hands that had wrought them and the dead spirits that had inhabited them. Only a great imagination, directing master hands, would have achieved this result.

It would be a glorious thing to make a picture there, and some day I hope to do so. No critic, I feel sure, would ever be able to complain of lack of authenticity, were a picture of that period to be made in this castle at Nettuno.

I have not met Premier Mussolini and my time is now so brief that I fear this pleasure is to be denied me. A dinner was to have been arranged in order for me to meet him, and they wanted us to remain longer, but when we returned to the hotel tonight, we found some telegrams awaiting us that had to be attended to and Natacha has decided that she will go back to Nice.

I couldn't, I can't go back very well, without losing at least three-quarters of the purpose of my trip, which is to go to my home town and to

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see all of my family. We talked it over and decided that for me to go back would be sheer nonsense. In a way, Natacha, much as she loves Italy, is not sorry to go, I think. She hates open cars and the dusty roads (not to mention my driving), and so tomorrow evening I shall put her on the train, a sleeper, to Nice. Auntie will remain with me and she and my sister and I will go on together.

I will write tomorrow after Natacha has gone.

*Rome, September 11th*

Natacha has gone.

She left, and I saw her go, with regret only too slightly mixed with that same sense of right doing that comes from sacrifice. I knew that she should go. Not only for the business reasons, the imperativeness of which gave her the final impetus to go, but also because she really is not up to further motoring. The nervous collapses she has had since we reached Europe were harbingers of this very thing, and, I shall be, in a sense, more comfortable, if very lonely, knowing that she is with our father and mother, comfortably and restfully awaiting my return.

People frequently say to me that married couples should separate now and then. For esthetic reasons, I suppose they mean. But I don't agree with them. If harmony is established

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in marriage, separation disturbs it rather than increases it. And only when the good of one or the other is involved should a separation take place. It is human nature to be lonely, and it is human nature to try to alleviate loneliness by one means or another. It is that very factor that does disturb so many stage and screen and other professional marriages. It is not that the people involved are any more or less fine than other people in other walks of life, but only that they are, perhaps, more sensitive and more highly keyed in conjunction with the fact that the exigencies of their work, not their desires, frequently place them where they are.

I am alone today for the first time in many months. I could write a dissertation on loneliness if I had the time. It is like a mist from the sea striking chill to the bone.

In an hour or two we start for Campo Basso, where my brother is. Auntie, my sister and I. Auntie and my sister have arranged to sit together in the back seat of the car so that they may not know the worst that the road (and again my driving!) has to hold for them. Natacha says that I am either neurotic about my prowess at the wheel, or else that I have a guilty conscience, else I would not dwell so constantly upon it. I tell her that my record speaks for me. I have nothing to say.



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Now for the next lap of the journey!

*Campo Basso, September 12th*

We had a wonderful road yesterday, from Rome to Campo Basso. I found myself wishing desperately that Natacha had been along to observe my tactics on that unwontedly good stretch of road. And there was marvelous scenery on the way there. Almost impossible to describe. The landscape kept shifting all of the time and one would have to have a kaleidoscope for a mind to be able to do it justice. Shifting beauty . . . colors that dissolved into other colors . . . grandeurs that gave way to grandeurs. . .

Even the people kept changing, as is the way in my country. Their costumes, their customs, their official languages. Their dialects, even. So that it was one panorama of continual change.

The only way one could perfectly express it and draw a true picture would be to have a picture camera and shoot right along as you go. If I should start describing, I would out-Cook Cook, and out-Baedeker Baedeker, and would, in the bargain, write volumes and volumes that would doubtless interest only those few who are genuine and authentic lovers of scenery. Few people are, I find.

Cities have a beauty that is as marvelous as the

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beauty of the countrysides to me. They are enchanted spots if you see them with your eyes half closed. Pinnacles, towers and turrets, opalescent and serene, piercing the very skies with a kind of daring and courage that is breath-taking. They are none the less majestic because they are man-made, for they are born of towering dreams and inspired, even though unconsciously, by the turrets of high mountains, the lift of rock foundations, the sweep of ancient pyramids.

And so I won't attempt the volumes here . . . some day, perhaps, when I am an old man with a long white beard and my fund of picture reminiscences has run out, I shall return to the scenes of splendor I have traversed on my trip and give my picture of it to a waiting world.

We did see, however a very interesting sight as we neared Campo Basso in the province of Abruzzi in the Appenines. The country people hereabouts have still preserved their ancient and ancestral costumes as well as the like customs. On this particular day they were just coming back from a *fiera*, or market day. From the hamlets and small villages round about they go, driving their cattle, their pigs, carrying their produce, whether of the loom, or the fields, or the vineyards, their milk and cheese to sell, everything they have. And also to buy there what they will need for some time to come. It is a

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medieval sight and rich with atmosphere and color. It seems more like a page out of some old medieval volume than an actual sight seen in this modern twentieth century.

All of the scattered people, and those near at hand, too, meet on this particular day. Generally it is the day of some saint and is connected with some religious ceremony. Then, when they arrive at their destination, there is usually a circus or something else by way of amusement. Business and pleasure are here equally, and pleasantly combined. They generally remain two or three days, feasting, bargaining, sight-seeing, gossiping, making love and making merry, and then they go back to their various homes, stored up with memories for a long time to come.

We met them all as they were coming back. They were dressed in gaudy, colorful clothes, most of them were carrying things on their heads. Few of them have carts and so they walk, those who have carts driving ahead of them what they have bought. It was a very interesting sight to me and at no time during the trip did I so wish for a motion picture camera as I did during that hour. There were marvelous types there. Marvelous coloring of costumes. Some of the very young girls were perfect types, the most perfect I have yet seen.

From the ages of thirteen, to say seventeen or

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eighteen, some of these young girls—the very young ones—are extraordinarily beautiful. Then, almost invariably, they marry . . . get fat . . . let themselves go. They pass a certain stage, a certain phase, during which they bloom miraculously. And then almost overnight, it is gone. It has been said that the most perfect beauty is that which has been touched ever so slightly with impending decay. That is why some artists claim that women in their thirties are the most beautiful, because the time is not far off when the delicate bloom will begin to pale, the fresh petals crisp a little at the bright edges. I have heard artists say this very thing. And, if it is true, then some of the young girls in this province are indeed beautiful, for they have the beauty that one in any sense familiar with them knows inevitably and very briefly doomed.

Their general type runs to very white teeth, hair as black as the blackest part of the night piled and worn straight down, dazzling complexions that seem to have caught and combined the warm Italian sun, the full-flooded moon, the tinge of the grape. I said to my sister and to Auntie that a motion picture director looking for types would find a veritable wealth of material here. All sorts of types, too, not only the young beauty type. Character types. Old men.

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Old women. Mothers with tiny babes clinging to their skirts, to their hands and arms and knees.

And I have never seen anything of this sort in a picture. That is why I believe that if you are to take a picture having to do with Italy, or any other country, want *locales*, want special types of character, the only place that it can be truly and rightly done is in that special country.

People say, "But why travel? We can build the locales. We can imitate the types." Maybe . . . maybe . . . but I don't think so. Not for the people who know. And it is, I think, a common tendency to undervalue what the fans know. They know me more than they, often charitably, say that they know. What you build isn't *it*, after all. It is imitation, and while imitation may be flattery, may be ingenuity, may be skillful, may even be past detection, it isn't the thing itself. It can't be. Besides, these true types on the screen would be immensely interesting to everyone. And I hope some day that if I do a picture with an Italian setting and a call for these types, I can do it here, where these types are, so that people in America will see something new. Real nature. Not people and places made up to look like nature and deceiving fewer than they think.

I am particularly glad that were lucky enough to see this *fiera*, because my aunt had heard about

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the *fiestas*, but had never seen them, she was very enthusiastic about it all and so glad she had had the opportunity to see it.

We kept on after that slight digression at the *fieras*, where we loitered along, picking out this or that type and asking and answering innumerable questions and arrived at Campo Basso at 5:30 that evening.

We went straight to my brother's house without any preliminary telephoning or message and went, also, straight up the stairs.

As I opened the door, I saw, the first thing, a little bit of a boy about nine years old. He just looked at me once, straight in the eyes, and said, "Uncle Rudie!" I said, "Yes!" and then he made a fast spring, nothing short of marvelous in its agility and direct aim, and was about my neck, hugging me tight.

I had never seen him before, of course, as he was born while I was in America.

After the outburst of the first meeting, he calmed down comparatively and began asking me all sorts of rapid-fire questions:

"Have you any dollars in your pockets?"

"What do they look like?"

"How did you come?"

I tried to answer the questions as rapidly and as succinctly as he put them, but I was hard put

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to keep up with him, I will admit.

When I answered the last question, saying, "By automobile," he detached himself from me and scampered down the stairs. Crazy about automobiles. Like I was when I was a kid. Automobiles, cattle and horses. That's all I really cared about when I was his age.

Then I turned to my sister-in-law, who had, perforce, remained in the background while the effusions of her son went on. She had really had no chance to interrupt and I had had no opportunity to do as much as shake hands or say "How d'you do."

After we had talked a few moments, I asked her where my brother was and learned that he was still at his office. I couldn't wait until he should return, whereupon my sister-in-law informed that she could see well enough where her small son's impetuosity of character came from.

I followed the boy down the stairs, we climbed into the car, my nephew, of course, in the front seat with me. Auntie and my sister laughed and said that this direct method of meeting my brother was somewhat different from the involved procedure we had gone through to meet her. And I told her that she had always "led me a life," and had, in that respect, in no wise changed.

Also, I had the deuce of a time trying to drive.

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If Natacha had been with me that time, she would have started back to Nice on foot, if need be. Certainly she would have appreciated former performances, if only by the comparison.

My small nephew tooted the horn at intervals, when no horn was called for. He tried to grab the wheel, the brakes . . . an absolute, reincarnated Mercury. He couldn't stand still or sit still for one instant. I called him Mercury and he liked it. Seemed to feel that it did fit him rather well. "Mercurio" is Italian for quicksilver.

We finally arrived at the City Hall, the office of my brother, who is Secretary-General of Camp Basso, which is the "capoluogo" or capital of the whole province. It is a very responsible position, a kind of lieutenant governorship, as it would be rated in America.

Of course, like most official positions in Italy, it doesn't pay much money, but it is a great responsibility for a young fellow and not a little honor.

Last year, because of his splendid work, he was decorated with the Cross of a Chevalier of the Crown, and that is a very great honor.

We embraced and I found him little changed. I have found that men change much less than women, with the years. Not only in terms of physical alteration, but their expressions, their



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points of view, the sort of aura or atmosphere that surrounds them. My brother, for instance, hadn't changed half as much as my sister-in-law.

He thought that I had changed, but that was only because I was nothing but a boy when I had left home and had been away during the transitional years of the greatest change of all. When I left I had been quite short, and now I am towering above him.

After we had talked for a while, he took us to the hotel, because his house was quite small, and not large enough to accommodate us all. We sat down in the hotel room until dinner time, talking . . . talking.

I shall go into that tomorrow. One of the last things I promised Natacha was that I wouldn't burn too much midnight oil over this diary. I shall keep the promise, though it is a temptation to go on.

*Campo Basso, September 14th*

I left myself talking to my brother . . . and we did talk. I suppose no two women ever went on at a greater rate than we did. There was so much to say and ask on either side. Most of our talk was, as it is with men, I think, of what we had been doing since we had seen one another. My brother and I had not so many common, personal recollections to share as had my sister and I. As I have said, when we were

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all children at home, my brother considered himself older than I, and went about with a group of older boys and girls. It was with Maria that I shared most of my boyish pranks and games.

But, of course, he wanted to know all about my work, more I think, from the business and administrative end of it than from the purely artistic. I told him of the growth of the "infant industry" from a more or less amateurish and claptrap affair to an industry ranked among the largest and most important in the world. I told him of all the worthwhile men connected with it. University men, business men, artists, too. And we talked a great deal about the educational end of pictures, what they can accomplish where textbooks and talking all but fail. . . .

He had never seen a picture of mine, though by this time I was not surprised at that. And the result was that he really knew very little about my work and what it meant. I had sent him clippings from time to time, but a great many of them had never reached him and as he doesn't read English, anyway, he hadn't gained much from me. As for the magazines I had sent him from time to time, fan magazines with interviews, et cetera, in them, and trade magazines with reports of my pictures, he had never received any of them. I rather imagine that the gentlemen at the frontier kept the magazines for

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themselves.

He asked me if I would arrange for him to see one of my pictures, and I told him that I certainly would. I must see about that tomorrow.

Then, as we were talking, an idea came to both of us.

Way up on top of Campo Basso, right on top of a high, commanding hill, there is a castle, Castle Monforte, which belonged to the Duke of Monforte. It is an historic fortress here in Italy throughout the period of feudal wars. It was built in 1100 by one of the Dukes, and both the castle and the fortress have figured in many battles and sieges.

It came out in the course of my brother's talk that the city wants to make this castle into a war monument. Their plan is to reconstruct a part of it and bring back the bodies of all the boys of Campo Basso who were killed in the war and bury them there. By so doing they would make of it a national monument to the heroes who died in the great war. They are, my brother told me, trying to raise the money to do this.

I suggested to him that he arrange with the Mayor for a big showing of my picture, "The Four Horsemen," charge enormous prices for it and use the money to accomplish his end of the

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restoration. I would arrange to get a print for him.

Of course, my brother was most enthusiastic, tickled to death at the suggestion. First, because it would enable them to do so much more speedily what they so long had in mind, and, secondly, because it would give him, and also the townspeople, the chance of seeing my picture.

I told him that I would get into communication with the proper people at once and if he would go about his end of the arrangements, it would only be a matter of a few days.

He left me to get off my wires, et cetera, as there were many little formalities to be attended to.

*Campo Basso, September 17th*

I am leaving Campo Basso today. I have arranged for the showing of the picture, and my brother has satisfactorily completed his end of the project. He says that he will write me all the details of the reception of the picture, et cetera, when I get back to Nice.

