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**The Journal of John Waldie Theatre Commentaries, 1799-1830**

**Title**

The Journal of John Waldie Theatre Commentaries, 1799-1830: no. 26 [Journal 37]  
December 9, 1816-February 16, 1817. Part 3

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7968j3vd>

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**Publication Date**

2008-06-18

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[ Box 3 ]

no.26 [ Journal 37 ]

**December 9, 1816-February 16, 1817. Part 3.**

Travels in Flanders, Germany, Switzerland, Italy,  
and France in the years 1816 and 1817.

Vol. 3<sup>d</sup>

[ 9. December. 1816 ] Florence

... I went to Mrs. Gunn's and sung with the three Miss Gunns. They are really very pleasant girls, especially the eldest; we rehearsed various things for their concert of tomorrow.

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... Evans and I went to the Opera at La Concomero Theatre. ... The Barbriere di Siviglia. I never saw it before in Italian: it is highly comical & was admirably done by the man who did Old Bartolo. Almaviva was also a very sweet singer, but not powerful. Gigaro was too noisy and had no humor at all; but Bartolo was so excessively diverting, I don't know when I have laughed more. Rosina was very well done by Signora Bellochi. The music, for strength and beauty, far

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exceeds that of Paesiello of the same Opera: from beginning to end it is enchanting, and so admirably adapted to the situation it is really surprising, and has every variety of fine modulation. The songs, duets, trios, & choruses are most exquisite. The Orchestra was full and good, & the acting, on the whole, was good. It is one of the finest operas of Rossini, tho' the singing was not great. The scene in the 2<sup>d</sup> act, where Almaviva in disguise ... passes himself off on the Old Man for Basil, and poor Basil is turned off as an Impostor, is really more comical than any thing, except the discovery of the trick made by Bartolo while Figaro is shaving him. Altogether it is a most capital comedy and most exquisite music.

[ 10. December. 1816 ]

... After dinner, Mrs. Bonnor and Lady Belmour came to us. Lady B. was very droll in her history of her sea adventures. She went with Evans & me to Mrs. Gunn's, where we arrived at 10 -- very few people, but it soon became very crowded. We began the music by Viva Enrico sung by 3 Miss Gunns, M. Magnelli, M. Serici, & me: then the Gunns & Magnelli sung 2 trios, and then began a Ball -- so the music ended in little or nothing, tho' all there was, was received with applause by a very brilliant party of above 200. The Conte de Pahlen, I found, was not my friend but his Brother, much younger, a very pleasing young man, We had much talk about Switzerland, &c. He spoke English, French, & Italian equally well, & is apparently a very clever young man. The Chevalier de Ulloa fixed to travel with us on friday. I met also S. Barret, Dundas, Montgomery, &c. Barret introduced me to a M. Bertolli, who was in the service of Napoleon at Waterloo, a very elegant young man and pleasant. I was also introduced to Mr. Gunn and some others. I had a long conversation with Prince Henry of Prussia,

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cousin to the King, who is a most affable, pleasing man and speaks English admirably, tho' he has only been 4 weeks in England. I should not, of course, have spoken to him, but Miss Caldwell, who was leaning on my arm, made an attack on him, & he then spoke to me as well as her. Lady B. and she are more odd & droll than ever.

[ 13. December. 1816 ] Poggiabonsi

In our walks we were generally joined by M. de Ulloa, who was indeed very pleasant and amusing, and I am very glad he proposed to join us in our journey to Rome. He has been long in Peru, where he has many relations. His property is chiefly in Andalusia, but the changes in Spain have been so great and so disastrous, and his Family are so many of them dead, that he felt it irksome on his return -- and the measures of the present Government are so contrary to the feelings of every man of sensibility, that he has obtained permission to travel, and without this, no Spaniard can leave Spain. He gave us a most amusing account of Spanish and Peruvian customs, & of his journey in South America from Buenos Ayres to Lima, his traversing the Cordilleras &c. and his voyage round Cape Horn in returning.

The descent from the hills we had traversed to Poggiabonsi, a small town in a valley, was beautiful; the red gleams of sunshine, the rocky points and distances innumerable, made the scene very striking. The variety of outline, objects, and color is really wonderful. We got to Poggiabonsi at 1/2 past 5. We all got excellent rooms, dined, and had a most pleasant conversation. Ulloa is the son of Don Antonio de Ulloa, whose Voyages were published in 1746. He died at the age of 85, only 21 years ago, when M. de Ulloa was 13 years old. He does not seem to possess quite the energy or exertion of his farther, and his health is rather delicate, but he has seen a great deal of the World in Spain, America, France, and England, and his manners are uncommonly animated, sensible, and engaging, mild to a degree, and with much of the softness of the Italian, and the openness of the French. We spent a most pleasant evening together.

