

N. D'IDONE, C.A.

lago di Como



Italia

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LAKE OF COMO



Text by AUGUSTO GIACOSA
with four coloured plates by
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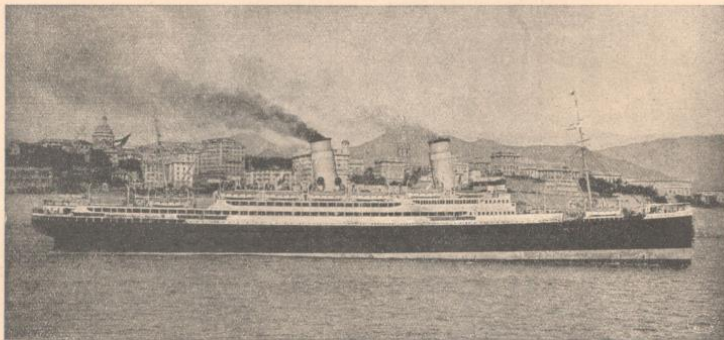
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SOME HISTORICAL NOTES

Enthusiastic at the sight of so much beauty on the Riviera of the Lario, Virgil exclaimed in the second Book of the *Georgics*: *te Lari maxime*, Lar, meaning 'prince' was the name given to it by the Etruscans, while the singer of the *Aeneid* put it in the place of honour.

Its history can be traced back to very early times for before Rome was built, the strong race of the Orobii, inhabitants of the mountains, had already founded cities between the two branches of the Lario. Perhaps they settled where now stands Como or Lecco, or very likely between the two, if it is true that Brianza takes its name from the ancient barrier, now destroyed, after which Mt Barro and the Baradello are called.

The invasions began with the Umbri, from whom the name Insimbria or Insurbia is derived. In 1500 B. C. the Etruscans crossed the Apennines and established their dominions here. The inhabitants became civilised and the region was therefore prosperous and picturesque until the invasion of Bellouese, head of the Gauls and the Celts in 595 B. C.

These Celts, who were the most uncivilised people that invaded our country, were only equalled many centuries after by the Lombards. They had very primitive customs and made human sacrifices. The head of the family was also a magistrate with the power of life and death in his hands. They used to hang their victims' heads to their horses, and used the skulls as vases. For clothes they took the bark from the trees or else simply wore animals' skins, their principal luxury being golden arms, bracelets and necklaces inlaid with precious metals. They lived on the flesh of the animals they hunted and on fruit. The Druids and the fanatic priestesses with their hideous rites complete the somewhat bloodthirsty spectacle of these savage tribes, who instead of gathering together in cities, lived scattered in the forests.

In the meantime Rome was growing enormously in power and was compelling the people to submit before the lictors.

The Insurbii, however, refused, defending their independence and their barbarous customs, but the Consul Claudio Marcello led the glorious legions to suppress them, thus winning the honour of the third "*spoglie opime*," (rich spoils).

Whilst the conqueror, dressed in purple and gold, his head crowned with a laurel wreath, his face painted red like the statues of the Gods placed in the temple of Giove Capitolino a branch of oak from which hung the helmet, the armour and the tunic of Videmare, leader of the Insurbii, who was killed by him, the prisoners in the dark dungeons of Tullian, after having been dragged in chains before the triumphant chariot and mocked by the people, were executed.

From time to time strong colonies were sent by Rome to oppose the Reti. The first, led by Pompeo Strabone, and the last by Julius Caesar included 500 Greek nobles.

Prf. Bebuschini writes that the Greeks were principally inspired to create their settlements on the Riviere of the Lario because it was similar to the country from which they had come. Thus on these banks sprang up numerous villages, and the names of Delfo, Corinto, Dorio, Lemna, Avedo, Careno, Peonia and Leucadia given to them by the new colonizers recalled to them their country in these far off lands. The arts, the commerce, the agriculture, the navigation, and every civil custom were passed on to the inhabitants of the Lario by them. In a short time they discovered particular trees familiar in their country; their marbles, their wools, their olives, the cheese from their valleys, the fish from their waters and their wine became famous, the latter vieing with the generous Falerno.

Under the Romans the Lario prospered, and their sojourn there, has been much sung of by the poets. Of the audacious legions composed of the people of Como, the 9th and the 10th were preferred by Caesar and they obtained for him the victory of Farsaglia. At that time Como was called "Novocomo," to indicate its restoration. Temples, villas, porticos, amphitheatres and baths soon sprang up upon its banks, and the patricians vied with each other in magnificence. Cannino Rufo, Calpurnio Fabato, Saturnino the Virii and the two Plinii gave money in abundance for the construction of Stupendous dwellings around which gathered numerous families. But alas, very little remains of all this pomp, for the successive invasions, the wars between the communes and the foreign dominations destroyed everything. Eight granite columns supporting the archway at the entrance to the Palace of Studies, attributed to the Temple of Giove, is not sufficient to remind the inhabitants of Como of the Roman city.

Though the Lario followed the sad fate of the rest of Italy when Caesar's great Empire crumbled, nevertheless when the eunuch Narsete, after having reconquered it, betrayed the Emperor and called Alboino with his hords of Lombards, a little handful remained loyal. They were the remains of the old legions led by Francillone, master of the Militia and Governor of Como for Maurizio, Emperor of the East. The Roman eagles found refuge in the centre of the Lake, on the Isola Comacina, and for 20 years defended in the Cristopolis their faith and their civilisation, until they were finally starved into submission by the overwhelming forces of King Authari.

Here and there flashes of light illuminate the history of the dark and stormy Mediaeval times. They are the struggles for the free commune sustained by the Lauriensi during the ten year's war. Como, the new Troy, had its Ettore in the Bishop Guido Grimaldi and for two lustrum (ten years) stood their ground heroically against fifteen united cities until she was finally destroyed in 1127. Immature ideas with too little liberty animated the strong population and the lake was tinged with fratricidal blood. Galleys with iron prows in the Roman style, were encounte-

red in the peaceful inlets; on the ruins of the villas sprang up Roman castles. Como, the Island, the Tre Pieve and Lecco, now and then allies, or enemies, ended by destroying themselves, whilst Milan and the German Emperor took advantage of such terrible discord.

The furious partisan wars led us under the dominion of the Visconti, who took away from Como's ensign the motto *Libertas*; then the French and the Spanish made Lombardy their battlefield and on the rising of the Signoria we find on the Lario the noble figure of Gian Giacomo Medici, known as the Medeghino. He was one of the boldest leaders of the time, and has wrongly been spoken of as a notorious assassin, a robber and the head of a band of desperadoes. He was on a small scale the predecessor of those who later on fought against the foreign domination with all their energy and even their life, for an ideal of redemption. Settling himself on the promontory of Musso, he opposed everything and everybody, and helped by his brave captains, true Laurians, and by the National Militia, was able to keep in check for many years the mercenary armies. If sentimental reasons had not put an obstacle in his path, his dream of an independent Lombardy would have been realised, the forerunner of that reign destined to come about in 1859.

Under the Spanish dominion the humiliation of the old and noble Lario is completed. Famished and

terrified, the cut-throats and the Cavargnoni on one side, the Tribunal of the Inquisition on the other, with the addition of the plague and the wars, she was reduced to a dim light.

Eugene of Savoia freed it from this dishonourable yoke only to set upon it another; and it was Maria Teresa and William II who restored the country. Yet the Lario, born to be a prince, was always a slave. It hoped for much with the arrival of Napoleon, but this was only a passing ray of sun lasting a few years, and soon the Austrians returned, making the word *liberty* the remembrance of a too brief dream.