My brother wants me to stay here longer, but I want to get back to Nice in time to be able to stay there three or four days, and I can't do it if I get behind my schedule now. And I have to go back to Paris, too, because of business that has come up there.

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One thing I have noted in regard to my mind and temperament, where procrastination is concerned, and that is that if I am ever led to neglect matters up to a certain point—invariably my conscience will prick me into action in order to overcome as quickly as possible whatever faults have been caused by the delay. As a general rule, I have schooled myself to be punctual. And, as a general rule, I am. But when one is vacationing, good resolutions are apt to slumber while we drift along with the current of every day pleasures.

I really waited in Campo Basso longer than I should have, because I found the spring in my car broken and I had to wait until a new spring was put in. As I have before remarked, things are not done in my country with the expedition one finds in America. This includes cars as well as service and telegrams.

I spent pleasant days with my brother, my sister-in-law and my little nephew, for whom I predict a career either in the cinema or in cars. He seems to lean slightly toward the cars right now, but may change with age. His agility should land him somewhere, certainly. He can get over more ground in a shorter space of time and with less apparent effort, than any other human being I have ever noticed, unless it might be Douglas Fairbanks at his best.

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It is the first time, and it may be the last for a very long while that I have been together with the members of my remaining immediate family. Happy days they have been, and I know that I shall look back on them some day with a pleasure hard to equal. After all, we have met, too, for the first time, with the first cross-roads of life passed by. We have come to the first milestone, that of knowing pretty fairly what we are going to be, how we are going to be it, what our futures are likely to shape us as. We spoke of our childhood and the dreams and plans we then had. I had certainly never thought that I should be an actor. My sister had never dreamed that she would be a business woman. My brother had rather imagined that he would follow in my father's footsteps, despite the fact that I have always been more interested in animals than he has. And now here we all are. Futures are uncharted things. They had little to do with Yesterday and how much less with Tomorrow. The fascination of turning the uncut leaves of a book of which one sees nothing—has heard nothing, or like seeing a play unfold before one's eyes, with only guesswork as a clue. It is a beneficent mercy, I think, that keeps the future safely behind a veil.

Tonight I shall say good-bye again to my brother and his family and proceed southward.

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Had a wire and a letter from Natacha saying that she is feeling rested and is enjoying the sunshine and late flowers. She also gave me detailed accounts of the various dogs.

*Tarento, September 19th*

We left Campo Basso in the morning. The last sight I had was an animated one of my small nephew executing gymnastics of farewell as we vanished down the road. The sun struck him full on, and he seemed a veritable sliver of quicksilver, prancing there in the center of the road. I don't know whether he felt sorrier at seeing me go, or sorrier at seeing the car vanish. His affections seemed to be pretty equally divided. A nice kid. . . .

On the way to Campo Basso, I had only one flat tire. But going from Campo Basso to Tarento I had *three*. Fortunately, I was able to change the first two, sprawling in the dust of the sunny road in my overalls. The third one occurred just as I arrived in front of the hotel in Tarento.

It was sheer fortuitousness to have it happen just where it did, because if it had burst on the road, I might have been left there, high and dry, all night long. For on this road there is no automobile traffic whatever and hardly any cart traffic, either.

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Tarento didn't offer much of a solution to the difficulty, at that. There is no automobile shop where one may buy equipment, and I have had to wait and telegraph to a nearby town to get the right size tire I need for my car. The rest of the family waited at the hotel while I drove about on a flat tire trying to locate help. When help failed, we put up here for the night to await the arrival of the salvaging tire.

I had a good night's rest, wrote to Natacha and some letters to people at home, and read a couple of books I hadn't time to get to before, and talked a long while with Auntie and my sister, agoing over what we had done on our trip and what was in store for us.

As I realized how near I was to the last pivotal point of my journey—my home town—I felt a sense of welling excitement, such as I had felt when we left New York, when we reached London, when we reached Paris, Nice, Milan and Rome. I felt as though I had been making progressive journeys back and back into my youth. Tomorrow I should get straight back to my babyhood. The house where I was born. The streets and garden where I had made the proverbial mudpies—and where I had pitched my first ball.

I didn't know how much of the place would



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seem familiar to me, because while I was born there and spent a great deal of time there, I really spent even more time in town and at the schools I attended.

It almost makes me feel old to think of Castellaneta. So much water has gone over the dam since those faraway days! Marie says that we shall have many a "Do you remember?" to say to one another after we reach "home."

As we came on further South, we came through a country where an automobile is rarely seen. To the children, no doubt, my whirring machine seemed much like a smoke-emitting dragon skidding miraculously along a commonplace road. They greeted me invariably with shrieks and squeals of wonderment and delight, and some among them, the most venturesome, took advantage of me when I had to slow down, by way of attaching themselves to the fender or any other precarious place they could lay feet and hands to, to steal a ride. They made it a habit to hitch onto any passing cart or wagon. . . . How much more adventurous to attach themselves to this not quite human machine and then to boast afterward of their unique prowess, their seldom paralleled adventure!

I had some terrible times, having to drive slowly, toot the horn and admonish the kids to keep off at one and the same time. My expe-

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rience with the little old lady into whose cart I bumped some time back, gave me a fresh impression of Italian wrath and indignation if an accident befall, and I knew that I would be the hapless victim of curses too widespread to endure if one of the little road urchins so much as scratched his or her hands. I was afraid they would get hurt and I was more than certain that if they did I would be held responsible for them.

As we got further South, about 4:30 that afternoon, the children had splendid opportunities with me, every one of which they availed themselves of. I had to go very slowly indeed, because of the country people coming back from the fields, driving their donkey carts or walking. In this part of the world, it is even harder going out of a town than it is going into one. Most of the people hereabouts have mules, and most of them have never so much as seen an automobile, save in a stray accidental picture. Both the people and the mules got nervous and frightened. The result was one slight mishap that might have been funny if I had not been tired and rather nervous from the strain of a drive, that had really been one series of impediments. On one side of the road there was a wall, a stone wall. I came slowly along, and some fool of a man, knowing his mule was nervous, stayed on the

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cart rather than going about to pacify the twitching beast. Just as I came along, the mule got scared to the breaking point, and started to make for the wall. As the mule ran, the man held her in such a way that she pushed abruptly back. I was only just in time to avoid the huge, laden cart pushing into my car and swamping us in produce of the field and the man's uprighteous wrath.

All the way that day I had to drive slowly because of the scared and frightened animals and the terrible condition of the road. It got worse as we went along.

But as night approached, there was a gorgeous sunset, and a huge orange moon arose, as huge as a house, so that we felt somewhat repaid and calmed for the pains we were taking.

However, irritating and aggravating as a dusty, fretful day may be, I defy any man or woman with so much as the germ of beauty within, to remain chafed and fretted when a moon like saffron silk rises above a land as purple as deep iris. There is something, too, in the air of night, rising out of the ground, that holds a nectar of soothing and sleep. Little things fade away and are lost in the silver shot immensities. . . .

I am very tired. More of our arrival tomorrow.

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

*Castellaneta, September 20th*

Home again!

The town that I was born in! The place that is fabled, storied, sung, sentimentalized over, revered and poked fun at! As a matter of fact, I do suppose that the town one is born in is largely a sentimental matter. The sentiment of tradition. For, in many cases, as in my own, only the earliest years are lived in the town one is born in, and all of the really important and significant events of one's life take place very far from the natal spot. Still, all men are egotists enough to believe that the event of their birth is a very important matter and so surround the spot with an "odor of sanctity."

It has become customary in these modern days to laugh, or to pretend to laugh, or to try to laugh at all of the old traditions. The Young Intellectuals poke scoffing fingers at the Old Home, at each and every one of the ancient institutions. Motherhood, the gods of our fathers, tender ties, gently held associations, all of those things have gone out with hoop skirts and golden oak furniture. The two preceding generations have become targets for the skepticism and mockery of this generation of iconoclasts.

Well, it may be all "hokum." There may be "nothing to it." And I may be only a "victim" of past scenes and memories. But I know that

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a lump rose in my throat and a film crossed my eyes as I pointed out to Auntie the square, flat-roofed farmhouse built of heavy white stone—the house where I was born. I was even guilty of showing her the shuttered windows of the very room wherein that epochal event had miraculously taken place!

I can laugh at it, but the laughter is not altogether free of a softer sentiment. And I am not ashamed of it. He who cannot be stirred is in process of dying, emotionally, if no other way. I remember so well the ceremony of closing those casement windows and barring them at night. The spot where I spent my childhood was not policed as are the suburbs of America, making it neither feasible, nor entirely safe, to leave one's windows open to the night.

But I am getting miles ahead of myself.

While we were in Tarento (though I was born in Castellaneta, I lived in town a great deal), our cousin met me.

I was much surprised to see how the town had changed. Somehow I had not expected it to. That is another curious psychological or egotistical fact about the traveler. One subconsciously or unconsciously believes that everything will be quite the same as it was when one left. Many and many a time I have heard a person say, upon returning home after a long absence, "Why, how

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changed it all is!" almost in tones of disapproval, as though things should have been left just as they were until that particular person came back again. We only believe in the changes we see and we scarcely realize them half of the time.

During the war, this town was an important military base. The troops went to Salonica, the Balkans—the French, English and Italian troops leaving from Tarento, one of the biggest Italian naval bases.

I was especially surprised to see that they are so modern as to have an electric street car line, because, up to the time of the war, they only had an omnibus, very creaky and antique, drawn by two horses. However, the one line was all the traffic. You saw cabs, but the regular service was done by these horse carriages and now they've become so modern as to have a street car line.

Also, the roads are improved and they have put in electric lights.

I exclaimed over each and every detail, and my cousin was amazed that I remembered so much, and so much in detail.

As a matter of fact, I went through a very introspective period of my young life while I went to school in Tarento. We owned a house here at that time and came here to live when I was

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nine years old, after which we never went back to Castellaneta to live for any length of time.

It was while I was here at school that I became to myself an imaginary figure of great excellence, daring and glamorous. The deficiencies of my every day life and my every day studies (which were neither brilliant nor promising), I compensated for by the stories I secretly wove about my Other Self. The imaginary Me. The gallant and dashing figure I dreamed myself to be. Perhaps the inception of my screen life took place then and there. No doubt Professor Freud would find it so. For certainly I walked myself through stories, legends, crusades and battles of the most rich and intricate material.

My favorite work of literature at the time was "The Adventure of India," but even the author of that volume could not rival me in my inner imaginings. I grew to seem quiet and visionary on the outside, but innerly I was seething with desperate adventures. I was in turn desperado, explorer, chivalrous knight and the warrior-rescuer of scores of beleaguered and beautiful ladies in distress. In my more martial and more valiant moments, I saw myself stained with the blood of hardily won battles, maimed, but triumphant after perils the like of which have probably never taken place on land or sea. I was

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knighted and acclaimed by the King and Queen, and listened with modestly inclined head to the plaudits and ringing hosannas of at least one-half the known world. In my more sentimental visions I saw myself twined about with white and gracious and also grateful arms, pelted with roses and crowned with laurel placed upon my heroic brow by a pair of lily white hands. I had a gorgeous time, but I can't say that my teachers and my family entirely appreciated this phase of my career.

I was so engrossed with these Herculean visions that I had little or no time for the mundane studies of every day. They seemed so dull, so pale and futile by contrast. I simply couldn't strip my mind of the glittering colors and the clash of steel and the drop of roses in which I lived, to conjugate verbs or to apply myself to any rule of three. I became a steady candidate for the dunce's cap! They supposed I was merely a very stupid boy and I couldn't, of course, break the box of myrrh at their uncomprehending feet. Then they would have thought me worse than dull, if there be anything worse—crazy would have been the conclusion.

I eventually got my punishment.

There came the thrilling day when the King was scheduled to visit the town. The announce-



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ment of this great event brought me out of my visions and dreams with a smart snap. For after all, visionary deeds and imaginary valor are one thing, but on the other hand a real king is a real king, and not to be mused over. Besides, all Italians have a really deep and profound love and admiration for Vittorio Emanuëlo, no dreamed of figure than which is considered finer. He is veritable father to his people and the lovely Queen Elena, the first in the land to rush to the aid of distressed or stricken subjects.

I was, I suppose, too evident in my joy at seeing. I showed signs of animation and interest in the world about me, and it was considered that this would be a fitting occasion on which to bring me to my wandering senses. Nothing else had been of any avail. The ordinary threats, ominous hints and curriculum punishments had simply skidded off the glittering surface of the world in which I lived and had my actual being. Even as today, in pictures, I have lived and had my actual being in the characters I have played. I was laying the cornerstone for this aptitude even then, but, of course, they couldn't know that and wouldn't have cared, more than likely, if they had!

However, on the day of the king's arrival I was stripped to my underclothing and left in the dormitory. That was punishment. That was to

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show me how a stupid and refractory boy was treated. My clothes had been entirely removed by way of an extra precaution. Who could tell what I might do?

Who indeed?

I was far too inflamed by desire for this real contact with a real figure of achievement to be stopped by bolts and bars or by the lack of garments. So soon as my captors had departed to see the king, I broke out of my captivity, scrimmaged about until I found a stray uniform several sizes too large, a hat and a sword of correspondingly plentiful proportions, and then made a dash for the stables. The good and worthy students had made use of all the good horses, and the sole remaining steed was a mangy little donkey who, like myself, had been left behind to catch not so much as the receding hoofbeats of his king. Well, I should ride forth on an ass!

I strode this humble steed and galloped lumpily away, my hat riding my nose, my huge sword hitting the ground, but undaunted nonetheless, and making good use of my accustomed dreams of myself to imagine that I was the dashing figure I would have liked to be. I muttered "For King and Country!" and with this valiant phrase ringing in my ears, urged my recalcitrant steed onwards.

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And thus I saw my King pass by.

The next day I was sent home to mother. Even more ignominiously than I had sent myself forth to see my sovereign.

Needless to state, my poor mother could not be made to see the high and lofty and laudable motive back of my misdemeanor. It simply smacked of another stupid prank to her, a defiance without grace. It was at this time that I was sent off to the Collegio della Sapienza, a military school for the sons of doctors.