[ 22. December. 1816 ] Rome

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... We arrived at St. Peter's in good time, amidst crowds of coaches of Cardinals in great state, their trains held up by inferior clergy, & servants. We followed them up the stairs of the Vatican into a noble hall, & thence into the Sistine Chapel, which is so called from Sixtus the 5<sup>th</sup>, its founder. It is entirely covered with Fresci painted by Michel Angelo Buonarroti, of which the Last Judgment at the end above the Altar and the beautiful figures of Saints on the Ceiling are most wonderful. They are thought to be the finest work in fresco of this inimitable Artist. The Pope's Throne is on one side of the Altar and similar to it, the steps being connected; there are Canopies of red silk above both. We got good places. The ladies are separated from the Chapel by a grating, as no female enters the Chapel or Apartments of the Pope. The Cardinals and Dignitaries of the Church were ranged around and in robes of purple and white with red large caps and little red skull caps. The Pope came in by a private door, followed by his train-bearers and a host of attendants and clothed in white, over which was a red mantle embroidered with gold flowers, and a high white mitre on his head. His Holiness Pius 7<sup>th</sup> is a stout good-looking man, with a pleasing countenance, brown, & Italian features. He seems about 70 and is, I believe, 75. He took his place on the Throne. At intervals he and all the Cardinals stood up and his mitre was taken off. Mass was performed by 3 Priests in splendid robes. Twice the Book was brought to the Pope and he read loudly out of it some sacred part in Latin with a clear voice

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and good manner; he also descended and prostrated himself before the Altar, as did all the other Priests and Cardinals, &c., at the elevation of the host. This was a very striking part of

the Ceremony and was succeeded by a very beautiful Anthem as a Trio sung by treble, tenor, and bass. The music on the whole was fine harmony.

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[ 24. December. 1816 ]

... Evans called at 1/2 past 8 in a carriage for Jane and me, and we all three set off to the Sistine Chapel where High Mass was to be performed by the Pope by torchlight. It was very crowded but we got very good places. I met Lord Denbigh, the Count de Pahlen, Don Manuel de Fagoago, a Mexican I knew once in London, Mr. Williams, &c. The Ceremony was nearly the same as on Sunday last, and the Pope got thro' it well, tho' he had been at the Mass of St. Peter's this morning. The Cardinal Doria was most comical in appearance: his eyes never rested, yet he was always reading and repeating to himself and with the oddest manner I ever saw -- comical and diverting: tho' more like a lively little old woman than a man. ... The music in some parts was very fine and the whole liturgy long than Sunday last.

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[ 28. December. 1816 ]

... I intended to have gone to the Teatro Argentino, which is the Grand Opera, but by some mistake got to the Teatro della Valle, which is the next in rank. Here I saw the comedy in 3 acts of I due Fratelli & the Opera Buffa in 2 acts of Qui pro Quo. The first act of the Opera was done after the first act of the Comedy, then 2 acts of the Comedy, and then the last act of the Opera. The Comedy was rather dull, but tolerably acted, tho' too tedious & sentimental. Della Porta's "commedia erudita" has been deemed too profound for the populace, thus, just as if Reynolds were to give us Much Ado, farce & pathos replace wit &

humor. I should not have staid it out but to hear the last act of the Opera, of which the story was taken from the French comic opera of Le Nouveau Seigneur. It was very well acted. The first tenor, Bussoni, was good & had great taste & flexibility, but is rather vulgar. Signora Bellochi, whom I heard at Florence, is a fine singer, & greatly improves on a second hearing. The second woman a very good singer, brilliant and pleasing, & has a clear style of voice I much prefer to the other. The Orchestra full and good -- and the music by Romani, the Proprietor of the Company and Maestro of the Musical Department, is really delightful, varied and full, spirited & expressive.

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[ 29. December. 1816 ]

... I went to the Teatro Argentino to the Grand Opera & sat with Latorf's two German Professors & Dr. Burton, whom I met at Lady Belmore's at Florence. I am sorry we see so little of Latorf; but having to go about with my Sisters, & having so much to see, which most people I care about have seen, I am obliged to give up Society which would otherwise be most pleasant. The Teatro Argentino is large and dirty: it was full but not crowded. The Opera of Tancredi was acted, the music by Rossini. Rossini is the finest modern Italian composer. His Music, if not equal to the best of Cimarosa or Paesiello, at least is full of power, variety, & novelty, yet harmonious, smooth, & easy, & keeps all the instruments busy -- the accompaniments

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are very fine, but the singing was, with the exception of the lady who did Tancredi & who had a tolerable counter tenor, most vile. Amenaide was often sadly out of tune, and the others all very bad. The quartettes and quintettes were in consequence murdered. The Music was certainly of a higher class than that



of Romani, which I heard last night, but it was not nearly so well executed: the Orchestra was much inferior -- indeed, for a grand serious opera, I certainly never saw any thing so bad. The Ballet acted between the acts of the Opera was the Difatto di Barbarossa. One lady was very pretty & elegant, & also had some ideas of dancing; the rest seemed to think it consisted in leaping and contortions. Never did I see any thing so vile -- and the storming of the Castle with the battle of the real horses was a real burlesque, after Bluebeard or Timour.