The idea of independence, however, continued to mature in secret and exploded like a bomb in March 1848. Then the valleys descending to the Lario seemed like impetuous torrents, waiting to take both moral strength and arms to the citizens. Martino Anzi, a priest promoted captain, defended the Stelvio; a famous singer placed the tricolour on the highest point of Mt Brunate; while the Isola Comacina that had given a sure refuge to the last Roman eagles during the downfall of the Empire, gathered in its ruins the Croati, prisoners of the citizens' insurrection. Thus history and art on the Lario united in the dawn of the Risorgimento.

On May 27th 1859 the supporters of Garibaldi in Como opened the gates to the heroes of San Fermo; while in the last war, the sons of the Lario equalled in valour the ancient legions favoured by Julius Caesar.



COMO HARBOUR

THE ARTS OF THE COMACINI

That the fine arts flourished on the Lario in the times of the Romans is assured by the letters of Plinio the Younger. In them he refers to buildings and monuments that adorn the city and the shores of the lake; praised artists amongst whom is a certain Nusic a Comense architect, whom Plinio appointed to construct a temple to Cerere, it is believed near Campo where now stands the Santuario del Soccorso.

Even at that time, the artists, sculptors and architects were united in corporations or colleges, and the Romans, driven out by invasions, united them together on the Isola Comacina. Masters of Art called "Maestri Comacini" came also and gave their name to the region.

The thirteen centuries of artistic history (600-1900) are recorded by the monuments scattered upon its banks and in its valleys, and make the Lario appear like an enormous safe full of precious jewels, from the small primitive Roman churches, still built according to the traditions of the Latin school, to the grandest constructions of that glorious century; from from the 7th century "barocco" to the new classical period; from the rigid Byzantine figures that unknown painters retouched upon the walls to the sumptuous decorations by the miraculous brush of Morazzone and the Recchi brothers; from the renowned paintings of Gaudenzio Ferrari and Bernardino Luini to the chiselled works that glorified Gaspare Molo.

Only seventy five years after the arrival of the barbarians, the *Magister Comacinus cum colligantes* found means to subdue the invaders. A law was passed by Rotari in 643, which bestowed privileges upon them, and this was renewed a hundred years later by Liutprando who made others. Having lost their vandalic sentiments, the barbarians began to understand that it was necessary to build, and the ignorant people who were not able to put stone, found themselves obliged to depend upon our builders.

These builders kept and exercised the secret of the *laborerium* and of the *schola*, their special art, which was much esteemed by the Romans. They lived in freedom, never slaves to the powerful, indifferent to warfare and not ambitious for power, with their own traditional and oral statutes. Their primitive and particular notions of art were handed down from father to son, and therefore besides individuals we find whole families of artists. It is owing to such a jealous custody of these secrets of art that the ancient Roman style, influenced by the barbarian and mixed with the Byzantine, revived and modified in the order called the *Lombardo*, *Romanico*, ed anche *Comacino*, afterwards gave place to the *Arco-acuto* or *Gothic*. When this last was established, however, our artists had already extended their activity on the Lario. Therefore the simple Roman architecture is met with more frequently in the Larian monuments.

The most important of these would have been without doubt the Basilica of St. Eufemia on the Isola

Comacina, had not the vengeance of the Comaschi destroyed it in 1169. The ruins of the three naves and choir testify that it feared no comparison with San Abbondio, San Carpofore and San Fedele. In general we refer to the little churches of one arcade, scattered chiefly along the ancient roman road, rebuilt afterwards by Teodinda and called Via Regina, in honour of this Queen. Amongst them, Santa Maria Maddalena of Stabio in Ospedaletto calls for particular attention on account of its characteristic little steeple. It is the work of the 11th Century and in ancient times an extraordinary artist added to it the strange belfry, now one of the artistic curiosity of the Lake.

The knowledge received from the Comacini reached its height in the 15th Century with Luini and Ferrari; inspired Fontana Leoni, the Borromino, the Maderno, Pellegrini and Albertoli; adorned Papal Rome; fought honourably against the masters of the Tuscan School; frequented the capitals of Europe where sovereigns engaged our architects, sculptors, and painters, repaying them with honours and riches.

The Mustio race is not extinguished yet; but lives in the same territory in the same manner. The love of beautiful arts is born in the people of the Lario, and every year new monuments appear in the cities, in the villages of the Riviera and in the valleys. It might be said that the inhabitants, never satisfied in their desire to make more beautiful by their skill a land already endowed by nature with great beauty, work unceasingly to construct monuments which they consider to be worthy of the beauty and majesty of their country.

The small millennium churches that are reflected in the waters of the lake or overlook it from a cliff, contrast strangely with the stupendous 17th Villas bearing the names of the best families of the Lombard nobility such as the Visconti, the Cornaggia-Medici, the Serbelloni, the Alconati, Giovio, Passalacqua, the Sommariva, the Melzi d'Eril, the Becaria, the Trotti and several others. Some belong to sovereigns such as Leopold of Belgium, the Duke of Saxony-Meiningen, the Princess Carolina of Brunswick, wife of George IVth of England; others to illustrious cardinals such as Tolomeo Gallio and Angelo Durini. They all vied with each other in adorning them with marvellous parks and inestimable masterpieces of art. The statues remind one of Antonio Canova and the paintings of Andrea Appiani.

Here illustrious poets, writers, and musicians such as Silvio Pellico, Parini, Carducci, Alessandro Manzoni, Cesare Cantù, Stendhal, Longfellow, Verdi Bellini and others found inspiration. The present Pope Pius XIth used to come every year on holiday to Griante on the picturesque banks of the Lario, which amongst many of its illustrious sons boasts two of his predecessors: Innocent XIth Odescalchi, and Clement XIIIth Rezzonico.



DIE BESTEN HOTELS AUF DEM COMER SEE

Como

HOTEL METROPOLE SUISSE ALBERGO S. GOTTARDO
HOTEL VOLTA ALBERGO BARCHETTA
ALBERGO FIRENZE

Cernobbio

GRAND HOTEL VILLA D'ESTE

Moltrasio

HOTEL VILLA REGINA

Torno

ALBERGO VAPORE

Tremezzo

GRAND HOTEL TREMEZZO HOTEL BAZZONI DU LAC
HOTEL VILLA CORNELIA HOTEL HELVETIA

Lenno

HOTEL S. GIORGIO

Varenna

HOTEL MILANO ALBERGO SOLE

Valle Intelvi

ALBERGO BELLA VISTA - LANZO ALBERGO FUNICOLARE - LANZO
ALBERGO MILANO HOTEL VILLA VIOLET

Cadenabbia

HOTEL BELLE VUE HOTEL VITTORIA
HOTEL BRITANNIA HOTEL BELLE ILE

Gravedona

HOTEL ITALIA

Menaggio

HOTEL VICTORIA GRAND HOTEL MENAGGIO
HOTEL DE LA GARE

Brunate

ALBERGO PARADISO

Bellagio

GRAND HOTEL BELLAGIO HOTEL FIRENZE
HOTEL GRANDE BRETAGNE HOTEL GENAZZINI
HOTEL VILLA SERBELLONI HOTEL SUISSE
HOTEL SPLENDEDE HOTEL MONTE S. PRIMO