It was called "a college of savants," though what optimist or liar gave it that name I cannot imagine. For I was surely not a savant when I went in and I was just as surely not a savant when I came out.

By this time, I had arrived at the mature age of fifteen and had discovered in myself an overweening desire to become a cavalry officer. The position of an Italian cavalry officer is an enviable and a fine one. They wear almost the most gorgeous uniforms in the world, a part of which is the dashing blue cape so much and so obviously admired by the fairer sex. But with all of those advantages to be attained it also costs a great deal of money, and while my father had left a fairly substantial amount of money it had become somewhat lessened in the years after his death, and my mother explained to me that there

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was really not enough to allow me to realize this great ambition, not without pinching and sacrifice to the rest of the family, and that I wouldn't have had at any cost.

We finally struck a compromise on the Royal Naval Academy. I turned my ambition thenceward and for the first time I really did apply myself and studied hard to fit myself both physically and mentally for the entrance examinations. I was set on it. It was the first thing of this kind that I had ever wanted to do very badly. When the day for the examinations arrived in the academy at Venice, I arrived, self-confident and anticipating triumph—only to find myself one inch lacking in chest expansion.

I wanted to die. I felt that I had drunk the very dregs of humiliation. I was tragically convinced that there was no place in the world for such as I. I had ousted myself from my world of dreams and the world of reality would have none of me. It was a bitter, an abysmal moment. I contemplated the canal. There, there would be oblivion where neither inches one way nor inches the other way would matter. I was a disgrace to my mother, therefore she could not grieve very much if I were brought home to her cold and still. It was an arresting picture, and I might, just MIGHT have accomplished the dread deed had it not been that another boy

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found himself in the same position owing to the lack of half an inch.

We found mutual consolation and decided to go on with life, albeit a bit wearily and resignedly.

The rest of my tragedy passed away on my mother's breast. That sacred pillow that has soothed so many an embittered man or desperate youth.

And thus it followed that I went to the Royal Academy of Agriculture to study scientific farming. Italy needed scientific farmers more than she needed sailors or soldiers, my mother said, thus replacing in me the enthusiasm of an ideal which I felt that I had lost for all time for want of an inch. Besides, she reminded me that my illustrious ancestors had tilled the soil of their estates and perhaps I might recreate the traditions, once glorious, of my progenitors. Wise, wise little mother of mine. She touched the quivering strings of my heart and drew forth a whole new harmony. She gave me inspiration and she awakened my determination. I couldn't fail her now, not after the loyal delicate way in which she had stood by me. And so I started to this Agricultural School, of which I have already written, with a high resolution. I wouldn't fail this time. And I didn't.

I have been writing far into the night. And

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I seem to hear Natacha's warning voice. I knew that when I got near to the scenes of my childhood reminiscence would crowd out the happenings of the ridden road.

I must get on with my narrative tomorrow . . . but tonight I have relived a section of my life. It is almost like getting another chance at the Past, emotionally if not actually.

### *Castellaneta, September 20th*

I left myself in a field of reminiscencing. It is the easiest thing in the world to slip back into one's past. Walking familiar streets, even though many of the familiar faces are gone, projects one back into quite as familiar sensations and experiences. It is hard to believe that so much has gone between.

But I must get on to events and let the memories weave themselves in when they will or must.

As I said in my previous instalment, my cousin met me. I hadn't seen him since his mother and father passed away. He used to have a big apartment, a whole floor, but told me that he had recently rented this domicile to a bank, which seemed to have greater need of it than he did. We went, consequently, to the best hotel in the town, where I was optimistically promising myself a fine hot tub and a change. I felt that I had drastic need of both.

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To my horror, I discovered that there was no room and bath reserved. This disconcerting bit of news my cousin had refrained from greeting me with, observing, as he did, my eagerness for the same. When I inquired as to why such reservation had not been made, I was informed by the *maitre-d'hotel* that it *was* because there was no room with bath. Not only was there no room with a bath, but there was no bath on the floor, and, to go still further, there was no bath AT ALL. None, anywhere, in the whole hotel. A few weeks, even a few days from now, this may appear to me to be a trifling and inconsequent incident, not even important enough to be mentioned, but at the time, and even now, it loomed up to me as an unspeakable catastrophe—an insurmountable difficulty.

“But why,” I said to the manager, who was quite imperturbable, “*Why* is there no bath in the hotel?”

The worthy manager spread his fingers wide apart, in a gesture of complete self-exoneration, “Because,” he said, “there is a Turkish bath around the corner and so we don’t need one in the hotel!”

Can anything more *naïve* be imagined? Can you imagine going to any hotel in New York, even in America, and having them tell you that



Valentino, revisiting the little cafe in his home town in Italy, reflects as to his own fate had he remained here instead of going to America.





Ruby as a baby. This is the only baby picture  
of him in existence.

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there is no bath, for the good and sufficient reason that there is one "around the corner?"

This gives the best ideas I know of how modern (?) they are in this part of the country. Bathing, fresh air, exercise, diet, all of these requisites of the simplest physical culture regime are unknown to them. Not only are they unknown, but they would be taken as downright conceit by the natives if one attempted to argue these points with them. Had I said very much, they would just have thought, in their rather obscure fashion, "Oh, this is one of those actor chaps—they've always got notions." I more or less refrained from comment. No doubt had I been a woman I should have burst into tears of sheer exasperation.

I was wretchedly dusty enough, however, to prevail upon the manager to present me with an ample basin, which he did, in great puzzlement, wondering what all the hurry was about and why I couldn't wait a few hours, a day or two, and then step into the convenient Turkish bath "around the corner" at my leisure and convenience. I finally managed to take a sponge bath—cold—and thought, as I splashed, of the Ritz in New York, with longing and regret. This traveling, I pondered, between shudders, is not always what it is cracked up to be. Ah, Rudy, my boy, it has its disadvantages!

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I might mention, too, that I managed a bit of hot water for shaving with considerable argument and patience. I couldn't stand the state of unbathedness, but how much less could I stand going about like the bearded Crusoe!

After I had made myself as presentable as I could, my cousin and I sallied forth, and I met a lot of my old friends at the very cafe they had used to frequent and were still frequenting, as it seemed to me quite unmoved since I had left.

They were the only thing about the old town that had not changed. Things, I thought, move on and alter and are renewed, but human nature, unless it be ignited by the moving spark variously called genius, or creativeness, or only mere ambition, human nature remains amazingly the *same*.

Men and women have loved and hated, striven and made peace, born children and cared for them, built houses and adorned their persons since time immemorial, the only deviations being in the material things. Storied houses instead of caves. Soft endearments rather than blows upon the head. Weapons of warfare, skilled and deadly, rather than bludgeons or bare fists. Schools and sciences instead of sign language inscribed upon stone or papyrus. The same old human nature—playing with new tools.

These men, these familiar faces, whom I saw,

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

to my unfeigned surprise, sitting around the same old table, in the same old indolent postures, in the same old cafe, had been young fellows of twenty-three or four when I was a mere lad of thirteen or fourteen. At that time they wouldn't have anything to do with me, of course, and it had been one of the ambitions of my life to be recognized by them, to be made one of them, to receive a slap on the back or a tentative confidence. It would have fairly swelled me with pride and import. They had seemed so splendid to me then! Now, here they were in their approaching mid-thirties, still sitting about the table, still talking the same language in the same way, still exchanging the same narrow and stultified ideas, with the same smallness of intellect. As I watched them there from a nearby table, I realized that the luckiest thing that ever happened to me was getting away and going to America. I might so conceivably, so easily have become one of them.

There is nothing more persuasive than a group of "good fellows," amusing talkers, idlers in pleasure with their leisurely scorn of the more exacting things, their dilatory appreciation of a pretty ankle, a good time, a rare wine . . . they are like anesthesia, robbing one of will power and the desire for effort.

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But as I looked at them today, after so long a span of time, I realized that while they had nearly trapped me into a life of inertia, they and what they stood for, they had also had the effect of projecting me into space. For at times I had felt stifled by the atmosphere of the town, by them, by all with whom I came into contact. My sister-in-law said to me when I was with her, that she remembered my saying to her twelve years ago that Italy was too small for me. "You said," she told me, "that Italy was too small for you—that you HAD to get out." She added to me, "And now I see that you were right."

At that time she hadn't seen it, of course. She had thought that it was the preposterous utterance of a bumptious youth—and undoubtedly it did sound just that. The utterances of youth are usually bumptious in their effect. Their immediate effect. But I think now that if I ever have a son of my own I will listen to his youthful pronouncements with interest as well as amusement. I will try to recognize in them the clarion call of prophecy. The exaggerated expression of all moment may well be the corner-stone of future activity. Many of the sayings of young boys are mere chaff, of course, not all to be taken seriously, but among the chaff there is frequently to be found the grain of wheat that will mean the harvest of the future man.

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

Sitting at our table, with my cousin, there came back to me so vividly that rather painful period just before I went to America.

That period was painful to me and also for my rather long-suffering family. I had won honors at the Royal Academy of Agriculture, but my brief and proud position as *Pride of the Family* was more or less short-lived. I was, of course, in the love-sick period of life. And if there is anything on earth more lamentably love-sick than an Italian youth in love, then I have yet to gaze upon the phenomenon. I languished, wrote violent love verse. I copied page after page from Tasso and Petrarch. I sighed like a furnace. I took out in surreptitiousness what an American youth of the same age and station is able to give vent to by word of mouth. In Italy rigid convention prevents a youth from much social intercourse with gently-bred girls, who are never without those perennials, chaperons. My family predicted darksome fates for me. And it was, therefore, small wonder, I suppose, that Paris called me. In Paris, I thought, the mistress of the cities of the world—in Paris, I would find just due of appreciation—and pleasure. Regardless of my family's entreaties, I pocketed what little money I had and dashed away to Paris to see what might be seen. I was the love-lorn swain begging from the courtesan city of

## MY PRIVATE DIARY

the world. And for a time the favors that I won turned my giddy head. I felt triumphant. Elated. Conquering. Here, I felt, here was Life. For the moment I lost my sense of being stifled. The boulevards yielded up to me a veritable largesse of beauty and gems. I was a lord of creation. I had come into my own. But as might be imagined, my money didn't last very long—and neither did the largesse of the capricious boulevards. I ceased to be a lord of creation. Abruptly, I became a mendicant who received scant favors. I was again desperate. As I had felt at the Military College when I lacked half an inch of chest expansion, so I felt in Paris, when I lacked the gold that was my only "open-sesame." I had thought myself to be omnipotent. I found that I was but another spender of coin, welcome as long as the pockets were full, a stranger within hostile gates when the pockets were turned out—empty.

I felt the bitter taste of a new disillusion in my mouth. The sweetness was gone to gall. I had dreamed again, and again had had a rude awakening. I thought of death. I would forsake a life so full of roughened seas. It was unworthy of a man of parts to endure so tawdry a dwelling place. Then I heard of Monte Carlo and with the few dollars I had left, rushed as desperately

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

to Monte Carlo to retrieve my fortunes, as I had formerly run to Paris to make good my sense of adventure. Monte Carlo treated me more shabbily than Paris. If I was a poor amateur at the boulevards, I was less than a poor amateur at the gaming tables. Perhaps that is why gambling holds no charm for me today. I am beginning to feel, as I go on with my diary and compare my present feelings and activities to those of bygone days, as though Freud were right indeed and most of the things we *are* spring from the sources of the things we *were*.

A few weeks after my first departure, I returned home, tattered and weary, a new — another Prodigal.

This moot question became the consensus of interest in our home and among the members of my family. I was looked upon with gloomy and foreboding eyes. Rash misdeeds of my childhood were dragged to light to prove that what was transpiring now was only to be expected. My mother alone retained her fond belief in me and in my ultimate emergence from the dark cloud of disapproval that seemed now to hang over me. But there must have been times, I think, when even her fond courage flagged. If so, however, she never let me know it. She had dreamed so high for me, it was hard for her to come down from her lofty attitude.



## MY PRIVATE DIARY

I came home, feeling more stifled than ever. My experience in Paris had only whetted my appetite for foreign lands and other scenes. Even though they were to be scenes of trial—which God knows they were.

*I wanted to get away.*

There were no opportunities. No horizons. I heard all of the old hokum about opportunity being "at hand"; and not making good in one place if you can't make good in another, but it all fell on deaf ears. I knew that I wanted to get away and I knew that I **MUST** get away or else fall into a "slough of despond" that would have landed me and left me at the cafe table, if in no worse place.

All of a sudden I decided I would go to America. . . America and no place else. There I could breathe. I seemed to feel a mighty liberating gust of wind from the vast Western prairies. I seemed to feel my very spirit rise up and grow at the thought of New York. . . America.

There were opportunities—gold mines of them! Rich and bountiful opportunities hanging like great, over-ripe plums from freighted and laden trees. Vast forests of opportunities through which one had but to stagger to emerge with laden, burdened hands. There were horizons—horizons over two seas—reaching as far

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

and further than the eye could reach—each horizon with a pot of molten gold at the tip-end. It was a country for a new knighthood. For a new Armada. For a new crusade. The riches of Arabia, the spices of India, the silkenness of Persia—all of these were as nothing to the munificence of America. And as for Paris and her fickle boulevards! Well, but there was Fifth Avenue in New York—there were other boulevards there—boulevards that would welcome a young Italian and make him generously welcome. I had yet to learn that the world is hospitable only to the provenly worthy guest.

Before, however, the decision was reached to send me on my desired way, I had plenty of time to prove to everyone concerned that something had better be done about me.

I was a bit of a Lothario, and I started to chase around with the show girls. That finished me completely with the decent families. They wouldn't have anything to do with me, and, of course, they wouldn't allow their daughters to have anything to do with me. As for getting away with anything "sub-rosa," that, in this town, was impossible. The whole town promenaded at nights on a certain piazza (not large in a small town), and the next day all of the people would know everything that had happened. So, of course, when it got about that I went with

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show girls, I was socially NIL.