[ 2. January. 1817 ]

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... At dinner I had

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Mr. Strictland on one side, and on the other side Signor Rossini, whom I have so much wished to see. He is the only great Italian composer now living -- and not above 30. He has composed a great many fine Operas. Certainly his Tancred is an admirable work, & his Othello & his Elizabeth are now playing with the greatest success at Naples, the latter taken from the English History, with the overture borrowed from Aureliano in Palmira, which contains many parts also repeated in Il Barbiere di Siviglia. He gave me a full account of the Theatre of St. Carlo at Naples, which will be the most magnificent in the world. It has been quite a year in rebuilding after its conflagration. I was highly pleased with his modesty and excellent manners, and information. I hope I may see more of him. We had a very long musical conversation, & he asked me to call on him at the Teatro della Valle, for which he is composing an Opera for the last days of the Carnival.

[ 5. January. 1817 ]

Soon after 10 the Chevalier Tambroni arrived & we all set out to go to Canova's. His Studio is in a small street near the Corso. It is most extensive, filled with half finished works of the most beautiful design. A few are finished and some are only in models of plaster. Some dancing Nymphs. The 3 Graces.

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Numbers of busts. The Centaur & Hercules. A most lovely design for the Monuments of the Daughters of the Marquis of Santa Croce, altogether the most pathetic thing I ever saw -- the mother & daughters weeping round it are charming. A noble colossal bust of Bossi, a Milanese painter. Canova himself. The busts of some most lovely women. A very fine colossal statue, but only in plaster, of Napoleon: the original is gone to England, bought by the Prince Regent. The most beautiful Venus I ever saw of his (very like, but even superior to, that of Florence), which belongs to Lucien Bonaparte but which he has just sold to Lord Lansdown for £1,500; it is now at Canova's to be packed for England. We saw indeed numbers of most interesting statues, & all the engravings of his monuments, statues, &c. He also paints in oils, but his paintings we did not see today; we staid near two hours -- but tho' delighted by the great variety & various stages of the art, in which we saw the works of this great man, we were even more pleased with himself. He is near 60, lively, unaffected, simple, temperate, natural, sensible, & communicative, without the least elevation or pretence. The Pope lately created him Marquis of Ischia, and gave him a pension of £800 sterling a year. He has given up this sum to several Academies & Institutions for the encouragement of Archaeological researches, & for the Schools of Painting & Sculpture, and never receives any of it for himself. M. Tambroni gives the

highest account of him in every respect. If any artist is in distress, he is sure to be relieved by Canova, & in the most delicate way, by Canova's purchasing his works at a high price: & then

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often giving them back under various pretences. When he was a boy of sixteen he made at Venice a Groupe of Daedalus & Icarus, & found means to come with this to Rome to the Venetian Ambassador, who was rather a patron of the fine arts. The Ambassador sent for some soi-disant judge to look at Canova's Groupe, who had it brought to the Palace to have it seen, & this Judge after looking at it a little said to Canova it was a "cochonnerie" and worth nothing: so Canova, whose only hope was in its being approved, was in great distress. Luckily for him, a Mr. Hamilton, an Englishman, being then here, saw it & thought well of it: & told the Venetian Ambassador he was sure Canova had talents & should be encouraged; so the Ambassador gave him a block of marble & some order -- & he next produced the Groupe of Theseus & the Minotaur -- & went on, gradually increasing in fame with every new work: but for above 20 years he did all his works entirely himself from the beginning, & went thro' all the labor of reducing the blocks & forming the coarse outline. Of course, as soon as he was rich enough to do so, he no longer went thro' such slavery, but now always has the groupes, statues, or busts formed & modelled by workmen and only finishes them himself. By this means he has done much more of late years. Beside the pleasure of being introduced to such a man as Canova, so good & so full of genius & feeling, we had the benefit of his conversation, & that of his brother, a very pleasing lively man, & also of his Secretary,

the Abbate Miserini, a most lively and amiable man: they were all most kind & attentive, and we were quite delighted with our visit. On the whole, Canova's genius seems to me to lie in the production of elegance, grace, lightness, pathetic expression, or playful. The stern, horrible,

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forcible, & muscular, he is not so great in -- & for this reason his women are generally finer than his men. He is little & thin, yet lively, healthy, and clear in complexion, keen & mild at once in the expression of his face.

... Canova works all the morning, from 7 till 1, dines, sleeps an hour, walks or drives out, and in the evening goes into Society, but seldom or ever to large parties.

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... I find that I have not put in his ideas of the Apollo and of the Venus de Medicis. He thinks they are perfect: that Apollo is of Roman Carrara Marble & most likely made in the Reign of Adrian, but possibly sooner, and if so, he thinks by Praxiteles, whose execution surpassed that of Phideas, tho' the ideas of the latter are reckoned finer. Venus is certainly of Greek Marble & he thinks more ancient than the other.

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[ 7. January. 1817 ]

... I went to the Play at the Theatre des Marionettes: it was a comedy, "Le Strage di Benevento," followed by a ballet of "La Presa di Algieri." The Theatre is a dismal dingy little place, and full of rather an odd set: the Marionettes were very comical -- but there was not enough of fighting. I was not so much amused as when I saw them at Mons, tho' the dancing in the ballet was most truly comic: they danced in most capital time and were in

vast number & highly grotesque. The Dey of Algiers, Lord Exmouth, the Sultanas, Slaves, &c., were all very splendid, and the Sailors on board the ships with the bombardment were really capital; but the last scene was most pretty: it was the Temple of Fame with the Trimphal Chariot; the whole temple was of glass, & very brilliant, with fine side wings, and a grand Marionette dance. Altogether it was admirably managed, & nothing could be more comic than the dignity & airs of the Dey & Lord Exmouth, the Deities of Fame & Victory crowning the latter with laurel.