Argegno

HOTEL BELVEDERE

Grandola

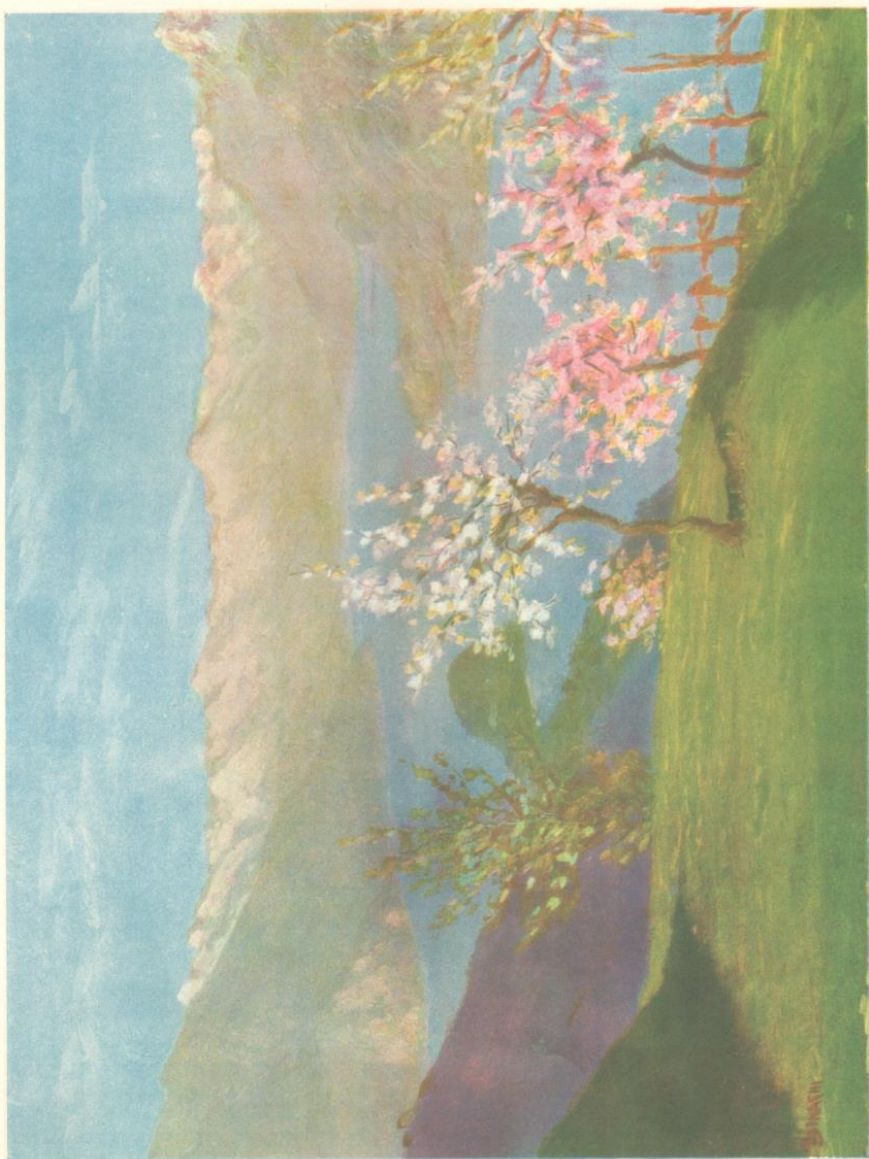
GOLF HOTEL MIRAVALLE

Azzano

HOTEL MILANO

Loveno

ALBERGO PENSIONE LOVENO



SPRING

TOWNS AND VILLAGES ON THE LAKE SHORES

Until a few years ago a flight over the Lario in a seaplane seemed an unrealisable dream but to-day it is the easiest thing in the world. Anyone can do so, since a machine is stationed at Villa Olmo for the convenience of all those who wish to admire from above this enchanting Riviera.

Como, Queen of the Lario, called "cancrina," or "lunata," city on account of its characteristic shape, seems to open its arms in an act of love to its lake. From the summit of the hill, which protects it from the South, the dull rock of Baradello reminds us of its past glories and the

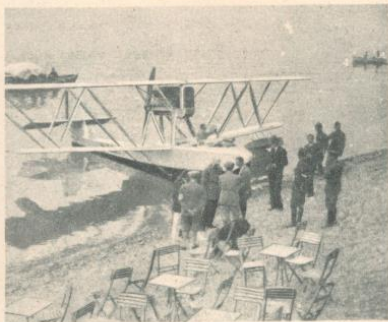


COMO - Promenade along the Lake

are placed the statues of the two Dînlî. This cathedral is one of the finest in Italy, and a better one could not have been constructed for a diocese numbering 108 bishops of whom 22 are sanctified.

The smoking chimneys of the silk factories in the suburbs testify to the activity of the industrious inhabitants. On the lake shore splendid hotels overlook the picturesque bay, enclosed between the slopes of Mt Brunate and Mt Olimpino, which are covered with numerous villas. In the centre of the city the elegant Piazza Cavour with its carefully kept flower beds makes a splash of colour against the blue waters, and every season ornamental flowers and trees are renewed and looked after with diligent care.

The steam navigation on the Lake of Como claims over a century of life. The first steamer, the Lario, having been launched on July 18th 1826. Now the bay is dotted



Ready to fly

tragedy of the Torriani, who agonized in cages upon the tower wall; below in the fine public park stands out the Temple of Volta, where everyone bows in reverence before the souvenirs of the greatest Comasco; in the centre of the city stands the cathedral on whose façade



COMO - The Baradello Tower

with innumerable vessels amidst which the majestic steamers of the Lariana seem like hens among their chickens.

The Savola, launched in 1927, was honoured by H. M. King Vittorio Emanuele III our beloved sovereign, during his visit to Como for the inauguration of the Voltian Exhibition on the Hundredth Anniversary of the illustrious physician. On the morning of May 28th 1927, enormous crowds flocked to Piazza Cavour and when the "Vittorioso" gave the military salute from the bridge of the steamer, a spontaneous cry of "Viva il Re" arose from the multitude. Then the beautiful steamer solemnly moved away and under the rays of the sun,



COMO - The Volta Memorial



COMO - The Cathedral Square in the XVII Century

the Italians, the "liberatore", the "caporaletto", as he was called by the people, was a guest in "Casa Villani", now called Villa Crespi, with Giuseppina Bauhormats and the sisters Elisa and Paolina. In 1838, the Emperor of Austria was received at Villa Olmo by the Viceroy Ragneri and the Prince of Metternich. The proprietor of the villa was then the Marquis Giorgio Raimondi, who had inherited it from his uncle Innocenzo Odescalchi, who had had it constructed from a design by Simon Cantoni.

The villa passed from the Raimondi into the hands of the Duken Visconti di Modrone until it became the property of the commune and was used as a site for the Voltian Exhibition. To-day the edifice is used as a civic museum and the splendid gardens are open to the public.

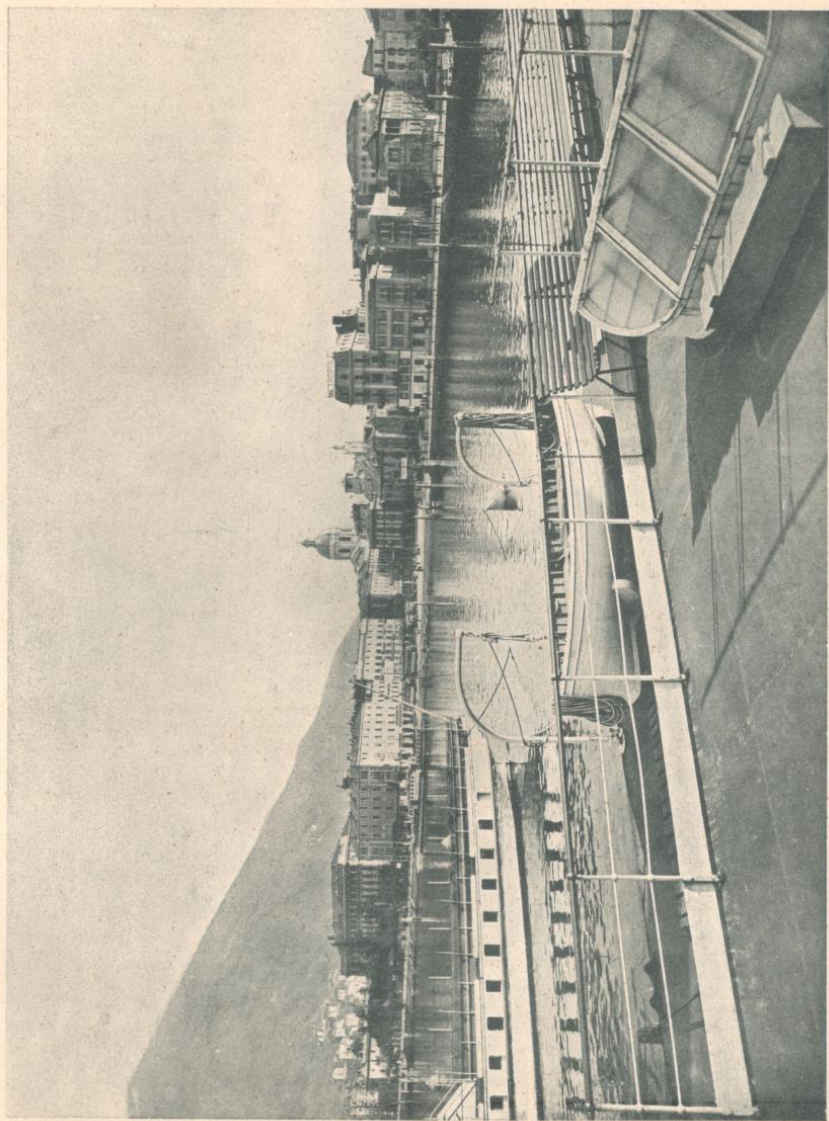
cut the trembling waters, ruffled by the Brega, the local breeze, or was it the old Lario trembling with emotion at the presence of the Royal visitor?