But I didn't care very much, except for the fact that it hurt my mother. I was still dreaming. And in my fantastic dreams, I thought that those show girls were perfectly beautiful—fascinating. My impression of them today is. . . ?

To me they were houris—blessed damosels—enchancing and enchanted visions of a most rare delight—.

At this juncture—lost in that bygone rare delight—I had better shut this diary until tomorrow. And I must finish my letter to Natacha.

. . .

*Castellaneta, September 21st*

I left myself in the company of the inamoratas of my very early youth—the small-town show girls. It was an association which, perhaps, may be said to have influenced the trend and the event of my life more than any other single incident—or, more accurately—accident. To my adolescence and unsophistication, those women at first seemed to me—in spite of the peroxided hair, ballet skirts and grammar—the very epitome of feminine charm. Such was the preliminary impression. But such is the rapidity of discernment of youth—contrary to much elderly opinion—that before my acquaintance with these girls had progressed beyond the stage of the most innocent of bystanders, the image began to

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

fade, the disguise with which my idealism had donned them became transparent.

The habits of a lifetime are strong. But still more strong are the inherited habits of centuries. I believe that not in one instance among thousands is it possible for a lad born of a good family and bred to the staid conventions of that family, to forget them for an instant. Nor is it a question of "convention." It is a matter of *taste*—that inborn, inalienable sense of fitness and of "adequacy." Still more firmly entrenched is that protective instinct in the emotional temperament, which all high-bred Latins, and myself—I say it without vanity—perhaps the contrary!—in particular possess. It is a rock-like protection. Only what is desirable, on an equal and attractive plane with one's self, satisfies to any degree at all.

Those show girls simply "didn't do." They were of another strata—another class. An impassable barrier stood between us.

Yet the instinct for romance lived in me with undiminished strength—the urge toward adventure, accomplishment, and love of the high and beautiful sort, which could appease my soul and stimulate me to the finer realization of the best and the finest that was within me.

I grew restless. In the small town of my

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birth and childhood, there was peace, serenity and comfort. But none of those things was what I craved. I desired the arenas of the world—the audiences to any sort of high endeavor which the great centers of life provide—especially those of the New World, where there is ample room for anything that needs doing and is worth trying for.

The thought and impulse to go to America became so strong within me that I finally communicated it to my mother, and she very naturally was overwhelmed with a sense of the impending loss.

My cousin said: "Let him go. It will do him good. Either make him or break him. And I am sure it will make him if he has any backbone. He will be where he has to fight for his own existence, and will learn to know life. Here he will be absolutely ruined. If he is going to be a criminal, he had better go to America and be one there, where he will not disgrace us and his name.

These family councils—how many young men can look back and remember them. The male members of the family all arguing to let the waster go and be broken or made. The mother hanging back, tremulous, fearful, her son's safety of more concern to her than the splendid process, the heartbreaking fear of his being made broken. It is the Gethsemane of mother-

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

hood, this fear . . . my mother, being wise, knew that I should certainly get away from the inert, demoralizing influence of the small town. She knew that I wanted to go and that my wanting to get away was the augury of my manhood. But she knew, too, that the odds were against me rather than for me. America was a very long way off—and did she also know that she and I would never meet again on earth? Was that a part of the fear that tore her courage into the little pieces she so valiantly pieced together for my good? I often wonder about that. I so often hope that wasn't a part of what she must have suffered. But I am afraid that it was. Brave little mother, brave mothers the world over, who break their hearts and then say to their sons, "Have you hurt yourselves, my sons?"

It was finally and rather painfully decided that I should have my way and go to America. Painfully, because it was conveyed to me by my cousin and other members of the family that I was going by way of a reform rather than anything else. But with the green hardness of youth, I was too much excited at the prospect of this Great Adventure to be much upset about the aspersions on my character. Perhaps because I didn't really believe them. I would show them, anyway—some day they would be proud of me—they would be forced to retract the beastly things

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they had said and hinted at—I would heap coals of fire upon their heads—wearing, myself, the wreath of laurel! Well, in a measure I have made good on this vision. The only thing I find that I want, however, is some certainty that my mother knows—she would be proud of me, I think. And I would like her to know that some of her faith, at least, has been justified. Not all, *that* I could never repay, but enough for her to feel that she was not wholly wrong about me. My belief in the life to come gives me, too, the happy conviction that she *does* know and is glad about it all.

It was my mother who got together the money for me to go. It was my mother who talked to me, putting not only new courage, but new ideals into my heart. If, in the days that followed, my courage ever flagged and I felt like giving up the fight, it was my mother's words that buoyed me up, squared my shoulders and made me try again, when trying seemed a futile, worthless thing.

It was on the morning of December 9, 1913, that I finally embarked on a boat of the Hamburg-American line, and I arrived in New York on December 23rd. Just then the city was making ready for Christmas. I think it was that as much as anything that so stabbed me with home-

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

sickness and a regret even for the small town that I had said so stifled me. And, incidentally, on the way over, something occurred to me that probably gave me my first sense of personal gratitude to America and to Americans. An American saved my life on board ship. I was standing high up in the bow, foolishly, during a raging storm. I was supporting myself, I thought, by grasping on of the ropes. All at once I felt a heavy impact on my shoulders, and a moment later a wave leaped over the bow so monumental and so ferocious that it would have swept me from my moorings quicker than it takes to tell. In an instant I would have been snuffed out, extinguished in the forgetful seas. The heavy impact I felt was the hands of an American who had seen the wave coming and had immediately recognized my predicament and had as immediately acted. This small-great thing caused the latent gratitude I felt to rise up in me. And in that I was, I am, no different from my fellow Italians. For we cherish a greater love for America than Americans really realize. The multitude who go to America, make their fortunes and come home again, never really forget. Their first spiritual debt they pay to the land that gave them gold.

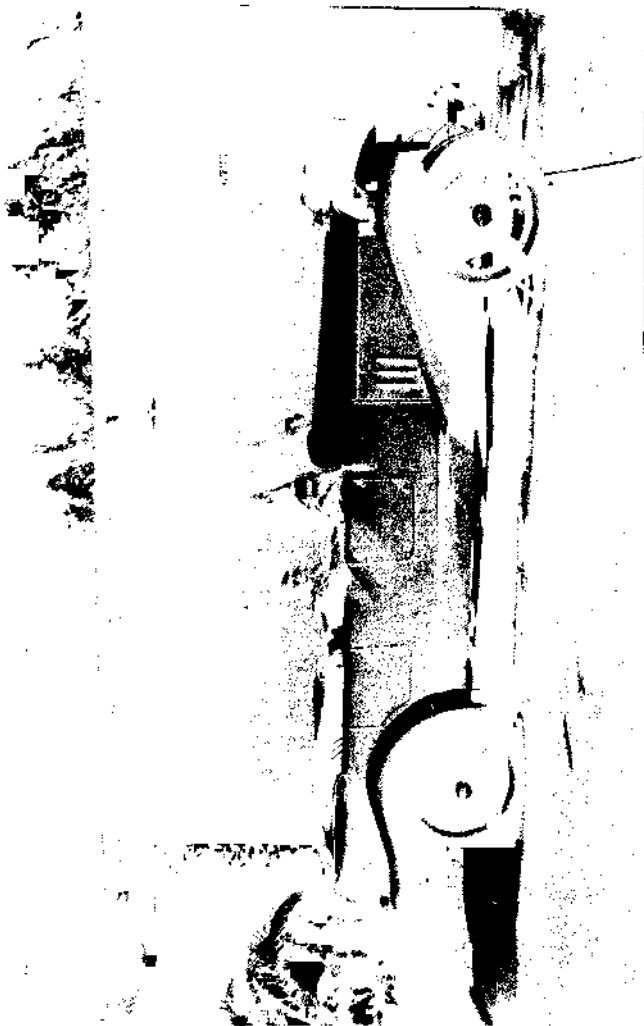
And so I finally approached America, flaming with zeal, vehement with ambition, eager to take



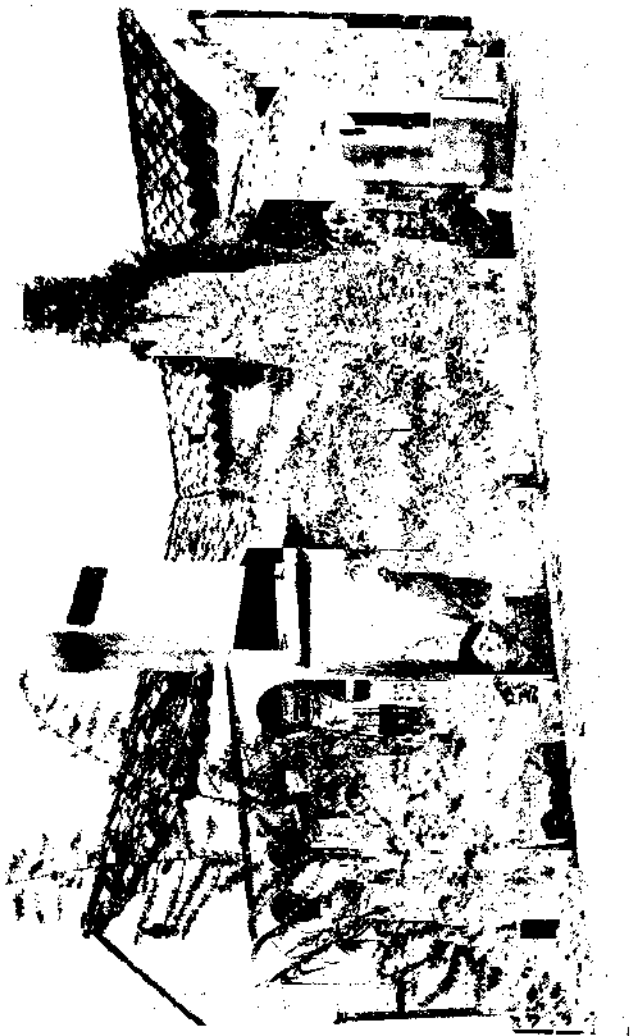
## MY PRIVATE DIARY

the land and wrest its secrets from it. Of course, I did not know that what I was to go through was not a series of triumphs dating from my inconspicuous, unheralded and totally unknown arrival, but the test of struggle that does, in fact, either make or unmake the man.

My first impressions, however, quite came up to my dreams. The skyscrapers of New York—ah there, before my very eyes, quite as I had dreamed, were the monumental shafts of Achievement piercing the very heavens with an arrogant disdain, or a poignard of praise. They were like radiant silver towers to me, the towers that had peopled my dreams when, a tiny lad, I had envisioned myself a knight with a crusader. They made me feel somehow, safe. One could not fail among them. They were like peaks of Aspiration, leading a man on and on, higher and higher, summits without end, I thrilled to them. I felt a part of them. I had quite forgotten that there were canyons at their bases. Mean little streets and alleyways, where the unsuccessful, those who had aspired in vain, or those who had not aspired at all, travailed and perspired, scurried and skulked, with never an upflung glance. And for a long while it looked as though I were to become one of the latter company rather than the glittering host I had first thought myself an hereditary part of.



The *Voisin* car built especially for Rudy in Paris, where he spent many happy days superintending its design and selecting its colors.



"Wedgewood Place" in Hollywood, the only one of Rudy's homes where he and  
Natacha actually lived.

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

Sometimes I used to think that I was taboo because I had landed in Brooklyn. I should have gone straight into New York, I would think, assailing the battlements firsthand. My first day in New York began rather well—though I musn't go into this too exhaustively here and now—I went straight to an Italian place, Giolotti's, of which I had heard from a young Italian I met on the boat. Here, or there, I secured a bedroom, sitting room and bath. On the front of the house. The money my mother had given me seemed a fortune to me at the time. It never occurred to me that I wouldn't have made another fortune of my own before this one was exhausted. That, more than anything, serves to show how very young and practically inexperienced I really was. Or else what a high idea I had of myself! I don't know which. I went to Rector's for luncheon following my very elegant installation. I had read of Rector's in the papers, and it seemed to me to be the eminently suitable place for a young conqueror to lunch at. How soon it was before Rector's was an unthought of eating place for me! In fact, to eat at all became a problem most complex in its exigencies. I often think that I shall never quite be what is known as "spoiled." Any man, or any woman, who has gone friendless and hungry and alone, a stranger in a strange land; anyone

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who has worn his thin sole leather thinner still on alien streets, who has faced discouragement and despair on an empty stomach—well, it seems to me that it would take an abnormally buoyant individual to quite forget those days and hours in one fleeting life-time.

Two of the things that first struck me, or occurred to me in New York were:

One that I got lost, hopelessly lost. I found myself sub-waying violently back and forth from Hoboken to New York, from New York to Brooklyn, from the Battery to the Bronx, getting more horribly confused with every new entanglement. I could speak only the most meager words in English, far too few to unravel the state I found myself in.

When, at last, drenched to the skin from the pelting winter sleet I had got into, foot-sore, discouraged and tired out, I finally reached my rooms again, I dropped onto the bed and cried like a small and very homesick boy. I bitterly regretted in that hour all that I had done at home, all the valiant resolutions that had landed me in this far country where I could not even find my way about. I eventually sat down and wrote a long and rather desolate letter to my mother, repenting therein of all my follies and warning her that I was apt to return to Italy

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

by the next steamer.

The other thing I mentioned to my mother—the other thing that so amazed me was—chewing gum. I told my mother that all of the people, or most of them, were chewing, chewing, chewing. I said that I couldn't understand it, because while they kept on chewing endlessly, they never put anything into their mouths. I thought, I said, that Americans must belong to the ruminating family. I had, oddly, perhaps, never had any chewing gum in Italy. Had never seen any. And so did not know what on earth it was. I can't say how oddly, how rather unpleasantly it affected me. Had I been able to speak English, I am sure that I would have turned to my nearest neighbor on one of the various subway trains I rode on and asked him, "What in h—are you chewing on and why?" As it was, I had to wait and ask my landlord and when, after some perplexity, he informed me that what I must mean was chewing gum, since I said that women were also and likewise employed, he burst out laughing at what he must have considered my consummate simplicity—and promptly offered me a piece from the apparently inexhaustible supply he kept in his pocket. I tried it, but can't say that then or at any other time I ever acquired the good American taste. I guess I am NOT a ruminant.