We walked, after it was over, to the Theatre de la Valle to enquire for Rossini, but he was not to be found. We went behind the scenes, & I left a note for him with the Manager.

[ 10. January. 1817 ]

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... we went to the Studio of the famous Danish sculptor, Thorwaldsen, where we saw all his works that are there at the present. There is a fine model of a frieze in bas relief of the Triumph of Alexander, which was placed by Napoleon in the rooms fitted up for him in the Palazzo Pontificale: very spirited are the figures of Alexandre, the Angel of Victory, the horses of the Car, also the the procession of the flocks, the soldiers, the women, &c. There are some very fine busts, and a colossal one of Thorwaldsen

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himself with a face of very marked genius, larger and younger, but not unlike Canova's; also a most elegant bas relief, the monument of Mr. Bateman of Frankfort, 2 circular bas relief medallions done for Lord Lucan of Night & Morning personified. I never saw any thing so light & airy as the latter with her shower of shadowing roses. There were 2 or 3 fine male Stautues, especially Apollo. We went next to M. Schadow's, a famous Prussian Sculptor, where there was not much in quantity, nor did I like

any of the bas reliefs. There were some good models in plaster, especially the Virgin and Child, St. John the Baptist, and some very good busts, but the 2 chief works were the 2 female statues, the size of life, one tying her sandal in a most exquisite and natural attitude, and the other the filatrice spinning, or rather with a ball of gold thread in her right hand held up and the spindle in her other twisting the gold thread. The beauty of the figure, the face, the limbs and drapery, the exquisite softness of the whole, and the nature and ease of the attitude really exceed belief. I think this statue of the Filatrice even exceeds the 3 dancing Nymphs of Canova.

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[ 13. January. 1817 ]

...The Italian Theatres are very ill constructed for hearing and attending, and are in fact only places to lounge. They have few good comedies. Those of Goldoni are too simple, and want good language, and at present the rage for foolish melodramas has ruined Italian Comedy. Tragedy they seldom act. Their Actors are seldom good, being not as in France and England people of good education, information, and talent, but the lowest and most uneducated of the people. I was telling Tambroni we had been a good deal in Trastevere today: he says that there the people are certainly a different race, and are jealous of being thought other than descendants of the Ancient Romans: they seldom intermarry with others. They are larger & much superior in looks to the Romans. They have some curious remains of customs like the Ancient Bacchanalia.

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[ 15. January. 1817 ]

... I went to the Argentino theatre, where they have got a new Orchestra and a new set of Actors, and very superior certainly, the best I have yet heard; tho' Signora Bonori, who is the chief

woman or treble, is rather harsh tho' powerful. Madame Marconi is the great attraction. She played admirably, looked well, and sung delightfully, especially her first song and the scene in the last act with Papirius. Papirius by Bolognese. He is very ugly and clumsy, but much the best tenor voice I have heard in Italy, has great powers and good articulation, and sings really with great effect; he has not yet the pathos and feeling of Marconi and can never have her elegance and energy. It is droll that the best Opera performer I have seen in Italy should be one I had seen before in London. The Opera of Quinto Fabio by Nicolini is pretty music, and very pleasing: but not fine

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or tragic. I was pleased with some of the scenes which represented the Forum, Curia, Hostilia, Mamertine Prison, &c., of which the ruins still existing enable them to be painted possibly something like the reality. Marconi was Quinto Fabio, and she was really capital. Emilia by Signora Boroni was tolerable and Papirio the Dictator by Bolognese was very good as far as singing went. On the whole it was better done than any I have yet seen here. Bolognese introduced a scene of Pucitta's from La Vestale with a Chorus which I can remember Tramezzani acting admirably. Here it went off with great eclat, as the words often recurred with music of great force of "Sempre invincibile Roma Sara," & were received with acclamations, the people not seeming to remember how often the words have been falsified. We had then the Difatto di Barbarossa, which I saw before and in which the serious action is very comic, and at the end of the last act of the Opera was a comical little ballet like No Song, No Supper, with some tolerable dancing by Signora Conti, the chief female dancer, who is elegant, strong, and has a fine figure, and some idea of dancing beyond leaping and stomping.

[ 18. January. 1817 ]

... we set off to St. Peter's, where there was a Grand Anniversary of the building of the Church. We got there just before the Procession began to move up the Church. The Church was all fitted up as at Christmas and the Pope entered with the same grand state in his Chair and carried as before. The whole Ceremony of the Mass and Music was much as before, but not near so

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many spectators nor so many troops, nor any trumpets sounded.