Borgo Vico and the Olmo recall other Royal visitors such as Napoleone Bonaparte and Ferdinand I. On 27th Prairiale of the first year of liberty (June 17th 1797) the commander of



COMO - The Cathedral and Broletto



COMO - CAVOUR SQUARE



The first steamboat on the Lake of Como

ged into a pleasant resort for the citizens, who flock there on holidays.

A steep funicular ascends to Mt. Brunate near the entrance of the park. From there one enjoys a magnificent panorama extending far over the Lombard Plain which is so picturesque, and on clear days Milan can be seen in the distance. During the winter season an early morning ascension passing over the sea of fog that surrounds the lake and the underlying city is a strange and wonderful sight. Then the mountain top seems like a great rock in a stormy sea; over our heads the sun is shining in the clear blue sky, at our feet is a wavy bed of whitish fog that separates us

It is at this end of the lake that the regatta and motorboat-races take place every year. The "Società Canottieri del Lario," so well known for its fame achieved in the international boat races, offers to its sister societies of the whole world one of the best stretches of water for the chivalrous competitions.

In the magnificent park the local tennis club has arranged excellent courts. Facing it is the beautiful civil park of the Villa Margherita, which stretches as far as Geno. Here the ex-Villa Cornaggia Medici is chan-



H. M. The King getting off the steamer "Savola,"



COMO - A Corner of piazza Cavour



from the world like a curtain of vapour. Though we are only 700 metres above sea level, such is the effect as to give the illusion of being much higher. One has the sensation of having been carried to the other side of a partition that hides the human miseries, bringing one nearer to the peace of Heaven.



If the smiling village of Cernobbio is so closely united to Como as to form a continuation of the city, it is chiefly owing to Carolina Elizabeth of Brun-



COMO - Villa Olmo



COMO - Villa Olmo (inside)

swick-Wolfenbüttel, Princess of Wales and wife of George IV of England. She was not wanted as Queen by the Puritan nation, and therefore she chose for her residence the Villa that had been constructed by Tolomeo Gallo of Garrovo, calling it the Villa d'Este. She made the entrance more practicable by widening the road coasting the lake, which until then was steep and narrow.

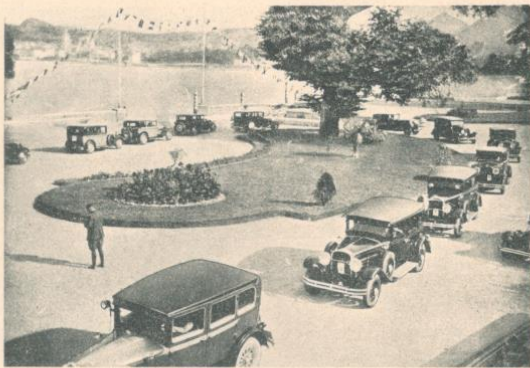
After the Princess's departure the Villa was left abandoned for many years, its ornaments decaying for want of care, so that tourists were moved to compassion at the sight of all this beauty being ruined for lack of care and someone to restore it. A restorer at last came upon the scenes, however, the benevolent Baron Ciani, to whom credit was given for having introduced the first bathing resorts on the lake. Here in the summer season flocked the best Lombard families to refresh and amuse themselves, and with this was refuted the belief that the water of the lake had not the beneficial effect of sea water. At



COMO - A Hall at Villa Olmo

this time the Councilor Frank manifested his desire that floating baths should be constructed, from which the people could receive much benefit and the country many visitors. In recent years bathing on the lake has greatly developed, but few remember that the initiative came from the restorer of the Villa d'Este in 1856.

On the slopes behind the Villa, some miniature fortifications can be seen which made us think of the tragedies of the long past Mediaeval Times but, they have nothing to do with them. They simply refer to a kind thought of the Countess Calderara for her husband, General Domenico Dino, "the first grenadier of the Cisalpine Republic," who found reproduced in his garden the fortifications



International motor-car competition - Villa Olmo (Summer 1929)



One of the swiftest racers at the Como motor-boat races
(Summer 1929)



M. Bernasconi of the "Lario," Rowing Club, winning the skiff
European championship (Villa Olmo - august 1927)



The motor-car race for the Alps Trophy at the Italo-Swiss frontier



COMO - Villa Margherita



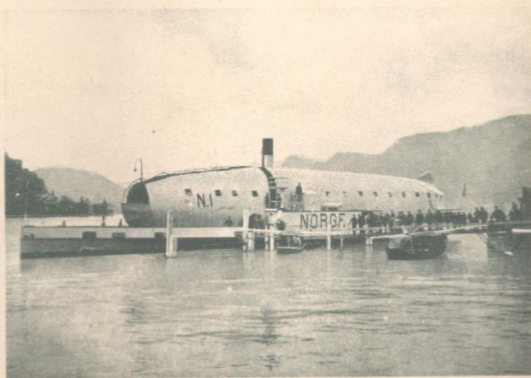
of Tarragona, in remembrance of his audacious deed in Spain. General Pino died in 1826, laden with honours, titles and pensions in his palace built with great expence and difficulty upon a marsh where now stands the magnificent Villa Erba.

Between these two splendid villas lies Cernobbio upon the lake shore, elegant, modern and conscious of its beauty, with well kept flower beds and little gardens dotted with flowers. It seems like a naïad arisen from the water to bask in the sun, fascinating with its beauty everyone that comes near.

Acting as a background is Mt Bisbino, one of the highest mountains (1339 metres). On its slopes lie the villages of Piazza and Rovenna.