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I think, though, as I sit here so deeply thinking back, that the lowest ebb of my life came on that Christmas eve, only one day after my arrival in New York. The abyss of loneliness. I ate a solitary dinner in a small cafe, and the very food tasted bitter with my unshed tears. One doesn't dare to cry in America. It is unmanly here. But at any rate, the dinner was the least of my difficulties, for I couldn't eat it, anyway. Afterward, I walked for hours, up and down Fifth Avenue, around the reservoir in Central Park, through the Zoological Gardens, around and about the Museum of Natural History; and I tried to tell myself that I was in New York, that it was the one place of all places I myself had most desired to be, and that before long I should be triumphantly a part of it all and should then love it. But in that dark hour, with the sense of happy families and celebrations pressing in upon me, all that I felt was my loneliness, my isolation, my strangeness. It was then I realized how *very* lonely one may be in a large city. How people, just people with their indifferent faces, can isolate one from the very world. As I write this now, with everything so different and New York a loved and cherished place to me, I feel again that low-surg-ing sickness that gripped me by the throat when I first came to New York.

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

New Year's Eve was another dark hour in my life. Crowds, surging crowds of people, bright-faced and on pleasure bent. Oceans of light words and light laughter drifting over me like cold waves. . . . I couldn't even understand the joy of the others. . . . That night, I remember, I went home and tried to read myself to sleep, but the bells of the New Year kept ringing in my ears, as if on purpose to mock me. I felt sore all over. My only refuge was to get up and write long letters home, to my mother, to my sister, to my friend. Some of these letters I tore up before I came to mail them. I knew they would make the dear ones at home unhappy about me. I couldn't act the ingrate by my own weakness.

Of course, I couldn't look for work until I had acquired some knowledge of the English language. And I thought that one of the best ways to do that would be to promenade the streets, picking up words and sentences here and there. Once in a while I would drop into Bustanoby's where I could talk to the waiters in French. It was here that I met my first friends in the new country. One evening I was sitting there I must have looked lonely and apart, for presently a young fellow detached himself from a group at an adjoining table, came over and asked me in French if I wouldn't care to join his party.



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WOULD I? I simply faltered my thanks, being unable to express the extravagant gratitude I felt for this first human contact.

But I am running beyond the time I have allotted myself to write in my diary. I think I shall have left Castellaneta behind me before I get down to details of the place itself. So many things, so many memories crop up to deter me from my given tract.

*Naples, September 26th*

Instead of considering this ever-increasing and exceedingly bulky pamphlet in the light of a diary, it seems to be developing into reminiscences. That is to say, I write so much of looking backward that I find myself out of a place before I have finished recording that place. Natacha writes me that if I were as good a letter-writer as I am a diaryist, or as prolific, at any rate, she wouldn't have to buy any reading matter for the rest of her life! But I think I must have some writer's complex or other. I can write in a diary so much better than I can write a letter to someone else. In my diary I am communing only with myself, with my own life, with my Past and with my Present. Even though I know that Natacha is going to read every word of it, still it seems to be myself writing to myself, and if I bore myself—why, who is to complain?

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

That is why I ramble on and on, one idea starting up a perfect torrent of other ideas. Certainly, I have few suppressions when it comes to the mighty pen!

I had meant to write only of what I saw and felt while I was, or am I should say, on this trip. But I have found out one thing, and that is that the Past is never entirely dead. Never. As we live the present, especially on the battlefield of the Past, we find that the two join hands systematically, surely, subtly. We cannot give a true record of the present without in some part including the Past. The old voices, the old memories, the old associations, step from their shallow graves and chime in too audibly to be denied. We cannot still them and give a true record of what is happening Today. So I have found that as I go back over the old ground, I see Today in the light of them. It is what I have gone through here and here, and here, years ago, that gives what I am doing today its significance, its value, its flavor. I cannot pass by the earth that gave birth to the fruitage of experience. It is the Past that I am dealing with in Castellaneta, in Tarento, in Naples and in Rome. Otherwise, th places would have no more value to me than to any other tourist sight-seeing in the chapel and the ruins.

I left myself, in my last instalment, written

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while I was midway between Tarento and Castellaneta, having just met my first American friends, George Ragni and Count Alex Salm and his brother. My first American friends. I could go on for pages telling of all we did together and how I began to lay, albeit unconsciously, cornerstones for what was to come. But it must suffice here for me to record that it was with these friends I first began to dance in America. Every night we would go together to some cafe or other, and they would introduce me to girls they knew, and I would attempt to dance. At that time, although the tango and the one-step were in reigning favor, I knew only the old-time waltz and the mazurka and the lancers. I saw that these bygone numbers wouldn't do, and I made up my mind to learn the new ones. The only way to achieve this was by dancing with the best dancers, and though I was deservedly enough turned down time and time again, I put my pride in my deepest pocket and persisted in the face of spoiling any number of dancing slippers and a corresponding number of dispositions.

In time, what with my bad attempts and equally annoying persistency, I became one of the best wall-flowers in the city of New York. I supported more ballroom walls than any other man I have heard of. I finally pinned Alex to

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

the wall one day and told him that I would never let him go until he had taught me the tango. I knew a few of the steps, so we had something to go on, and then and there, by sheer force, I made him teach me the remaining steps, the rhythm, and so on. Having once mastered the basic technique, I made it my business to practice daily, until I not only got the steps they all knew, but even originated a few new ones of my own.

My next necessary step, I felt, was to get along better with the English language. I realized that I was making very slow progress at Giolitto's because Italian was spoken there and I could and did lapse into my mother tongue whenever I felt tired or was in a hurry. It took courage, because I am rather indolent, as most people are when they have to take something by the very horns to achieve their aim. But I made myself move to an uptown boarding house, where only English was spoken, and where I would go without if I didn't make known my wants in English. I might add that I darn near approached starvation again—the names of most of the American dishes eluded me almost to the very end!

I had been in New York three months before I actually went to work. This time had been largely taken up in learning English and in going about with my friends, spending money I should have been saving against the well-known

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rainy day. At the end of the three months, I realized that I had to get to work and that without any loss of time, if I didn't want to repeat my little experiment in starvation. I had a letter of introduction to the Commissioner of Immigration, and when I showed him my diploma from the Academy of Agriculture, he gave me a letter of introduction to Mr. Cornelius Bliss, and I got my first job—that of laying out the grounds of the Bliss country estate on Long Island in Italian gardens. I forthwith moved myself into a little apartment over the garage on the estate and took the position of superintendent on the estate.

It would take me too long to go into all that happened while, and after I thus began my career of work. It must be sufficient to say that I eventually lost my job on the Bliss estate, partly because of my own youthful follies, such as motorcycling madly about the place, and partly due to my pride, which would not permit me to stoop to the labor of picking bugs from leaves of bushes, when I had visualized myself as a sort of an advisory superintendent, nor would it permit me to eat with the other "help," when I had imagined myself as a sort of guest of the family. Mr. Bliss, nevertheless, gave me, upon my departure, a letter to Mr. Ward, the park commissioner, who engaged me for the position of an

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

apprentice landscape gardener in the park, until I could study up for the examination and become a part of the park staff. But when I went to the civil service bureau to take my examination, I found that only American citizens were qualified for a city job, and also that it would take me five years to attain that elevated standing. Five years! I could have laughed at that. In five years' time, I would be the citizen of a country immortally beyond the limitations of citizenship or nationality.

And then began my real Gethsemane. Then I was literally and really penniless, stranded, hungry and alone. Mr. Bliss had been making me an allowance while I apprenticed in the Park, until such time as I should have got a really paying job. Of course, I couldn't accept anything further from him now that I had nothing definite in sight. And there I was! After that, down . . . down . . . down! I was kicked out of lodging after lodging for nonpayment of bills. I walked long and blistering streets on hot and blistering days reachings for employment that seemed to elude me like some giant gadfly, torturing while it kept away. I pawned everything I owned that was pawnable. My last landlady held my trunk, so that I didn't even have a change of such clothing as I had left. I went to the Mills Hotel, I inhabited cubbyholes, where I

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had to use newspapers for linen. I slept on the well-known and almost immortalized park benches, where so many a sorely discouraged head has rested. I was become a mendicant, a tramp. I couldn't beg help from my family. Letters from home told of financial distress due to the war. My mother was beginning to ail. I couldn't stoop to the final ignominy of letting them know that I was just as much of a failure in America as I had been at home, and in a far less glittering fashion.

Holding on to what pride and grit I had, I made it a habit to go into some one of the big hotels, the Astor as a rule, and there I would write to my mother on the hotel stationery, drawing for her a beautiful picture of my successes in New York, my comfort, my wonderful achievement.

There came a day when I would have swept the streets for bread. There came a day when I thought again, and this time in that most bitter of all bitter ways, on an empty, aching stomach, of suicide. Of the peace and oblivion of the effacing waters. But part of my code has always been that only a coward dies by his own hand, the man worth while hangs on though he hangs to a cross. *I had to hang on!*

At last the tables turned. It is too long a story to record here, and some day, when the

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sting of it has faded so completely away that I can write of it dispassionately and with a just perspective, I will put it all down, but I did finally get a job at Maxims, dancing with women who came there minus partners. And one thing led to another. A job with Bonnie Glass. One with Joan Sawyer, all evolving by processes dim enough at first, to the final beginning of my screen career. Painful step by painful step, but with each bit of progress the pain diminished, hope began to peep through the heavily gathered clouds and my coming to America to achieve these phantasms, Fame and Fortune, began to seem not so preposterous a thing. There came the day when I was able to write to my mother legitimately on Hotel Astor stationery. A prideful moment.

These things, all these things that I have written down here, were what thronged through my mind as I sat with my cousin in the little old cafe of my home town, and saw there before me the group of men, boys grown older, who had been sitting there when I left. Somehow they made my past misfortunes, my agonies, my sufferings, seem more worth-while than anything else had ever done. They showed me what I might so easily have been and how valuable all the valleys of Despondency had been if they had led me at last to this peak of Progress.



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Seeing these wrecks, for that is all they are, poor chaps, worn out with doing nothing, lacking in all ambition, drinking the same champagne, giving the same parties, going with the same chorus girls, amounting to *nothing*—wasted energy, wasted life. I was tremendously grateful, and I felt, in recurrent waves of sheer feeling, how lucky I was to have gotten away, because if I had stayed I would have been one of them.

While in Tarento, by the way, I went to see the old doctor, a former friend of my father's. A very energetic man and the father of five boys and four girls. His eldest son is lieutenant commander of a submarine which is stationed at Corfu, just at the time the Greeks had injured some Italian emissaries and Mussolini was demanding punishment for them, so he was detailed there. They expected him back any day, because Mussolini came out with flying colors, and the affair was settled in Italy's favor. In fact, I saw him the following day.

The second son is a clever cartoonist, and was just beginning to go around with a bunch of fellows, as most of the creative young men of the town seemed to naturally, for some reason or other. His father took me aside and said: "You have been in America and have made something

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of yourself. You didn't have much money, as I happen to know, and had to fight for your existence. Here my son is going around with this very crowd we have been talking about. Shall I let him go to America?"

And I said: "Certainly. By all means. He might be a great success on some newspaper. What I would do is this. Don't give him a lot of money. (The doctor is very rich). Let him look for a job. If he has money with him he will stop at an expensive hotel and squander his money almost over-night. Give him a very small allowance and don't let him even dream that he can get more under any circumstances. Just tell him, "Here is what you will get each month," and then, if he loses the money and you know that it is a question of his very life, you can send it to him, but don't let him think for one moment that you will. Yes, let him go. After all, he is much luckier than I was. He does stand a better chance. He has relatives in New York. He speaks sufficient English. I didn't know *any* English and that was almost my greatest handicap. I didn't know a soul. And I had, when I landed, only \$400.00 I wouldn't ask for more. I had told my mother that I was going for the purpose of making a position for myself, and I had to make it, even if that position was in the Potters Field."

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The doctor didn't decide definitely what he would do while I was with him, but I hope he lets his son go. If he stays, I fear that it will ruin his whole life. Better strife than suffocation. Mental and spiritual suffocation.

I saw quite a number of my old friends and they all knew me at once. I also saw several naval officers and commanders who had been in New York and San Francisco sent over by the Italian fleet.

About noon of the twenty-second or third we drove to Caresino, outside of Tarento, to the old property of my dead uncle. It is a big country place that looked like a Moorish village. My cousin doesn't live there since his mother and father passed away. They used to stay there in summer, two or three days of each week. It is only an hour by automobile and two or three by coach.

Today it is dilapidated, not kept up at all. It has that aura of sadness of old, neglected places that once knew light feet and merry laughter, and the song of life being lived between its walls. Of course I went over again the scenes of my early childhood, for every summer we went there to spend a great part of the season.

I found that I remembered best one particular incident: One day I was very naughty and my aunt—a holy terror, I was really and mortally

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afraid of her—locked me in a cupboard with a heavy oak door. Here seventeen or eighteen years later, I found the same door and the same cracks. They seemed to me to stand out as rather more than mute evidence of that hour of dark rebellion and dim terror.

I went over, on that old estate, all of the battlefields of my youth. I was always crazy about animals, as I so frequently reiterate. And here I used to go to the stables and fool with the mules. My mother lived in constant fear that I might be brought home with a hoof print in my stomach. My favorite occupation was to put on the harnesses, take the mules to water, hitch them up, drive the carts. That sort of thing.

As my cousin and I were standing there, a cart came in, and my cousin and I jumped in and had them take a picture of it.

We had a lovely lunch. Marvelous wine, sixty or seventy years old. The wine unbottled in my honor was bottled when my cousin was born thirty years ago. We had, too, a white liquor, Marsala, like sherry, bottled the year my uncle was born. The wine was marvelous. Tremendously strong, though. It went down like oil. But you couldn't stand more than a sip at a time. Gosh!