... I stood just by a very intelligent Officer of the Pope's Guards, keeping the space clear. We had a great deal of conversation: he told me they have not much pay and their clothes are very expensive and elegant. He seemed to have no great reverence for the ceremony and talked to me much of the theatres, &c. He seemed to think it a terrible degradation that he saw behind us one of the actors of the Valle and was much astonished when I told him such people, when of good character and education and manners, were often received into the best English Society. The Italian nobility have a great idea of their Rank and State, and this man was (as all the Guards are) the son of a nobleman.

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... The Music of the Vespers was begun. Today it was a full band chorus, and included almost all the fine singers in Rome: both Orchestras were filled, and two organs, and quantities of other instruments, went on at once. The Chapel was very full. Never did I hear any Church Music so exquisite. It was neither too operatic, nor too heavy -- most brilliant, yet most various and affecting: the double choruses alternate and together (both Orchestras being full of singers) were of astonishing effect;



and the solos by the two boys, especially, were executed with a facility, precision, and effect truly surprising. I have scarcely ever heard bravuras better done -- and the trios and quartetts were most inimitable: it lasted till 1/4 before 5, and I could have listened twice as long.

... After dinner a curious argument took place, quite in the manner of the philosophers of Headlong Hall, between two Frenchmen, one of whom contended that every thing in this World was the effect of chance, and the other insisted that nothing was. I should have been inclined to adopt a middle idea -- but the drollery of the thing was not so much in the subject as in the manner of the disputants, who at last got so warm, that I thought it would end in fighting; however they gradually relaxed and one of them at last thinking his antagonist too unreasonable to contend against any longer, or feeling that he had the worst of it, got up and decamped. The Society however today was remarkably good, and the conversation more general and pleasing than usual. Every body was in raptures with the Music of the Vespers at St. Peter's, which I shall certainly not soon forget.

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[ 19. January. 1817 ]

...Wright and Fisher called, and we all went to Canova's, where we found the Abbate Misserini who shewed us again all the chef d'œuvres of Canova. Canova came to us himself and was as kind and amiable as before. He is indeed a most pleasing man, but has little of the Fire of Genius in his manner, which give one more the idea of great goodness than of Great Talents. I was much pleased with a bust of Napoleon which I had not before seen, and admired the beautiful figures of the dancing Nymph, Polyhymnia, &c. We also saw the plaster groupe of Mars and Venus now making

for the Prince Regent. It is more properly Peace and War, and is very elegant and finely conceived, tho' I do not think it equal to many other things of his.

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... At 2 we all moved off in the carriage and, traversing Rome, arrived at the Church of Santa Antonio, very near that of Santa Maria Maggiore on the Esquiline. It is small, and is connected with a convent: the cause of the assemblage of the great crowd we saw there, was that this was the great day for St. Anthony to give his blessing to the horses and other animals who came in search of it. These poor animals are brought tied up with ribbands &c. to the door of the Sacristy, where stands the Priest with a tub of water close to him on a chair, and in his hand a brush. As the horses, mules, asses, sheep, &c., come up, he shakes the blessed water over them and their riders and attendants, repeating at every fresh batch of animals "Per

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intercessionem beati Antonii abbatis, haec animalia liberatur amalis, in nomine Patris et filii et Spiritus Sancti Amen." ... The Priest was so civil he wrote me down the benediction as above, and also a sort of introduction to it, expressing that it was absolutely the voice of Heaven delivered to Anthony. I also got a picture of the Saint and a Cross. All the crowds that were in the Church and round it seemed to think it a most holy affair. This business goes on for 8 days and began last Friday, but today is the day in which the good Monks of St. Anthony get the greatest number of Pauls and in which the greatest number of animals are blest: lots of the horses and mules reared and kicked at the crowd and noise, and at the Priest flourishing the wet brush, and indeed were not at all sensible of the blessings that were bestowed on them.

[ 20. January. 1817 ]

... We went to the Theatre de la Valle, and had good places near the stage. ... we saw the Qui pro Quo, which was performed before the Comedy, at least the first act, and after that the Comedy of Giustizia o sia, una Lezione per i Giudice. The scene was in England, and the interest turns on a duel in which a worthless fellow is killed by Lord Belton in defence of the character of his friend and relation, Lord Edward Belton, who, happening to pass after the real duellist had fled, is found with the body and is brought to be tried before Lord Belton, amidst the lamentations of his Mistress and her Mother, &c. Every evidence is against him and he can only declare his innocence. At last Lord Belton, seeing there is no way for Lord Edward to get off, writes the verdict of Guilty, but puts in his own name instead of Lord Edward's. Soon after this arrives the pardon of Lord Belton, who never was suspected till he declared he was guilty; nothing can be more absurd or more perfectly contrary to English customs, laws, and manners; but the piece is rather interesting and was certainly well acted. The music went off well in Qui pro Quo. Some of it is really very pretty.