Rope-Railway from Como to Brunate



Disguised boat during the festivals of September



Villa d'Este



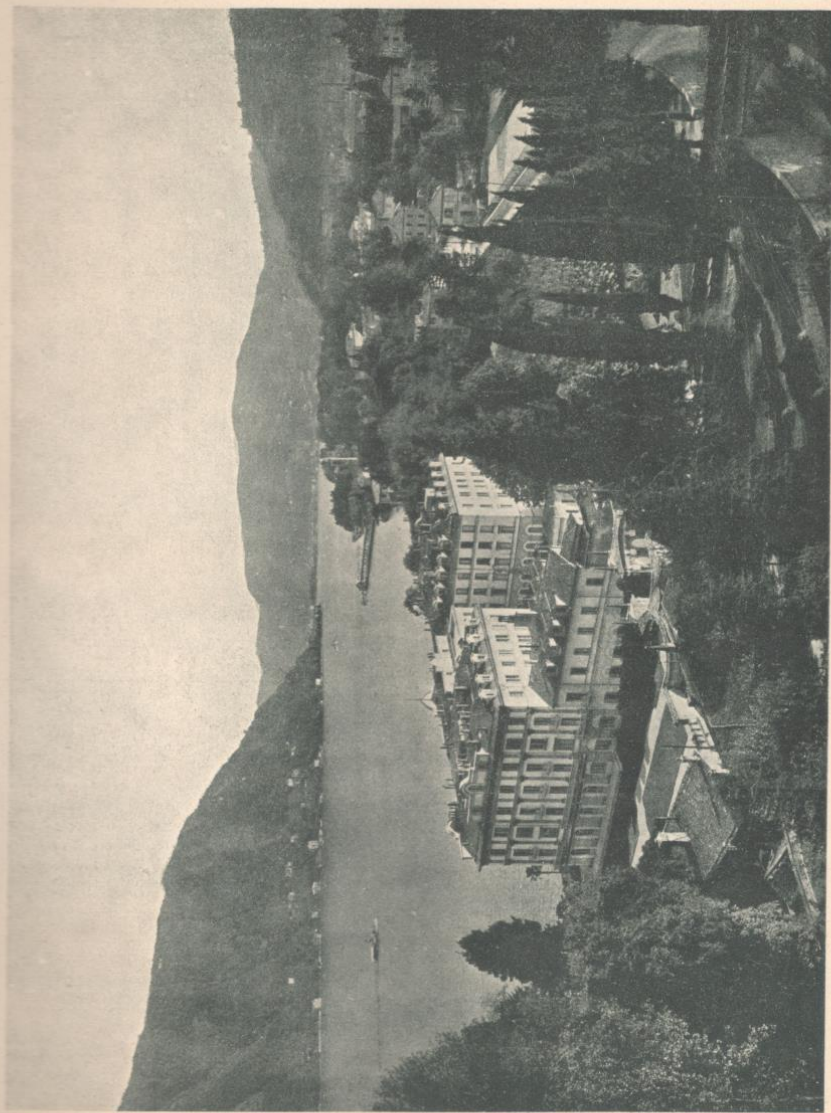
Before undertaking an excursion it is advisable to give a glance at the summit, which when covered with clouds announces coming rain.

*Corri a prendere l'ombrello
che Bisbino ha il suo cappello,*

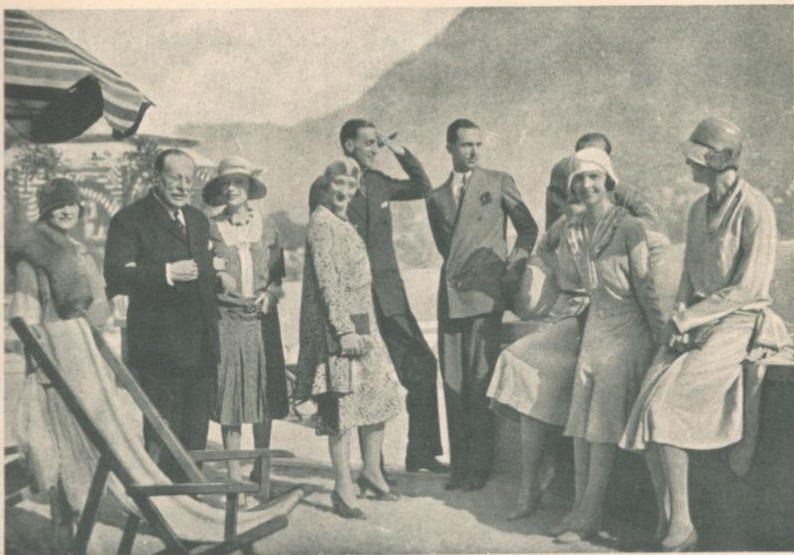


Bathing at Villa d'Este

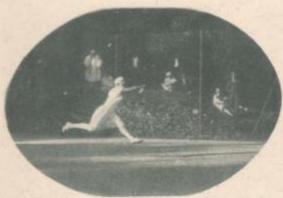




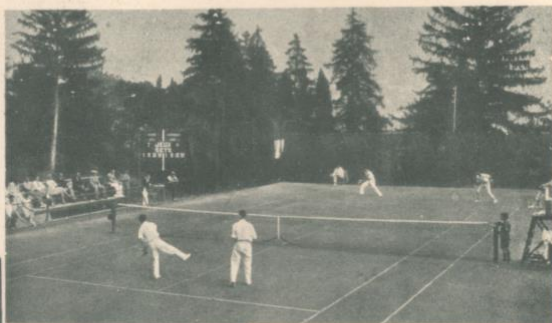
VIEW OF CERNOBBIO - VILLA D'ESTE



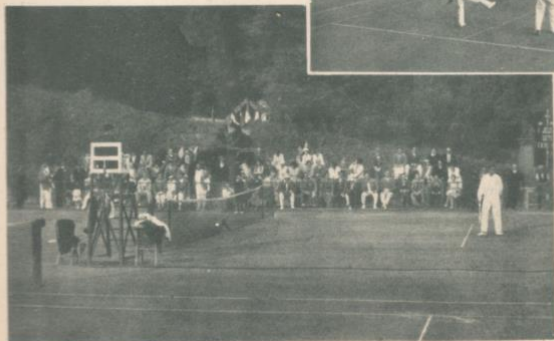
H. R. H. Prince Umberto on the terrace overlooking the lake at Villa d'Este



Susanne Lenglen at the International Tennis tournaments at Villa d'Este - 1929



International Tennis tournaments at Villa d'Este - 1929



Golf of G. A. Villa d'Este at Montorfano (18 holes)



On the border of a pine-grove



Five o' clock tea



H. R. H. Prince Umberto at the Anglo-Italian Golf meeting - sept. 1927



Mr. Gallaz and Mr. Boyer champions of Golf



Beginning a golf match

The point of Torno lies opposite Moltrasio closing the first basin of the lake. Torno with its houses gathered around the Lombard church of S. Tecla, with its picturesque portico, and its beautiful ST. Giovanni, where a nail from the cross is preserved, invites the dreamer to retire in its peaceful seclusion, which seems to have something almost mystical about it. It was not so peaceful in the XVth Century, however, when its woollen goods and its artistic tapestries were in demand by all Europe.

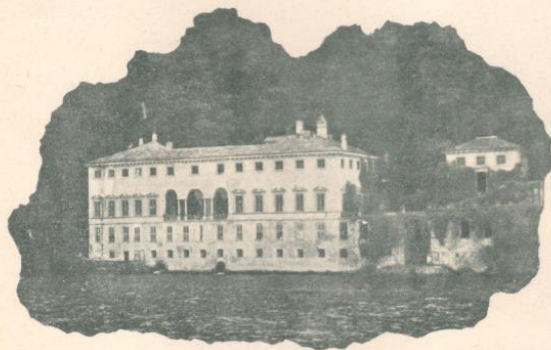
From Mt Piatto a magnificent view is gained, which repays a thousandfold the fatigue of the ascent through the pine trees.

A boat can be taken to visit the Villa Pliniana, where one arrives after a good hour's rowing. Here many tragic and sentimental memories can be recalled. It was erected by the Count Giovanni Anguissola, one of Pier Luigi Farnes'e murderers and derives its name of Pliniana from the curious intermittent fountain studied and described by Plinio the Naturalist.

Between Torno and Argegno the lake is bordered on either side by overhanging mountains, which give the surrounding country an aspect of majestic grimness. To these the Valley of Nesso ascends in the direction of Zelfio to the Plan of Tivano and Mt St. Primo (1686 metres)



Pliny the Younger
(from an engraving of the XVI Century)



Pliny's Villa

*" I lidi ancora
suonano Plinio e il fortunato
ingegno;
e' memoria di lui serba la fonte „*

G. BERTHET

the highest point of the Larian peninsular. To the West the Valley of Intefvi so renowned for its picturesque view and appreciated as a spa for cures and a holiday resort, joins the Lake of Como to that of Lugano, covering the space between the Generoso and the Galbigea.