After luncheon my cousin told me that a great friend of our family was living on the way be-

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tween Carisine and Tarento, and that I really ought to go there. He wouldn't tell me who it was until we arrived. And I shall have to defer writing about it until tomorrow.

*Naples, September 27th*

Natacha has written and assures me she is quite rested from her journeyings and is impatient for my return. She writes me there is considerable mail for me and interesting things in a business way among them. I feel confident that soon I will be able to return again to the work I love . . . to get back to it all! This hiatus has been a restless, though withal, a wonderfully pleasant time. But to get back! They say that "travel broadens a man." Well, it certainly deepens him, too, and strengthens and enlivens

But yesterday I stopped before our visit, my cousin's friend and mine, to an old friend of our joint family, living near Tarento. The man of the family had been a college chum of my father's. He couldn't come to see me because he was ill and in bed, so we went by at my cousin's suggestion to say "Hello."

As I went in, he said, "My God, you aren't Rudolph, are you?"

I said, "Yes."

And then, affectingly, this man of sixty began

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crying like a child. It was one of the most moving greetings I had had since I began my travels.

He put his arms about my neck and said, "Sit down by me."

Just, I felt, as if I had been his. So we sat down for a while, and never have I been so eagerly, so interestedly, questioned about my career and all of its ups and downs. He was as vividly interested in every detail as if he had lived through them all himself, and was as anxious for me as if I had been indeed bone of his bone. It was a fine exhibition of friendship.

It was on my way back to town that I passed by Castellaneta. Just as I approached the town of my birth, as the buildings rose before me on the turn of the road, I stopped the car and took a picture of it.

Before going into the town there is an enormous ravine that comes right down underneath a stone bridge. And right above, the railroad passes. The bridge that goes over this ravine was built by my mother's father, my grandfather, a Frenchman and a railroad engineer. It is very peculiar in its surroundings. My grandfather also built the railroad.

In building this railroad my grandfather had to go through a forest inhabited by brigands, and on one of these expeditions of engineering he

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was captured by the brigands. They held him because the chief of the bandits got it into his head that my uncle was captain of the National Guards. Th chief was going to shoot my grandfather. He wasn't even going to parley by taking ransom. Bound and lying on the ground, my grandfather had the grisly pleasure of hearing this talk. The only thing tha saved him was the fact that one of this band of brigands had once been a soldier and afterwards a deserter. Having been a soldier and having known the chief of the National Guard, he went to the chief of the brigands and told him that he had mistaken his man. "This man is not he," he said. And so finally, they let my grandfather go.

It is a funny thing about telepathy. My grandmother was an extremely *telepathic* person. It so happened that my grandmother and my mother were on their way to Tarento the very night that my grandfather was about to be shot.

My mother told me that my grandmother said, "I know that my husband is in trouble. I can feel it."

She had no idea what kind of trouble (most fortunately for her), but somehow she got danger signals and spoke of them.

When he got home and told them about what

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had happened, my grandmother nearly fainted away, a compound of relief, terror for him and a sense of the supernatural in her own promonition. My mother had often told me this story when I was a little boy. It was one of my "favorites," and I always pressed for the most minute details.

She told me that my grandfather was an exceptionally brave and valiant man, but that he told my grandmother that, as he got out of that forest and looked back, his hair stood up absolutely straight. It seemed to him as though the dark forest was drenched in blood, which might so easily have been his own.

Also, he was very ill for quite a long time. He had a high fever and it looked for a while as though the brigands had achieved their death purpose after all.

I also took a picture of the ravine.

Right on the top of the ravine there is a little old church, quaint and beautiful, where an old nurse, who nursed me when I was a baby, used to take me—no, not to pray—to play. Somehow I did like that spot. It is one of the unforgettable places to me. An old, old church—Lord knows how long it has been there. Just a little chapel. Somehow or other it appealed to me immensely. It was my favorite playground. I got out and walked into the moldering little ref-



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uge and got back a sense of the mystery I had felt when I had played there so many years ago. Its ancient flavor, its mystery, its deep and brooding peace influenced a great many of my early childhood fancies. I can't exactly say that it turned me toward religion—although maybe it did, too, after its fashion.

After this we drove into the town itself and took a walk down "Main Street"—for there is a "Main Street," even in faraway, remote, unimportant little Castellaneta. And what is more, unlike the progressive Main Streets of America, it hadn't changed a bit. No "Rotary Clubs," no "Civic Improvement Societies" had had their renovating hands upon this Main Street. It brooded still, still and undisturbed. It was just exactly the same. So much the same that I found that I remembered every spot.

One particular spot here I escaped (I seemed to have been in a continual state of "escaping")—this time I was about five—and ran away from school and went for a donkey ride. Coming back from that particular expedition, I met my father, and my adventure ended in the usual ignominious way—one can easily imagine *what!*

Some of the "old folks" were there, too. Keeping their little shops, just as they had been keeping them when I was five.

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I saw one old friend, the village grocer, at his little corner shop. We shook hands and the ready tears came into his eyes. Betwen his tears, he assured me how happy he was to see me back and then launched forth into reminiscences of things I used to do which I confess that I have long since forgotten. So minute his memory seemed to be that even when he told me of some of my infant misdemeanors, I couldn't remember them. But I pretended that I did. The poor old man was so anxious that I should share his memories with him. We sat there and had a long talk, only that now I didn't sit at his feet and I didn't ask him quite as many questions, confident of the wisdom of his replies, as he told me I had been wont to do many years ago.

After I had managed to tear myself away from the garrulous old chap, I went to see the house that I was born in. Auntie was especially interested in that. Birthplaces, I believe, have more attraction for women than they have for men. Which is, I think, correct "biologically speaking."

Then I walked down the street, where some friends of my family were still living. We went upstairs and after a perfect bombardment of ejaculations, questions, amazements, were were offered some refreshments after the fashion of the Southern Italians, said hospitality usually

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taking the form of a demi-tasse and home-made cakes. We stayed a couple of hours and I wanted to stay longer, both there and in the town, looking up other old friends, whose names and memories had so long stayed with me, but I felt that I had to make Naples that night, and so we left and started for this, our destination, getting as far as Salerno. It was a splendid drive. The mountain roads were, for a wonder, in marvelous condition.

One of the points of interest was a huge castle which dates back to 1000 or 1050 and was occupied by Theodoric, the Byzantine Emperor.

Further down is a river with a legend. And incidentally, and unlike so many legends, there are documents in existence to prove the authenticity of this one. It purports that, at the time of the above-mentioned Emperor's invasion of the country, an enormous treasure of gold and silver and precious gems was buried under this river. At the time of the invasion they moved the course of the river and buried this treasure anew and put the river back. For centuries now they have tried to find out the secreting spot, but have never succeeded. It is a smart to the imagination to think of what this treasure must be. But there seems to be no clue, even in the documents which substantiate the legend, but give no hint of where the hidden treasure lies, immutable

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under the running waters.

We found we couldn't make Naples last night. It was eleven o'clock when we reached Salerno and being rather too tired to break any more records, we decided to put up there. This morning we started for Naples.

At Pompeii we left the car and I took my Aunt through the excavations. I should have liked to have lingered a long while there. A city that once lived so vitally, a city deathstruck and entombed, in toto, in the bowels of destruction, a city slowly rebuilding like a phoenix rising unscathed from the cerements of ash. I have heard the fact that Pompeii is rebuilding slowly is rather unfortunate than the reverse, since a great many of the rebuilding attempts have been the work of vandals rather than of archaeologists. Our inspection of the ruins, cursory as it was, took quite half a day and what with luncheon at two o'clock, it was three-thirty or four as we started—and on the worst piece of road I found in all my trip coming from or going back. This road passes from Salerno to a little beyond Naples. It is quite unimaginable—the condition it is in.

I actually gave thanks, for the first time since Rome, that Natacha was not with me. It would have unfitted her for another inch of travel so long as she should live. Auntie commented on

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the same fact. "This is the worst yet," we muttered. or rather choked, as we bumped and hit the sky over the abomination. Two feet of white dust that simply chokes you . . . great holes and giant stones that by some malignant circumstance you can't see . . . carts ahead of you constantly impeding you . . . and finally, to seal the bad bargain, we arrived at a small town between Naples and Rome, where my battery broke down. I had had to go so very slow, tooting my horn continually to get the carts out of the way. They wouldn't budge for you.

As a matter of fact, I had really hoped to make Rome tonight, having an appointment there on the morrow, but what with the collapse of my battery and a mountain road to make without so much as moonlight, I gave that fond hope up as the snare and delusion of a motorist. I tried to keep up my optimism by reminding myself how much worse the trip might have been by way of mishaps and misadventures.

That last stretch of about eighteen miles I had to go absolutely in the dark. Couldn't see my hand in front of my face, nor Auntie's face beside me. Twice automobiles passed me, going in the opposite direction, and they nearly blinded me.

In Naples, when we arrived, and after a day of rest, for having missed my appointment I

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gave up the idea of breaking my neck, and Auntie was a bit used up, anyway. In Naples I tried to arrive at the most interesting spots, but man proposes and royalty disposes in these sovereign-ruled countries. The Prince of Naples, Humberto, the heir to the throne, was in town, and the streets were so blocked that we couldn't have seen to right nor left, even supposing we had been able to make our way down them. Tomorrow I shall see what I can see of Naples, and then we shall go on to Rome.

The end of the journey grows on apace. And as I faced the beginning of it with joy and anticipation so, happily, I faced the end of it in somewhat the same spirit. For at the journey's end waits home and work and Natacha (NOT in the order of their importance).

And so, as one famous diaryist would say, "to bed."

*Rome (Again), September 29th*

Rome again. The round robin of the trip is all but finished. Soon now I shall have rejoined Natacha, said Hail and Farewell to our family again and have set my face homeward—screenward, too, I hope. More than ever am I eager to work again. More than ever before, I think, I feel all of my capacities at flood tide. There is nothing quite like the upsurging of the desire to do one's chosen work. It is of the very essence of

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creation. It is the very essence of creation. It is the veritable stuff of which creativeness is made. Writers feel it, poets, artists, artisans, too, I suppose. For all of us are artisans, laboring with our particular materials, each of us as much of an artist as we feel ourselves to be.

It is said that no man is greater than his Art, and I believe that to be true. As a matter of fact, I have often thought that many men are less than their Art. That they are but vessels of more or less ordinary clay through which the precious essences of Art are poured. I have known writers of the most delicate and exquisite fantasy to be great, gross fellows with no appreciations that can be *seen*, at any rate. I have known men with the voices of angels to be utterly unkempt and unwashed. And *vica-versa*, I have met men who wrote the most ribald balderdash to be exquisitely sensitive and fine in their daily life and talk. Thus when the Potter made the earthen pots, he often waxed facetious and put unlikely essences into unlikely vessels. A paradox. Perhaps the most perplexing of all human paradoxes. So few of us fit outerly what we are innerly. We are most fortunate when we do.

Another thing this trip has done for me is to give me back the boon companion of my youth—Hope. I think we all walk side by side with

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Hope when we are very young. We haven't seen that radiant figure trampled on nor despoiled, and we keep the shining figure closely by our side. But as we grow older and life and care encroach upon us, we lose sight of Hope and turn to another and a less glittering companion. Doubt. Dark doubt. And with Doubt rather than Hope, we falter and are dismayed. We turn aside and try this and that bypath in the hope of finding Hope again. And we so seldom do. Doubt is a loyal comrade. Doubt of ourselves. But now, after this trip, I feel renewed again. I feel as though I had re-discovered Hope and lost her successor, Doubt. It is almost that invaluable boon of being able to begin again.

We shall see. I get encouraging letters and Natacha says that she has still more encouraging communications which she is keeping for me. Before I am done with this record of my trip, I may be able to make an announcement in large and bold-faced type. *I think I have second-sight*, for I believe that such will be the case!

Well, back to the "record."

After we had seen what we could of Naples, what with the parade in honor of the visiting Prince, and the consequent crowds of people, we drove to Caserta, where there is one of the royal palaces well worth seeing.



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Then on to Capua, the stronghold of the Popes in medieval days, still fairly well preserved and in good shape.

It is a very interesting sight and one can readily understand why it is a stronghold. There are three entrances (only!) to the city, each commanded by a sequence of three drawbridges. These don't exist now, but there is a moat as well, beside a fortified wall. So that there are three moats within fortified walls before you get to the town at all, and when you do get there, that is surrounded by a high wall. Cesare Borgia also went to Capua when his position got shaky, and from there he escaped to Spain. He got as far as Valencia, or somewhere in that region, I believe, when he was killed. At least, I think it was there. Before going, however, he sacked the city and slew five thousand inhabitants. This, I believe, was about 1501.

In modern Capua, we stopped in the Musee Campana in the Via del Duomo and took a fleeting glance at the ancient sarcophagi, the cheerful tomb monument and the various coins, vases, pictures and terra cottas that are there preserved. There is also a very small library.

In ancient Capua, we saw the ruins of the amphitheatre, which is the oldest in Italy and the largest, too, next to the Coliseum. It was

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originally constructed for fifty thousand spectators. The walls are all made of uncemented blocks of travertine. Two of the eighty entrances and three of the corridors still remain intact enough for us moderns to follow the ghostly footfalls down them. Images of ancient Gods adorn the keystones and in the arena, which has all been cleared out, there are numerous passages, dens, et cetera. Most of these passages now do duty as improvised museums and have been filled with bas-reliefs, fragments and odds and ends found in the original ruins.

After a few hours spent in those places, we started back to Rome. I almost felt that I was going home. But en route, perversely, my lights went down again and I had to stop and stay overnight. One not only doesn't make Rome, but doesn't reach Rome in a day! Not when one is traveling via wheels. We didn't do any more sightseeing, however. The mishap tinged our ambition with disgust. And after I had the car attended to, I went to bed and to sleep.

The next morning we finally arrived here in Rome.

The first day we decided to do some of the things we hadn't done when we were here the first time, owing largely to Natacha's inability to do any more sight-seeing than she felt to be absolutely requisite. If sight-seeing is ever a

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requisite thing.