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[ 27. January. 1817 ]      Naples

...Aversa, a small city, anciently Citella, is a tolerable little place, and was anciently famous for obscene spectacles and great dissoluteness of manners; being so near Naples it is most likely not very different in its modern state. The sun set magnificently, and a bright moon and stars lighted us over the fertile woody plain bounded by hills. Vesuvias now shewed his deep red flame, which from its height and color was most striking, novel, and magnificent. I never saw any thing so clear as the sky and stars. We descended unexpectedly a sort

of defile or rocky broken woody valley; the noble entrance to Naples by two immense wide roads, one from Capua and one from Caserta, is very striking: and the breadth of the suburb street, the grand public workhouse, &c., are very fine: we passed many noble public buildings and several wide fine streets and entered the Street of Toledo, which is moderately wide and crowded; a most animated scene of noise, light, moving figures, shews, shops, palaces, churches, moon and stars, all most brilliant: altogether the whole place is wonderful and the streets we passed thro' far exceed in elegance and magnificence of building any in modern Rome. Naples is the third city in Europe in point of population, and at present is so full of strangers that we should have had very great difficulty in getting any rooms if I had not written.

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[ 28. January. 1817 ]

At the Theatre of Saint Carlo, in the Pit, all the 10 first rows of chairs are abonné, so that it is impossible to get a place near the stage, except on a night when it is not expected to be very crammed you may take some of the abonné seats not occupied and change from one to another as the people come: this many people do, and I did it tonight; tho' it was very full, I only changed once, & got next a very pleasant gentlemanly man, who told me the names of the actors, &c. I could not have conceived any thing so excessively splendid as this Theatre, which was burnt down not above a year ago, but has been rebuilt in 300 days; its splendour is inconceivable: the gilding, carving, clock, devices of bas relief in silver, the whole contour in shape not unlike Covent Garden, and also chiefly white and gold, but much handsomer.

I never saw any thing at all to be compared to it for magnitude and magnificence. It is, on the whole, well constructed for hearing. We had only the first act of Gabriella di Vergy, music of Carafa, very bravura and with not much meaning. Nozzari, David, and Colbran were all most exquisite: the two first are most charming tenors, full and sweet, and with great powers and flexibility, and both are good actors. Madame Colbran is little and -- not handsome -- and a bad figure, yet she sings delightfully, clear and in admirable tune, and with the greatest distinctness and execution. I don' think she seems a great actress, but I must see her and the others in an entire opera of better music.

... The ballet was La Vertu Premiata, o sia Cendrillon -- in fact Cinderella, and in all my life I never saw any thing so splendid in point of scenery, decorations, and dresses, & not even at Paris so many fine dancers together. Duport, Vestris, Taglioni, and several others; but the women here are most superior. Madame Duport, who played Cendrillon, is admirable for naïveté and beauty and elegant dancing, and the fine attitudes of Conti and Palerini (the other Sisters) were very exquisite. Taglioni, the Groom disguised as King, and Duport, the King as the Groom, were capital, especially the latter, whose fencing at the tournament and dancing with Cendrillon were perfect grace in motion. In the Tournament above 40 horses were at

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once on the stage. The scenery, for richness and beauty, exceeds description, and there were besides the above Miss Mori, Madame Taglioni, &c., above 14 fine women dancers, and some of them very elegant & beautiful: the last scene was lighted with white phosphoric light, and was really beautiful beyond description --

in fact this Theatre, in magnificence of architecture, performers, and machinery, scenery, and dresses, far exceeds any in the world. It is in part supported by the Government, but is chiefly kept up by the subscriptions of the inhabitants for pit and boxes. The band contains above 100 admirable performers, led by Festa for the Opera and Tucci for the Ballet. I was really in an ecstasy with every thing except the composition of the music of the Opera, which was very unmeaning and old fashioned, without air or character. The music of the ballet was very good, by Kalemberg. It was over before 11, on account of the 2<sup>d</sup> act of the Opera being left out.

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[ 29. January. 1817 ]

... We all went to the Teatro Nuovo, a very pretty theatre, where only Comedies are acted. We had capital places near the stage and heard and saw well. Il Burbero benefico, a comedy by Goldoni, was acted, and it is quite a monodrame -- all dependant on one man's character: the blustering choleric man was admirably acted and well written; the other characters were uninteresting: the actors were very respectable, but there was no scope for powers except in the part of Il Burbero -- it was heavy and not very interesting, and tho' written with point, certainly not laughable.

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[ 31. January. 1817 ]

... Evans, Grey. Sotheby, and I went to the Teatro St. Carlo and got luckily very good places together. I saw the whole Opera of Gabriella di Vergy, which ends in the imprisonment and poisoning of Gabriella, and in the perfidious lover killing himself. Madame Colbran I liked much better tonight: her voice is exquisite, and her clearness, intonation, and execution are delightful; she has also more feeling than I had supposed. Her acting in the prison

scene was charming. In the 1st Act the duet between her and David is good, and the finale also -- and in the 2<sup>d</sup> the very exquisite duet (music by Mayer) by Nozzari and David. I never heard more perfect harmony by two tenors of such great power, expression, and flexibility. They are the two best men I have heard for many years, and I think David, yet young, will soon have quite the power of Braham, with more clearness, and equal flexibility. Madame Colbran's dying was very good: the music of the Opera improves and the 2<sup>d</sup> Act is very superior to the 1st. The Ballet of Cendrillon went off even better than last time. I never saw any thing so fascinating as Madame Duport in Cendrillon: her learning to dance, and the pas de deux with Duport, also the scene of the Court, dancing before the King, the tournament, and the last most exquisite scene; altogether I never saw such taste and such an admirable combination of scenery and effect. The Theatre is really most perfect. It has 6 tiers all with open gold work and silver bas reliefs, imitating the antique. 29 boxes form the circle, interrupted by the magnificent Royal Box in the centre, lined with mirror and surmounted by a splendid Crown. The Proscenium, the curve it forms,