A useful provincial road, upon which runs omnibuses, leads to St. Fedele and Dellia as far as Lanzo. This is the most famous resort of the valley and from here the road leading to the summit of Mount Sighignola (1318 metres) from where a splendid panorama of all the villages of Lake Lugano can be admired, was opened by the Italian Touring Club in 1914.

To reach a more dominating point one has only to take the road leading to the "Belvedere,, from where the funicular railway ascends to St. Margherita.



SUMMER



Nesso, the church of Borgo and entrance to the Val d'Intelvi



Valle d'Intelvi - Lanzo

collaborating with them by nesting there and so creating an earthly paradise for hunters.

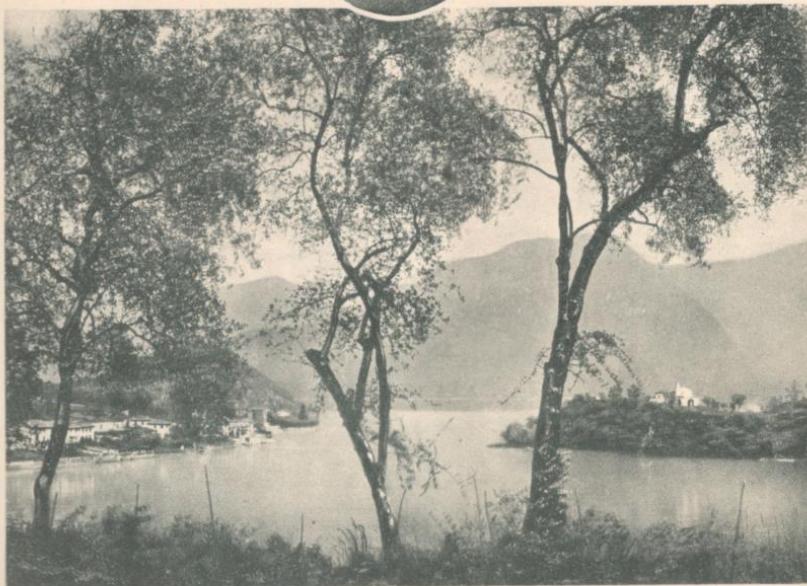


Valle d'Intelvi - Casasco



H. M. KING ALBERT OF BELGIUM,
QUEEN ELIZABETH AND PRINCE
LEOPOLD OF BRABANT ON BOARD

THE STEAMER "COMO,, ON A VISIT
TO THE COMACINA ISLAND
(APRIL 1st 1922).



AMID THE OLIVE-TREES FACING THE COMACINA ISLAND



The Comacina Island in the Middle Ages according to an old print

The historical "Isola Comacina", left as a legacy to H. M. King Albert of Belgium by the last owner Cav. Giuseppe Coprari. The King generously gave it to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Milan, who are transforming it into a resort for Italian, Belgian and other artists of the League of Nations.



Sanctuary of the Madonna del Soccorso



The Comacina Island and the Tower of St. Mary Magdalene's at Ospedaletto

take the name of Comacina and Tremezzina. Both are so rich in natural beauty that the artist and the poet are unable to decide on which to bestow the supremacy. Cardinal Durini called the former the "Lake of Venice," and the latter the "Lake of Diana," and so as to be able to admire them simultaneously at his ease, erected the Pavillion of Balbianello.

The fascination of the Comacina is increased by the only Island of the Lario, that protrudes from the waters of the gulf like an enormous cetacea. This is separated from the coast by a canal that Plinio called "Euripo gemmo," and baptizd by the inhabitants "zoca de l'oli," (oil concave) owing to the abundance of olives or the calmness of its waters.

The Tremezzina boasts many princely villas and magnificent hotels along its shore, and in the Spring and Autumn an elect cosmopolitan society flocks there. It is the favourite resort of the English and American tourists; was honoured by Queen Victoria, Longfellow and by Stendhal.

Behind the beautiful stretch of shore the country rises with a gentle slope forming a



Villa di Balbianello - Terrace



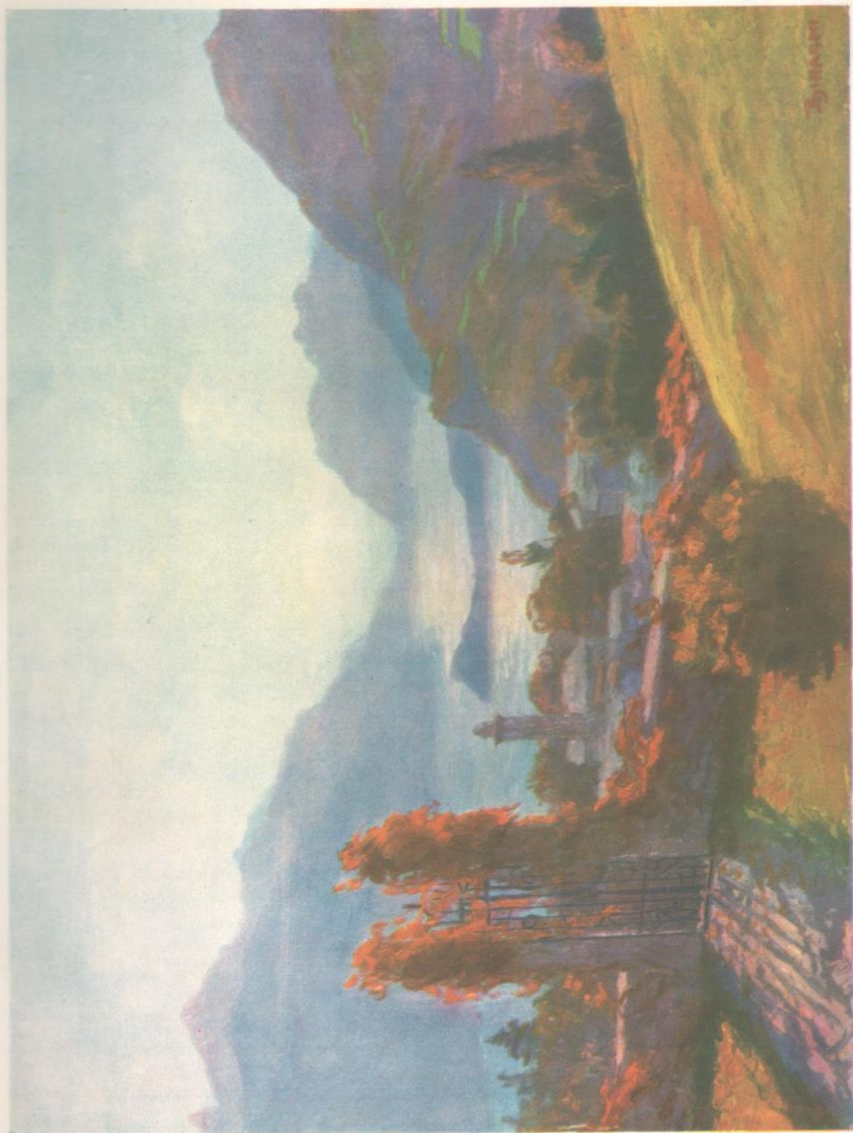
Villa di Balbianello - Landing-place

great amphitheatre covered with villages, overlooked by sanctuaries and old convents, the destination of unforgettable excursions for those who wish to unite to the stupendous panorama the sensation that one feels when in front of works of art.

Rich flowers and rare plants that hang from the parapets of the villas make the air fragrant with perfume and give one the impression of being on the Ligurian Riviera instead of a Lombard Lake.

