

Hotel de fenes

Genoa
march 29. 1877

My dear Maffie

I have written a very stupid letter to Papa but you know how hard it is to write letters when you're moving about. Beside I regard all this part of the journey delightful as it is as quiet by the way, and tends likely to turn my attention too much from the main point. However we are off tomorrow morning for Ravenna, next day to Brindisi, whence we start on Sunday night for Corfu. We shall probably land in Greece somewhere about Tuesday, and then for a fortnight we shall be quite lost sight of, wandering about among ruined temples, snow-clad hills, green slopes, beautiful brigands &c till we turn up at Athens, where I shall hope to hear news from you people. I don't suppose I shall get time to write another letter till then. But I'll try & keep you informed of my whereabouts by a judicious employment of postcards.

I have described my companions to the father. We get on very well. Mahaffy - commonly called "The General" has been deeply occupied since we came here - & indeed was so on the way down - in looking over his Civil Service Exam. papers, so we three have been left very much to ourselves and a very good time we have had. There is hardly a street in Genoa that does not know our three magnificent coats, for my

Wilde has a coat rather like mine, of a sort of brownish yellow, & Goulding a light brown striped Ulster. We have had enormous fun bargaining about ~~the two great specks~~ coral, gold & silver filigree work, & meerschauum pipes, especially amusing the 'orefici' by pointing to the shop fronts & asking "Combreni per questi tutti?" I fear we have given the poor shopkeepers of Genoa rather more trouble than profit, for we have bought very ~~bad~~ ^{little}, meaning to reserve our funds for free. Goulding rather reminds me of Ellison, in his very casual way of going on. His attempts at speaking French & Italian are quite delightful. Ours are very little better but I at least am too much troubled with a desire for correctness which is fatal.

Genoa is really a charming place. The marble palaces, especially the ^{the} doorways are magnificent. Yesterday morning after breakfast we went up to call on Mahaffy & his mother & sister. They live in a little villetta just outside a charming villa, called Novello, belonging to Arthur Novello, son of Vincent & brother of Clara of that ilk — situated on the Southern cliff & looking right out to the Mediterranean. Miss Mahaffy is like her brother in face though harder in feature. She is pleasant ^{enough} in her way but has a very shrill grating voice which she

is rather too fond of hearing ^{choir}. We three have
taken rather an objection. Most unfortunately
Mrs M. whom I hear on all hands to be
a very charming & clever old lady is ill
in bed, so we have not been able to see her.
I am very much disappointed. We went to
call on Mr Novello - a pleasant old man -
who showed us round his garden with
evident pride. Such a garden! all
hanging terraces, full of most luxuriant
flowers & fruit - ~~vines~~ - purple & white -
huge albes - violets, & climbing perennials,
nasturtiums, magnificent roses of all
kinds, oranges & lemons - & vines - not
yet in leaf - along the walls & on trellises.
We next went to the Palazzo Rossi where is
a small but magnificent collection of
pictures - Guido's St Sebastian - about the
most beautiful picture I ever saw - portraits
by Vandyke - Paris Bordone - Tintoretto -
a splendid Cleopatra by Guercino &c -
not too many & all good. We then lunched
at a delightful café with an open court
full of ~~orange~~ orange trees! - and afterwards
strolled down to the narrow streets about
the port where dwell the "orefici" &c

Today after breakfasting with the
Mahaffys we drove out to a most
lovely public garden - the Scolgetto -
too splendid for description - in terraces
connected by winding paths with a
fine waterfall falling by steps down the
middle from the top. The garden like Mr
Novello's was all luxuriant with oranges, &

~~onagers~~ ^{Canelli gas} & rises, &c. Here was a little round
white marble temple delightfully placed among
cypresses or olives. Here a villa as brightly
coloured outside and decorated within after
Pompeian fashion. At the top was a flight
of steps & a wall with two fine rosaces
& a tower ^{all} coloured a rich red. - whence we got
splendid views over the town & the bay, &
the amphitheatre hills - the lower slopes
all dotted with many coloured villas.
A garden to wander about in for hours
together. We all exclaimed how delightful
for a garden party & I could wish for
nothing better if you all & a select number
of interesting friends could be transported
hither. But I must not waste all my
raptures on Italy or I shall have nothing
left to say when I at last behold my
beloved Greece.

We talk of hiring Greek dresses &
being photographed in a picturesque
group with the general in the midst,
when we get to Athens.

I hope you are all flourishing &
happy.

We start tomorrow - Good Friday -
for Ravenna. Miss Mahaffy predicts our
certain destruction for travelling on such a day
but time is precious. Today being Holy Thursday
has been a great day in Genoa. The churches
were all decorated with flowers & candles &
figures of our Lord lying in the sepulchre & the
soldiers watching. In one church was the biggest
bouquet I ever saw - quite 8 feet in diameter!
Entirely of red & white camellias & azaleas.
My letters may find me up to April 10 at
Porto Taurante, Argos. After that, Athens.
Yours affectionately,
G. C. C.