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and the 4 noble corinthian pillars supporting it, are really most striking and magnificent, and the glass chandelier in the centre is most beautiful. The side lights attached to the boxes, to be lighted on ball nights, are admirably contrived so as not to protrude or intercept the sight. Between the Opera and Ballet, we went to the Gambling Rooms of the Theatre, called the Ridotto, above stairs. They were very crowded. La roulette and Rouge

et noir, & lots of people. They are very elegant rooms -- but no Ladies of a certain description are allowed to attend the Theatre, so every part of it is very decorous, and very different from our Opera at London, where the best and worst females are quite side by side.

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[ 1. February. 1817 ]

... Went to the Fiorentino theatre with Grey. It is a large and handsome one, with a good Orchestra, not unlike the style of the Paris Feydau Theatre, but very inferior in size. One lady, Signora Canonici, sings very well, and a comical fat Canalecci in the "Ammazato per apprehensione" made the people laugh -- but in these light pieces they speak so much in the Neapolitan dialect, and cut the words so short, it is difficult to make it out. It was a new piece, and

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received with applause. The music by Sparano I thought very commonplace and poor. In the first piece, called La Sposa di Tirolo, the music by Guglielmi Junior was exquisite, and the acting of the fat Canalecci in the gourmand Sharper was perfect. I never saw any thing more natural. The Theatre was full, and one of the tenors is a very good singer: but the singing of tonight is not to be named after that of Saint Carlo.

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[ 4. February. 1817 ]

... I went to the front row during the Opera and sat with some civil Italians I had there with before. The Opera was Otello with music by Rossini -- and reckoned his best; it is in 3 acts, but only two were played, which I very much regretted, as this Opera has the rare quality of music growing finer as it advanced -- the finale of the 2<sup>d</sup> Act, the duet of Nozzari and



David, as Otello and Roderigo, were very fine, and the trio of these 2 and Colbran was exquisite: her singing was finer than when I had before heard her, and the music is very difficult and complicated. It is not always well put together but shews great genius in the composition, and a lively fancy. Nozzari was Otello, David Roderigo, which is the same as our Cassio and quite a second part, Iago being a trifling part and not better than Brabantio. Desdemona was by Colbran and Emilia by Monzi. The story is much

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altered, but the Opera is certainly good in its way, tho' so very unlike the tragedy. I regretted much not seeing the last act, as I was just getting into the spirit of it: it was succeeded by Astolfo e Gioconda, taken from Ariosto and La Fontaine: this ballet is by Vestris and is indeed excessively dull, with no variety, no grand scenes, and no interest. M<sup>lle</sup> Mori was very interesting in Rosalia, the country girl; but Vestris, Conti, Taglioni, and Madame Taglioni were not so, in the 4 lovers. I longed for Madame Duport, who did not appear; it was poor indeed after the splendour, naiveté, and interest of Cinderella.

[ 5. February. 1817 ] Vesuvius

... The ascent is steeper than any I almost ever went, but is not very long; but it is often fatiguing from the soft cinders slipping from the feet. In riding up, we had observed the different old streams of lava of the great eruptions of 1767 and 1794. It is most curious to see the spreading currents of it in every direction. The

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whole space between the hill and the Sea, on which Portici is built, is lava, and there are supposed to be six or seven strata above Herculaneum. The upper part of the ascent is by a sort of hard steps and is nearly perpendicular: above it is an undulating plain of enormous yellow, green, red, blue, brown, and black gulfs, clefts, vales, & hills, all smoking and warm, and hot black dusty sulphureous earth. A steep, yet comparatively easy ascent after what we had passed, led us to the enormous blocks of lava laid openly like fallen rocky fragments on each other, forming mounds and fortifications round the top. We heard a bellowing like the roar of an immense steam engine. Volumes of smoke were rolled down upon us, so sulphureous and penetrating I once thought I should have died; my lungs were so dreadfully affected speaking was impossible -- a few minutes more would have finished me, but luckily the wind changed a little and drove it off: we turned across the ridges of rocky lava more to the south and got more round in front of the great crater, which now was quite clear for a time, and sent up its volumes of smoke and flame perpendicularly; meantime, a tremendous crash was heard above us, and at once burst out thousands of immense red hot stones or cinders, some of them flaming like torches in the air. One of them fell on the outside of me and not a yard from me; so nearly I escaped my death: it was

as big as my head. Numbers of others fell all round; the smoke and incessant showers of stones continued, and going nearer the crater was impossible. The other crater was also turbulent & vomited smoke, but no stones. We got round with some danger and fatigue to the source of the lava on the side of the hills. At present it descends in the direction of the town of Torre della Nunziata, but, tho' it is a very great stream, it is lost