Now we arrive at the most marvellous part of the lake that is one of the most charming of Lombardy and also of the world: pure air, beautiful views, "cielo pericoloso alle vengine,, as Properzio said of Naples.

*Te più fausto il sol rimira,
o ridente Tremezzina,
l'aura mite che a te spira
della vita i gaudi affina:
tu c'inviti a puro gaudìo,
tu se' il nido degli amor.*



AUTUMN

1911



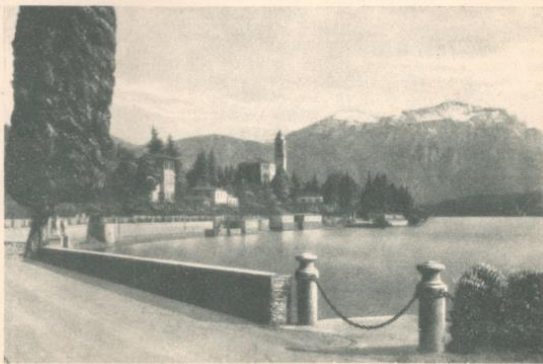
Coast of Tremezzo

The villages are arranged in two groups. Midway upon the slopes are meadows, vineyards and olive groves, and the villages of Acquafredda, Mezzegra, St. Antonio, Bolzanico, Viano, Bologno, Susino, and Roghero. At the foot upon the diluvium of ancient floods, covered with rich vegetation stands Lenno, Portezza, Azzano, Bolvedro, St. Lorenzo, Tremezzo, Cadenabbia and Malolica, mirrored in the beautiful expanse of the lake.

It is the series of gardens clothed in evergreens, rose bushes, oleanders, magnolia trees and exhaling the perfume of myrtles and cedars that forms the chief beauty. Cottages, whose external appearance is not less admirable than their interior comfort, increase day by day, and the ground not being sufficient, intrude upon the lake.

Poetry cannot suffice to describe all the wondrous of this paradise. Here doctors send into convalescence patients whom they have saved from death, or those for whom they can find no remedy. Many people seek here rest and forgetfulness from the bustle of the city, and learned men come to carry out some toilsome work.

Here everything attracts and satiates the senses. Every day new scenes appear in their different forms, for the sun never illuminates the mountain in the morning or colours it in the evening in the same way; never



Along the Lake at Tremezzo



Tremezzo - Promenade along the lake

Villa Carlotta is really the Queen of the Larian villas, constructed between Tremezza and Cadenabbia in the year 1747 by the Marquis Giorgio Clerici, the clerical president of the Lombard Senate.

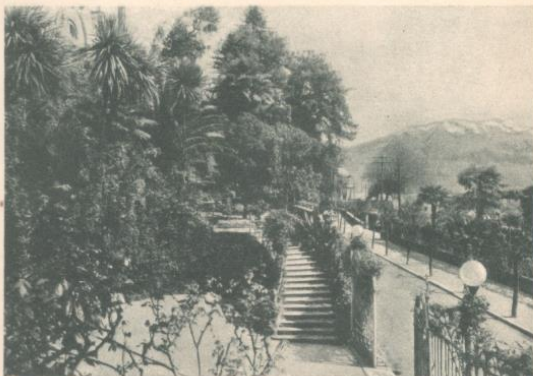
The great American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow got the inspiration for some of his best verses here.

By Sommariva's garden gate

I make the marble stairs my seat

And hear the water as I wait

Lapping the steps beneath my feet



A garden in full bloom at Tremezzina



Cadenabbia - Landing stage

do the clouds appear the same; the landscape changes, not only every day, but every hour; and the moon reappears later every evening from a different point in the circle of the mountains, giving a different aspect to the magnificent picture of which it is the lamp.

The man who best explains himself in this way is the severe author of the "Storia Universale", the illustrious Cesare Cantù, who seduced by the enchantment of this riviera forgets the historical importance to become a poet.

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*The undulation sinks and swelles
Along the stony parapets,
And far away the floating bells
Tinkle upon the fishers nets.*

*Silent and slow, by tower and town
The freighted barges come and go
Their pendent shadows gliding down
By town and tower submerged below.*

*The hills sweep upward from the shore
With villas scattered one by one
Upon their wooded spurs, and lower
Bellagio blazing in the sun.*



Cadenabbia - Protestant Church

*And dimly seen, a tailed mass
Of walls and woods, of light
and shade,
Slands beckoning up the Stelvio Pass
Varenna, with its white cascade.*

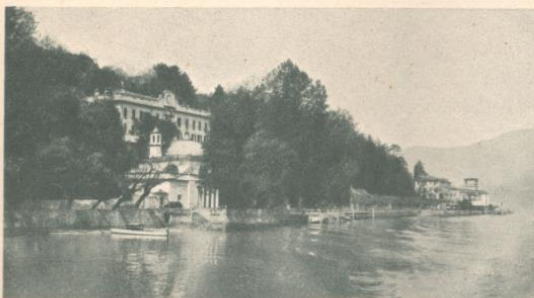
*I ask myself, is this a dream?
Will it all vanish into air?
Is there a land of such supreme
And perfect beauty anywhere?*

Whoever visits the Villa Carlotta cannot remain indifferent before the magnificent architecture of its edifice, at the superb base-relief by Taraldsen and the statues of Canova which adorn the vestibule, to the many precious paintings hanging in the apartments. But whoever happens to be there in May is sure to clap his hands like a child at the sight of the sea of azaleas in full bloom, that in the glory of the sun suddenly appear at the end of the avenue in front of him.

Spring changes the garden into a great basket of flowers.



Cadenabbia - La Malinca



Tremezzina - Villa Carlotta

The thick high bushes that cover the slope of the mountain seem like coloured torrents that descend to the blue surface of the lake to offer it a tribute of beauty and perfume at the awakening of nature.

This avenue of azaleas is rightly considered to be the most precious ornament of the Villa. It was cultivated with great difficulty upon the slope of the mountain in such a manner as to be nearly flat and not to hide the view of Bellagio, Mt St Primo and the villages of Varenna, Bellano and the region of the Fiume Lario with the Grigna and the Legnone in the background.

It was the Duke George of Saxe-Meiningen who enriched the "new garden," that is - the portion of the park that stands over the "Viale dei Platani" (Valley of Plantains) making the mansion, that his wife Carlotta had received as a wedding present from her mother Marianna-Alberta of Prussia, most fascinating.



Tremezzina - Villa Carlotta

Stendhal, alias Henry Boyle, of Grenoble, wished that Granta and Cadenabbia should act as the setting for some of the most interesting scenes of his novel "La Chateuse de Porme...". He speaks thus in describing one of his scenes: "situé dans une position peutêtre unique au



Villa Carlotta - "Cupid and Psyche" by A. Canova

monde, sur un plateau à cent cinquante pieds au-dessus de ce lac sublime dont il domine une grande partie...

Boyle, like Longfellow received inspiration from Lake Como for the composition of the best of his pages and chooses the most picturesque spots as settings for his actors: "ces lieux enchanteurs voisins de Granta, si célébrés par les voyageurs. He loves Italy tenderly, especially, the Lombard region; his imagination

"est touchée par le son lointain de la cloche de quelque petit village caché sous les arbres; ces sons, portés sur les eaux qui les adoucissent, prennent une teinte de douce mélancolie et de résignation, et semblent dire à l'homme: La vie s'enfuit, ne te montre donc point si difficile envers le bonheur qui se présente, hâte-toi d'en jouir..."

These hills of admirable shape that descend to the lake with such a peculiar inclination, recall all the descriptions by Tasso and Ariosto. Here everything is pleasant and of noble aspect, everything speaks of love and nothing recalls the deceptfulness of civilisation. The villages situated on the slopes are hidden amongst the old trees and above them stand out the fine architectural steeples.