We went first to Castello San Angelo, which has been closed to the Public until very recently. This, also, was a stronghold of the Popes and was given its present name because of an alleged miraculous vision. In the time of Gregory the Great, plague ravaged the city and he inaugurated penitential processions in order to avert the plague, and in one of these, while crossing the bridge, claimed that he saw Saint Michael the Archangel sheathing a bloody sword. Hence the name.

The castle has been used for a long time now as a state prison. Here Benvenuto Cellini, Cagliostro and others have been confined, and Napoleon III was held here for a brief time in 1891.

We saw, too, the prison place where Beatrice Cenci lay and where Cavadarossi, the hero of the opera "La Tosca," was imprisoned. You had to stoop to get into the cells and in the middle of the floor was a trapdoor opening into the Teverem or Tiber River. The story goes, unfounded on facts this time, that any number of the unfortunates imprisoned here disappeared from these prisons into the Tibr, strangled, and their bodies were picked up on some distant beaches as unknown identities. Perhaps there is no building erected by man either in this age



Rudy, with Vilma Banky, in "The Son of The Shick", his last picture.



Valentino in his famous Spanish part—*Galardo*, the bull-fighter, in "Blood and Sand".

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or in the ages that have gone before whose walls could tell such grim, such ghastly tales as prison walls. Yes, and particularly the old mediæval prisons where man had not begun to learn to punish men humanely. Hospitals witness the suffering of the flesh and the battle with Death, but prisons witness the dark despair of the sufferings of the soul, and of those who have no souls, having lost them. Life has been left behind, outside the prison walls. And the chill and damp is worse than that of a tomb. It sickens the soul to think of those dark and dreadful deaths back of the doors of living creatures—of those mangled, cast in the dark of night, into the River Tiber—upturned faces drifting under a pallid moon, to rest at length, “unknown” on some far shore.

I also learned that one of the defenses of this place was to throw boiling oil from the top of the castle in order to defend it.

On the top of the Castello is a huge, big room filled with enormous terra cotta vases, in which they used to keep the boiling oil to pour down upon the enemy.

Then, too, we saw the private treasures of the different Popes, particularly of Cescare Borgia and Paul III of Farense. These were mostly kept in five-foot high urns lined with hardwood. There are silver coins of all kinds in these. In

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four-foot urns is kept the gold, and in the third and smallest urns are collections of pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds and other precious stones.

Then we saw the private apartments, which are all decorated most marvelously.

The most amazing, I thought, is the bedroom of Pope Paul III and that of Cesare Borgia, which are still kept as they were then.

To leave myself tonight in the bedrooms of the Popes is a most daring deed, but such will have to be my predicament. I must get a full night's rest, for tomorrow I turn my back upon Rome and go to join Natacha.

What news will she have for me? And what will reach me as I turn my face again toward American shores?

I sincerely hope it may be favorable—may tell me that the artificial barriers which have stood between myself and the work I love have at last been broken down and that the field of endeavor is again clear for me. I feel great work—really important work, more important than any I have ever done—is pent up within me ready to burst forth at the arrival of the real opportunities which I have hoped and striven for so long.

The relation between an artist and his art is always difficult in a curiously special way. Not

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only must one's mind and spirit be poised and serene—as I feel mine to be now—but material things must be in order before one can give the best that is within him. There must not be baffling and nerve-irritating petty considerations in the way. They, more than any other cause, stultify and retard any really worth-while creativeness. But . . .

Until tomorrow. . . .

*Nice, October 1st*

My trip is all but over. Somehow I never count the *going back* as part of the trip. A trip is, or should be, a state of departing, of pushing off from shore, so to speak. The home shore for the unknown shore. But I am going home. I *am* home, for I am again with Natacha, who looks rested and wonderful after her days in Nice with her family. We found so much to talk about that first evening that we threatened to turn night into day. Pleasant communications awaited me, and both Natacha and I felt from the genral tone of them that it only wanted my arrival in America to set the wheels in motion and begin work again. I know that I shall be bitterly and profoundly disappointed if this is not the case. But I feel "in my bones," as the good wives used to say, that it is. I am become an optimist since I went home. And Natacha, whose business acumen, coupled with her femi-



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nine instincts, is equalled by none and surpassed by none that I know of, feels, too, that all things are heading in the right direction—at last. I am like a horse chafing at the bit. Restive. Keen for action. The action that I love.

We are to spend the week here in Nice, mostly resting, meeting a few people that we didn't meet before, or that I didn't met before and then proceeding, leisurely, to Paris, thence to London—and home again. America again.

Today Natacha and I have merely been basking in the sunshine. I told her all that I didn't write her of my home, of the old familiars I had met and talked with, of the new impressions that had come to me as I circled the troublous roads of Italy. The roses were all around us, and the blue of the waters was not bluer than the low, embracing sky. It was Peace, and I felt warmly happy. One of those hours when the heavens bend very near; when fruit seems laden and golden; when the flowers are prodigal of their breaths, and the birds sing notes they have never sung before. Reunion hours. Reunion with someone you love very much and have been separated from with pain.

Natacha and I . . . together again. . . .

Late in the afternoon some people came in for tea and I was asked whether I had danced much

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during my travels. The question really amazed me, for I have danced not at all, with the exception of once or twice, quite privately and where we were unknown, with Natacha. I suppose that as a matter of fact I have done none of the things I would be supposed to do on a trip. I haven't danced. I haven't flirted. I haven't been a social nor a professional butterfly. My amazement at the question gauged how far removed even dancing had been from my mind. It had never occurred to me. "But I thought you so loved to dance," my fair interlocutor persisted, "don't you?"

"Oh, yes," I said, "at times . . . in places . . . not publicly, nor when I am making points of distance on my travels. I like to tango and I love very much more to waltz. I would, as a matter of fact, waltz far more than I do excepting that so very few of the modern people do. But, as a matter of fact, when I am waltzing, if I could select the type of woman I would waltz with, she would be an older woman. Somehow, they have captured and they still retain the spirit of the waltz. And also, older women, if they do dance at all, are as a rule marvelous dancers . . . better even than the younger generation."

"I suppose," our guest said to me, "that dancing is all a matter of technique, anyway, isn't it?"

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"It isn't at all a matter of technique," I told her, "that is, not in my opinion. It is a matter of temperament. I have often asked a girl to dance and have been told by her, wistfully, 'Mr. Valentino, you won't want to dance with me very long. I am a very poor dancer,' and I have taken her on the floor and we have got along famously. On the other hand, I have often danced with a professional dancer—and we have not got along at all. It is a matter of matching temperaments. When the temperaments clash—*so do the feet.*"

I have forgotten most of the rest of our lazy, sun-basking conversation, but I do recall, amusedly, that, woman-like, my verbal opponent led the talk from dancing to marriage. And I told her that marriage was much like dancing—the two must be in tune and the technique is of relatively small importance.

She asked me how I believed in treating a wife. I told her that was a sweeping question, and would require a sweeping answer, which I should be able to answer some tangy day in October in hustling New York than here on the sunny, indolent Riviera.

However, I did tell her, as I stooped to pick up a bit of lace she honored by the name of a handkerchief, that I believed in giving a woman

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

*her* way in *small* things, small courtesies, delicate attentions, trivialities, all that—but *never* in the *fundamental* issues. When I saw the light of battle kindling in her combative eye I hastened to add, for it was too beautiful a day to argue, and I could see Natacha smiling at us under her garden hat, I hastened to add that, I believed women were happier so. A man should be the master and the head of his house. In my country men are always the masters and women are happier for it.

At which juncture Natacha came to my rescue by ordering me to do some important thing, which I forthwith meekly *did*, and the tea-time talk ended in a hearty laugh.

I have been writing this down between tea and the dinner hour, while Natacha is dressing. The first gong sounds . . . more tomorrow . . . I shall make it my business to bring my diary to date before I sail.

*Nice, October 2nd*

Yesterday, in my diary I told only what I was doing, inserting scraps of conversation . . . dalliance . . . dalliance . . . I like to write so. . . . I suppose if I were a writer I would be what they call an Impressionist . . . things are frequently most graphic when they are barely suggested . . . a word . . .

## MY PRIVATE DIARY

a fragment . . . and a Whole is created. But probably a diaryist is not supposed to be a writer. . . .

We are to spend a day or two more, then drive to Paris to see about taking the boat.

*Nice, October 3rd*

We have changed our plans somewhat. Today comes a cable from Mr. J. D. Williams asking us to meet him at Cherbourg rather than in London, because he has something very important to say to us.

We aren't very keen about going to Cherbourg, but this seems to be a matter of grave and pressing import. At this stage in my career one cannot disregard the grave and the pressing. Things are hanging by the well-known hair. We have kept in touch with our attorneys, of course, and from communications received since my return to Nice it all seems to be a mere matter of awaiting my arrival before going into definite negotiations. Such being the case, Mr. Williams might have something to impart that would color my future activities, throw light on a situation, or something of the sort. Why he is so insistent upon Cherbourg, rather than London or Paris, I cannot imagine, nor can Natacha, or any of the family. But the ways of men are devious ways, and there may be a reason for it all.

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

In the cable Mr. Williams says that he wants us to meet him in Cherbourg and proceed to London with him. I wired him this morning, when his cable came, that I would meet him in London, but have received a counter cable from him still insisting upon Cherbourg. Why one cannot talk business better and certainly more comfortably in London, it is beyond my imagination to grasp. He has since kept on wiring, "If you want to please me, come to Cherbourg." It must be something of tremendous importance. I say to Natacha that Mr. Williams evidently doesn't know what Cherbourg IS—but I do! He won't find it so pleasing, I fear, when we meet there.

He is to come on the *Leviathan*.

Well, we have decided to proceed a la Mr. Williams' urgent behest. One never knows. . . . We decided that we will go by auto. Not having had enough of motoring as yet . . . Natacha, at least, is ready for a new lease on life . . . or on wheels, to be exact.

*Hotel de France, Cherbourg, October 5th*

Well, here we are. . . . **HERE WE ARE!**

One never knows what twenty-four hours will bring forth.

This past twenty-four hours has brought us face to face, hand to hand, with **DEATH** . . .

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we have embraced and gone under the sea together, Death and I . . . Gods above, what an experience . . . and for nothing . . . for *nothing*. . . .

Well, we started on our way from Nice, via auto. I was not driving that time. It was a mad rush and I had had enough of the wheel. Fortunately (the one fortunate episode in the whole grisly experience) fortunately, we had a racing driver from the Voisin people who knew the roads.

And he raced . . . no doubt at all about *that*. . . .

We arrived just in time to miss the ferry that transported passengers to the steamer. That wild, hair-breadth ride for nothing then! If I had been an Irishman, I would have "got my Irish up," but as it was I suppose I got my *Italian* up, and determined that since we had come thus far and thus *so* we would reach the *Leviathan* by one means or another.

In the meantime, I must here insert, I had shipped our trunks from Paris, and they were supposed to be awaiting us here at the dock.

When we arrived, at the dead of night, by the way, we found no trunks, no sign of them at all and no one who could give us any intelligence of them.

We finally had to awaken the man at the sta-

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

tion, which feat we accomplished with almost as much difficulty as though he had been an Italian taking his midday *siesta*. We eventually made him comprehend that what we wanted was a cart to load the trunks on if we should locate them inside the locked station. He got us the cart, we located the trunks and started off, trundling them ahead of us, to the place where I knew a transport was lying that would take us to the *Leviathan*. As we trundled into view of the dock, I saw that the transport was gone! Somehow I couldn't arouse my slumbering sense of humor. It was too late at night.

We were then told by some itinerant official that the boat had not arrived. As a matter of fact, it *had* arrived and was waiting in the port.

We stood on the dock at midnight pondering what we could do. We decided, then, to hire a motor boat.

This involved waking up some more people, and in the meantime a drenching rain had begun to descend upon us from the unkindly heavens. We were cold, freezing . . . the very memory of the sun of the Riviera was chilled from our bones.

While the arrangements were being made for the motor boat, we scouted about and found a funny little cafe, where we had some hot coffee and tried to get warmed up.



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Then, when the motor boat was ready, we took the truck containing our trunks and trundled off down to the dock again, I wheeling our luggage before me, Natacha following and the people we had managed to arouse trailing along with us, regarding us, I must say, with very definitely suspicious eyes. They thought we were either lunatics, or something . . . it turned out that they thought we were "something," which I will tell later on.

This:

As we were loading the trunks on to the motor boat, a customs guard came up to us and said, very brusquely, "You can't leave!"

"Why not?" we said.

"You have got to have your luggage opened before you can leave."

"Opened nothing!" I said. "We are leaving France."

"*That is nothing*—I have my orders," said the guard.

Well, there seemed to be nothing to do but comply. I explained what I could of our plans to the customs official, but he maintained rather mysteriously but very firmly that our luggage had to be opened and inspected and as I knew that an argument would take time and doubtless lose us the boat we were so desperately trying to make. I finally told him to go ahead and I

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

will say that he was kind enough to come over to the motor boat and do his inspecting then and there.

And then we were informed, in the dark and mysterious night, that two famous Gobelin tapestries had been stolen from Versailles and orders had been given that all customs houses of France were to inspect every piece of luggage over a certain weight. Of course they were fearing that the thieves would try to get away with the tapestries and most likely would make their getaway to America.

And naturally . . . two strange, rain-drenched foreigners . . . hiring a motor-boat in the middle of the night . . . grim and desperate in their endeavours to leave France . . . they thought . . . well, they thought, "HERE ARE THE CROOKS!" Doubtless they had never been so certain of anything in all their lives as that they had the thieves dead to rights then and there. We DID look odd, I must admit.

When, at last, they finished going through the trunks and said to us, "You can get," we embarked in the motor boat, already loaded beyond the capacity of safety, and we left.

The *Leviathan* had come into the port and was anchored there outside. It was tremendously rough. The transports were all coming

## MY PRIVATE DIARY

back. The rain was still driving down with long, angry finger lashings and the sky and sea seemed converging to press us under. It was weird and rather grim. The sort of thing one should only do in a matter of life and death. It was, in fact, a matter of life and death with us, although I don't suppose we fully realized it at the time. One so seldom does.