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in the older gulfs of the hill in descending, and does no mischief below. We walked up close to its mouth, which is exactly like the iron furnace at Lemington, when it is tapped, being small, and then an enormous liquid mass flows slowly and majestically down, dividing below into two or three divisions. It is strange to see this thick red hot matter flowing slowly out of the hill side: By putting a stick into it a violent flame bursts out -- but really it is the most scorching heat I ever felt. My face was quite burnt standing near it, and my feet, tho' well fenced, felt it sensibly: tho' only standing on black edges of old lava. It is quite impossible to conceive any thing so frightful as the black chasms, gulfs, rocks, and flowing red hot lava, the vomiting crater at the top, and constant red hot shower from it, with its (at intervals) explosions of gas and, after them, volumes of smoke and flame -- and all over the mountain smoke issuing forth in all directions. ... The sun set like a ball of fire in the Sea, just by the southern point of Ischia; the infernal colors, noise, and smoke, and lurid clouds above me, were a strange contrast to the calm sea and rich red tints of the Evening sky: the clouds cleared off, and the sun sunk. Charlotte came to me and we staid some time to see again the crater, from which the wind did not

drive the smoke -- but at last, as it was getting dark, we thought it right to descend.... all the way having a noble view of the flame of the crater, which was most splendid, vomiting forth red smoke and fire. At the Hermitage we stopped a few minutes only, and rode by the light of two torches, still admiring the red horrors of the crater.

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[ 7. February. 1817 ] Naples

... I went to the Theatre Fiorentini and met my Sisters, Wrightson, and Miss Wrightson. We had a very good box. Paul and Virginia was the Opera. The music is by Guglielmi Junior, and it is most exquisite. The story has never before received, neither in Lesueur's opera nor in Kreutzer's ballet, such an affecting musical complement. Really I have never heard music more expressive of the situation, and full of soul, variety, spirit, and effect. The duet by Paul and Virginia in the 2<sup>d</sup> act is harmony and feeling most delicious: and the voices of Madame Ciabrand (Virginia) and Madame Canonici (Paul) are very sweet, and powerful, and accord admirably. Cassaccia, the fat man, was very comic in Dominico. Pelligrino, a good bass, played the Father and Madame Checcherini in the Mother sung well. The Officer had a fine song and sung it well. Altogether the composition and execution of the music were both admirable, and one hears it certainly much better in a smaller Theatre; it is all fine -- and there is scarcely a solo, duet, or trio that is not listened to with silence the most perfect. The last act I think on the whole is inferior. The storm and Paul's song are good, but the conclusion is short and abrupt. I never thought the story dramatic: here it is better than in London, but not near so interesting as at Paris, tho' the music is finer.

[ 14. February. 1817 ]

... I went to St. Carlo to see the interior of the Theatre, and got a very civil man, who took me all round it. The Scene rooms are the largest I ever saw. The scenes were painting for the new Opera which comes out on Sunday. They are all done in a flat position and are very large and fine. The wheels for pulling up and down the scenes are very ingenious. There is a most immense space both above and below the stage -- and its depth is the greatest I ever saw. I did not see the wardrobes and dressing rooms, which are also very extensive, but went to the top of the very high roof, made in the old sloping way, but strong and well finished. A stair behind the wall of the gavel above the grand facade to the street leads to the ridge at top, whence is a noble view of Naples, the hills around the Sea, Capri, Vesuvius, the hills of Massa, and Sorrento, and of Pausilippo, &c. The interior construction and conveniences of St. Carlo are not equal by any means to Covent Garden, yet nothing can exceed the variety and beauty of the scenery nor the immense or extended effects of it: nor the promptitude and neatness with which it is contrived and made use of. I went to call on Mr. Barbaia, the Proprietor of the Theatre, at his Palace, of which the first floor is occupied by a gaming table, which is well filled at all times: it is for Rouge et Noir only. I did not find him at home. Dined with Wright and Fisher at the Milano. Dressed and went to St. Carlo to the rehearsal of the grand new opera for Sunday Evening. It is called Aga Nedica and is taken from Ossian -- it is in 5 acts, and is a most splendid spectacle of scenery, dancing, and music, but very stupid, noisy, unmeaning music -- the vocal

part in particular is detestable. Nozzari, David, and Colbran appeared in a sad way, and quite annoyed

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with it: the bass had all the business. I was amused with the crowd on the stage, and in the pit. The scenery was up and looked well. The stage quite lighted as for performance, but the performers were in their usual dresses. The pit was half full, and boxes also: so it was quite operatic, but most terribly dull. I got into a box with a very pleasant man and woman, who know all the dancers, &c., but I grew so tired of the ineffable dullness of the piece that I was glad to retreat.

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[ 15. February. 1817 ]

... I went to the play with my Sisters at the Nuovo Teatro. We had rather distant places in the pit, but heard well. The play was La Vertu Premiata, being the story of Cinderella, but not near so expressive and interesting as the ballet at St. Carlo: for here there is no magic, and it is really very dull: the dialogue was very humdrum indeed -- it was well got up and acted: the old Chamberlain, and old Mother of the 3 Sisters were very comical. The dresses were handsome: but on the whole I was not much amused.