The transports, as I have said, were all coming back, and only the mail transport was still hooked on to the boat. This, by the way, was twice the size of our little motor boat. However, that was the only way to get to the *Leviathan*, through the transport. As we drew near, the swells came up, looming, large and dangerous. There was no chance. It was, in veritable truth, a matter of life and death.

The man on the transport kept calling to the man on our boat: "Keep away! Keep away! You can't board!"

Well, the first time we nearly made it. We were soaked through. The giant waves lashed at the boat, encroached, came roaring in over the sides. We were isolated, it seemed, in a black tunnel of a world with the driving rain above us and the angry sea beneath us. Our trunks catapulted all over the place, skidding about like live and angry things. I had a glimpse, a horri-

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

fied one, I admit, of Natacha's jewel box just about to fall into the water. I made one lunge for it. Then I gave a sailor on the transport near at hand the jewel box to hold. There was a gigantic crash . . . something . . . *something* on our boat went to pieces. . . .

The man on our boat shouted hoarsely, above the uproar, "I can't be responsible for this . . . for your lives . . . it's too rough . . . we cannot make it! . . . " and before I could shout back, even had I any desire left to do so, he had pushed off and we were making as best we could for the shore again.

I left the jewels, all Natacha owns in the world, with the sailor on the transport. Jewels, I find, wordly goods in toto, mean singularly little when your lives, like the frailest of reeds, are palpitating beneath an ominous sky and a hungry sea.

More tomorrow, I hope, but a rush of circumstances makes me quit my desk now when I am in the middle of narrating this exciting adventure.

*Cherbourg, October 6th*

After this terrifying experience trying to board the *Leviathan*, we finally made the dock again, with more pitching and tossing, more ravenous embraces of waves and more tumultuous

## MY PRIVATE DIARY

pelting of rain than I would have believed it possible for three people in a frail craft to live through. Had I seen such a scene as this one on the screen or read about it in a book, I would have said that they were stretching credulity and reality, to past the breaking points. Which only goes to prove that nothing, after all, *can* be stranger than reality.

Once safely (and wetly) on the dock again, we had to go back and unload all of the trunks. Nine of them. Big ones. The truck had gone. I had to scout around and get a pushcart, help load the pushcart and then trundle it off to the Customs House, the only place where the trunks would be watched and be safe.

Then I went back to the dock again to get the jewel bag. It isn't quite fair to say that I went with misgivings, perhaps, but I did. . . . Anything might have happened on a night like that. But as I walked on to the dock I saw the transport working her way through the mad dervish of the sea and there was the sailor, as honest a fellow, surely, as could be found with the jewel bag intact in his hand. I was so glad!

I had left Natacha in the little cafe, where, previously in the evening, we had had coffee and warmth. It was now about five in the morning. The thing now was a hotel. . . . But what a



Valentino, coming in sight of the *Statue of Liberty* on his return to America says: "No woman, save Natacha, ever looked more beautiful to me. She seems to have a message—especially for me. A message of triumph".



## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

thing to find! They told us in the cafe that the Casino was the best hotel in town, but the rooms, they also said, were all taken. General Pershing, it seemed, was on the *Leviathan* and the rooms had all been reserved ahead.

We went then, to the next best place, the Hotel de France. Imagine us appearing there at five-thirty in the morning, bedraggled, soaked to the skin not once but many times, weary almost unto the death we had so narrowly escaped.

Natacha said, "What a publicity story *this* would have made!"

I smiled rather grimly and said, "The tale of another Shelley at the end at least!"

At the hotel here the owner said, "No room now, but if you wait half an hour, there are some traveling salesmen who will be leaving and we will then be able to give you some kind of accommodation."

In any lesser occasion I would have quibbled about the aforesaid accommodation, but now . . . any hole in the wall would have seemed refuge to us then. . . Life is all a matter of the comparative, anyway. . .

So we finally had another cup of coffee and waited some more. Our faces were assuming the set expression of stoical patience against all odds. We were sinking into the last lethargy—



## MY PRIVATE DIARY

that of complete and utter resignation. Resignation, I often think, should be the last resource of the suffering. It is a sort of pale and passionless Heaven, where the ills of body and soul are absorbed, soaked up. It is a form of Nirvana.

At last and eventually, after what seemed to be a lifetime and a long and strenuous one compressed into one dark and dreadful night-mareish night, we reached this room.

One can't imagine Cherbourg on such a night . . . damp as can be . . . the hotel without a fire . . . damp . . . damp . . . dolorous and mouldy, soaking into the room as it had, the night through, soaked into our bones . . . no hot water. A state of being where the most ordinary creature comforts were blandly disregarded. I made Natacha wrap up in many blankets as we could corral and curl up in them, like a papoose. I did the same myself and prayed faintly that we might not meet another and more lingering death, having just escaped a swift one.

I had left word downstairs, that we were to be awakened at eight-thirty, as the boat left at nine.

But when I did awake this morning, I knew instantly, by instinct, that nine, that eight-thirty, had long since come and gone and the boat had

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

gone with the hours. They had simply forgotten to call us, if, indeed, they had ever intended to. I got up and looked at my watch, which, like ourselves, was still, miraculously alive and going and the watch said, "Eleven o'clock." I said aloud to Natacha, who had awakened when I got up, "They have forgotten us and we have missed the boat again."

The resignation that had been ours a few hours before seemed to be still with us, for neither of us said a word, simply looked at one another with solemn and immovable countenances.

I rang, and I thought I would have a little hot water, shave, bathe, and try to get into form again for the next move. But no. Ringing was of no avail. The maids were having their breakfasts!

I had to shave and bathe as best I could in cold water. I refrain from even thinking how poor Natacha managed to make her toilette.

While these pallid ablutions were going on, somebody, a shoemaker or someone, was singing the damndest song in the damndest voice, and he just managed to break our resignation up into bits of rage and anger.

We were going to leave here in an hour. I have been writing this while Natcha has been contriving her bathing and dressing and in the

## MY PRIVATE DIARY

meantime I have telephoned to the Casino Hotel for a room for the day. *The President Adams* arrives at the dock at eleven tonight and we shall take passage on that boat, God willing. . . .

*Hotel Casino, Cherbourg, October 7th*

It is evening of the same day . . . later than evening . . . nine o'clock.

Now, while Natacha is still resting, I sit by my window writing this page in my dairy until it is time to board the *President Adams*. The night is fair, a moon shining, as though to say to us that last night never happened, that it was some troubled mirage of troubled minds . . . thus does Nature heal the wounds she makes. . .

*London, October 11th*

Natacha said to me this morning, "Has the memory of that night in Cherbourg evaporated from your mind?" and I told her that it might have done so had it not been for the ironic bit of news we received when we arrived in London and saw Mr. Williams.

All through the danger and terror of that night, all through the chill and discomfort of the next day, I had been thinking, well, at least I did what I could for an important cause. I dared everything for the sake of something vital. One should do what one can when great matters

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

are at stake. I now have nothing to reproach myself with."

That is what I thought. And had such been the case I would have patted myself on the back and told myself that such is the stuff of the eventual conqueror and let it go at that.

This is what actually happened:

The *President Adams* finally arrived at Cherbourg that night at eleven o'clock. We arrived in London the next day and found that Mr. Williams had been awaiting us all the preceding day, I said, almost breathlessly, "WHY did you want us to come aboard the *Leviathan* at Cherbourg?"

I held my breath for his answer, thinking that in a sentence, my future, my plans, things near and important to us both were to have some revealing light shed upon them.

"Oh," he said, "Oh, yes, why, we had a nice party arranged for you. We wanted you to have a good time. *We had a band all ready.*"

"*We had a band all ready*" . . .

I don't know why, but that kindly enough, casual little remark seemed to undo me. It brought back vividly, too vividly, that scene by the transport, with the sea raging and the sky down-pouring and the trunks growling about like living things, and death to right and left of us, while, above, a band and a party waited. A

## MY PRIVATE DIARY

band that might so logically have played Chopin's Funeral March!

But I had to laugh. And so did Natacha. There we had been taking parts in a melodrama of the elements the like of which I never expect to equal in a role, just for a nice supper and to hear a band play!

What Thomas Hardy would doubtless describe as one of "Life's Little Ironies."

There was nothing of any importance to discuss. Nothing that we didn't already know. I told Mr. Williams what had happened and he was, of course, sincerely sorry. But what one hasn't actually lived through is a difficult thing to grasp and I don't suppose anyone but Natacha and I and the man in our boat will ever really and fully grasp how close we said farewell to life that night.

We have two more days in London, then America-bound.

We have seen one or two plays. Had a few business talks. We've seen several of our friends and have been entertained at dinner. And we have thoroughly enjoyed the hotel and the feeling of comfort and safety. The next time I write we will be on our way home—on the ocean—homeward bound.

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

*S. S. Belgenland, Homeward Bound,*

*October 15th*

I suppose I have used the word "home" in various ways in this diary. There is something, after all, in the old adage that where a man hangs his hat is home. That is, I think, particularly true of men. Women must make a home before it is home to them. I have noted that women will fix up hotel rooms with little odd touches, or even in the most brief of rented abodes will somehow manage to transform them before they can be what they call "at home". But a man can literally hang up his hat and feel as though he is at home. That comes, especially, to men who have traveled or whose work has called them frequently from one part of the country to the other.

This boat is home to me now. It is taking me home. And it is, I hope, taking me back to my work. That, most of all, is *home*. A studio . . . the glaring and blaring of lights . . . the hammering of the carpenters . . . the raw skeletons of unfinished sets . . . the striking of the lights . . . the shifting, painted people, moving about here and there . . . the coatless director corralling his forces . . . the noise of it all . . . the smell of it all . . . that is really home. . . .

I feel, in a sense, that I have had no vacation whatsoever. Time doesn't constitute a vacation,

## MY PRIVATE DIARY

nor does moving about from place to place, seeing sights and meeting people. Vacation is playtime and play should be the be-all and end-all of a vacation.

With me this trip has been just a rush trip to see a lot of relatives. We really hadn't any vacational enjoyment out of it, as things go. And still, the mere change of it all was a rest, in a sense. We weren't, after all, doing anything constructive. The creative faculties were at low ebb, if nothing else, and that, in itself, is a great change for a person in my line of work.

Still, I feel happy on this boat.

I know from the telegrams I have had that things are adjusting themselves in America. It is, I feel confident, now, just a question of time.

Mr. Steuer has been working for me and has got things whipped into such shape that I am very anxious to get back. Sometimes, now that I am really on my way, I feel like getting out and pushing the boat along. It seems to take its great way so leisurely through the waters. As though nothing mattered but the sea and the sky, calm, I am glad to say, thus far.

Tomorrow, we shall sight the Statute of Liberty. Even as I sighted it for the first time so many years ago. The same Statute of Liberty, but not quite the same "Me."

## —RUDOLPH VALENTINO

*Hotel Ritz-Carlton, New York, October 21st*  
Home again.

In New York again.

Soon to be at work again!

I feel like a schoolboy, like throwing my cap (if I wore one) into the air and shouting "Hurrah! Hurrah!"

The day after I last wrote in my diary we steamed into the harbor, sighting the Statue of Liberty. I must say that no woman, saving my wife, ever looked more beautiful to me. She seemed to me to have a message, especially for me. A message of triumph.

And there, on the dock, was the same official, policeman, who had waved me the lusty good-bye when I sailed. It was like a perfect circle being completed. He had seen me off. He now greeted me in. It gave me a sense of permanency. Of the establishment of all things.

No one knew that I was coming home. That is, no one knew *when* I was coming home, and so our arrival was very quiet indeed. Very unostentatious. Most of the fanfare and trumpeting had taken place when we made our departure.

Hotel conventions made much of the excitement of the trip.

My diary must draw to an abrupt close. I shall have no more hours of dalliance in which



## MY PRIVATE DIARY

I can muse my pen into the wee sma' hours.

I am to work again.

I am to do the story I have wanted to do for a long, long while.

I am to make "Monsieur Beaucaire."

Nothing, *nothing*, could please me more. It has for a very long while been an ambition of mine, for I had it in mind to do long before Fairbanks had it.

And so, the day after we arrived, when I found that things were straightened out and that I was to go to work again, I said, "But the Story?"

Well, they mentioned several, "Captain Blood" and others, and finally "Beaucaire" was spoken of.

"That's the story!" I said.

And so very shortly now I shall go to work. The synopsis has been decided upon, the cast has been decided upon, the cast is about to be assembled, the whole wheels of production are being set in motion and before very long I shall get out the old make-up boxes, the costumes have got to be ordered and selected very carefully, which is going to mean another hasty run across to London, and we shall be ready!

What more triumphant conclusion could I have for my return trip to my old home! What

—RUDOLPH VALENTINO

greater news could I write back of my after-all victorious return? What higher note of triumph is there on which to conclude these pages of my own diary? SELAH!





## AMERICA FOR ME

*By* HENRY VAN DYKE

'Tis FINE to see the Old World, and travel up and down  
Among the famous palaces and cities of renown,  
To admire the crumbly castles and the statues of the kings,  
But now I think I've had enough of antiquated things.

So it's home again, and home again, America for me!  
My heart is turning home again, and there I love to be,  
In the land of youth and freedom beyond the ocean bars,  
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

Oh, London is a man's town, there's power in the air;  
And Paris is a woman's town, with flowers in her hair;  
And it's sweet to dream in Venice, and it's great to study  
Rome  
But when it comes to living there is no place like home.

I like the German fir-woods, in green battalions drilled;  
I like the gardens of Versailles with flashing fountains  
filled;  
But, oh, to take your hand, my dear, and ramble for a day  
In the friendly western woodland where Nature has her  
way!

I know that Europe's wonderful, yet something seems to  
lack;  
The Past is too much with her, and the people looking back.  
But the glory of the Present is to make the Future free,  
We love our land for what she is and what she is to be.

Oh, it's home again, and home again, America for me!  
I want a ship that's westward bound to plow the rolling sea,  
To the blessed Land of Room Enough beyond the ocean  
bars  
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.