Over the hills, on whose summits arise hermitages that everyone would like to inhabit, the chain of the Alps covered in snow, can be seen with the naked eye. On the other side of the lake stands the Villa Melzi, and over it the sacred woods of the Stendrali and the noble promontory that separates the two arms of the lake, that of Como which is so charming, and that of Lecco which is so severe in beauty. It is a sublime and gracious panorama, that the most renowned places of the world, such as the Bay of Naples, equal but do not surpass.



Tremezzina - Entrance gate at Villa Carlotta



Villa Carlotta - Terrace

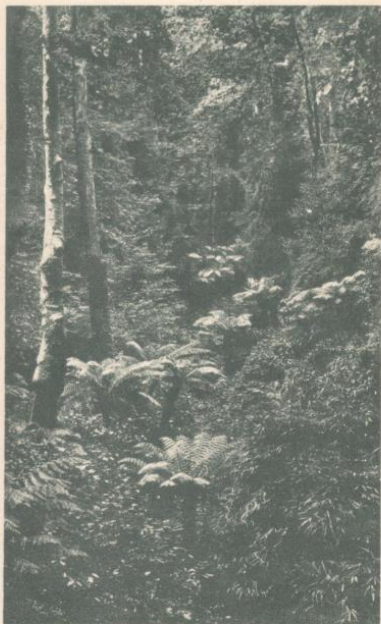
Bellagio, "the pearl of the Lario", crowned in green by the woods of the Villa Serbelloni, was also considered the best of the Larian resorts. To-day more than one village is a flourishing little city, furnished with every comfort to satisfy the needs of even the most scrupulous tourist, but Bellagio fears no comparison with the most renowned holiday resorts of Europe. Its position offers one



Tremezzo and Villa Carlotta

of the most splendid views in the world. Below, the three branches of the lake join and the mountains around seem to form a crown in their solemn majesty; resembling an assembly of giants around a jewel. The poet Sigismondo Boldoni di Bellano in the 16th Century described it thus:

*" Da tre lati fremendo il flutto gira
Breve istmo il giunge, d'orti ameni ornato
Fa ghirlanda al bel giogo e lo circonda
Di cipressi e d'allori eterna fronda ..*



Villa Carlotta - The fern dale

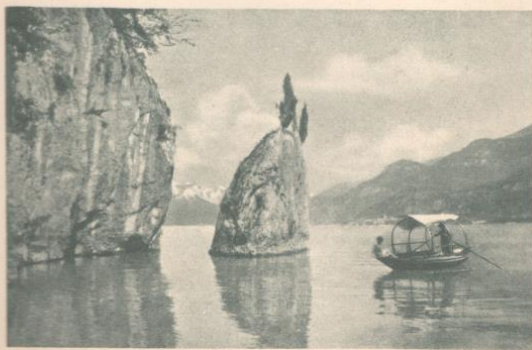


BELLAGIO

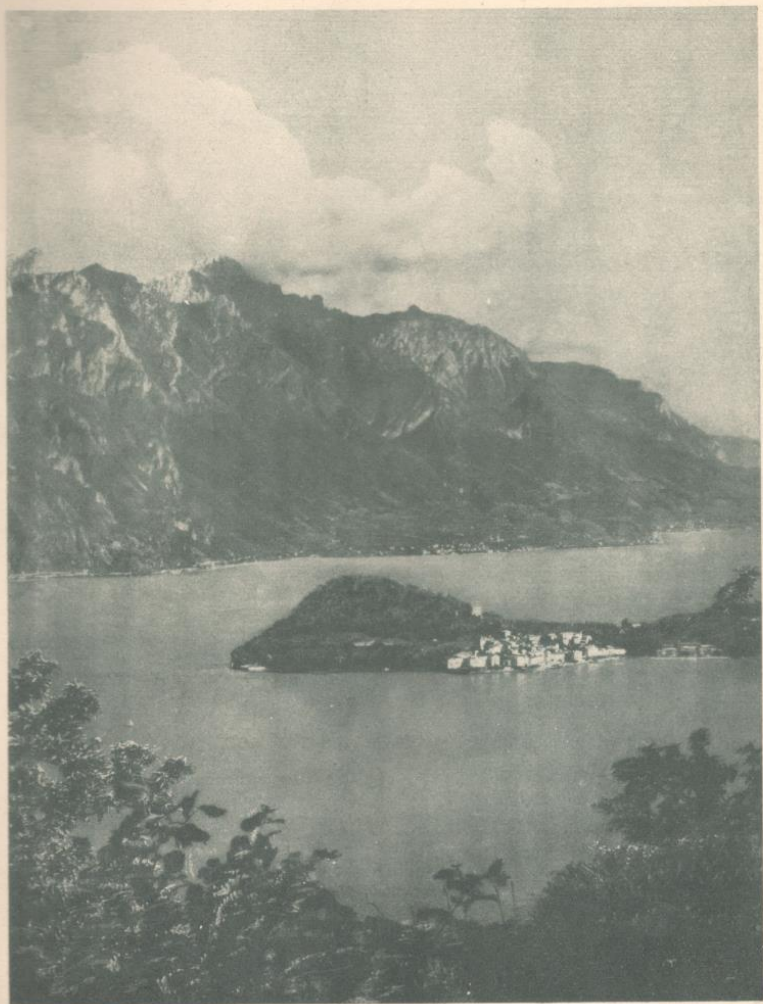
Here awe and beauty are united; impassable rocks and terrible precipices contrast with marvellous gardens, the pride and delight of patricians, who for many centuries, have spent on them large sums of money and great care.

The fascination of this promontory attracted the attention of Plinio Cecilio, who built his villa,

"La Tragedia," here. Many sovereigns such as Teodorico, King, of the Goths, Liutprand, King of the Longobards, the Emperor Maximilian and Lodovico il Moro, came to live here. In more recent times we find Ferdinand I with the Empress Marianna Carolina of Savoy, relatives and guests of the Duke Melzi, in the year 1838. Vittorio Emanuele II, the father of the country, invited William I, "il Vittorioso," (the victorious), to partake in one of the most delightful periods of the new reign, when the King of Prussia came to Milan to meet him in 1875. Lastly the Crown Prince Umberto with his Consort Queen Margherita took part in one of the greatest banquets that have ever been organised in this region.



Pictureque rock near Bellagio



THE PROMONTORY OF BELLAGIO



A garden at Bellagio

To-day the hotel industry has added to the artistic and natural attractions of Bellagio all the modern comfort and amusements that have become necessary to the present world. The rich and prominent aristocrats, and the intellectual and political persons who flock there place it in the foreground of the tourist centres of Europe. It often happens in the busy season that under the porticos, along the shore or in the elegant shops, we pass unconsciously a prince, a writer or an artist whose name is known to all the world.



The promontory of Bellagio and Villa Serbelloni

Menaggio and Varenna are the columns of Ercole of the upper lake. Here the country becomes still more fascinating. There are many terrible stories and poetical legends woven around the ruins of the old castles, which date from feudal times and are the remains of a past of strife and warfare. There is the Tower of Vezio, where queen Teodafinda is supposed to have died; there is Musso's Cliff, that from the times of the Goths to those of the Spanish, terrorised the vil-



The American author Mac Grath and the movies artist Adolph Menjou at Villa Serbelloni

cheese industry. From Dervio one ascends to Mt. Legnone and to the cone shaped Legnoncino, an interesting excursion for tourists. From Menaggio a good road and railway leads to Lake Plano, to Porlezza and thence to the Valley of Cavargna.

At the extreme end where the Adda widens out to become a lake, Sorrido, Gravedona and Dongo once formed the strong Republic of the Tre Pievi, advance bulwarks against the invasions

lagers and kept the most powerful of men occupied; there is the Castle of Rezzonico where a beautiful prisoner of a jealous husband used to tell the swallows her sorrows, according to the story of Tommaso Grossi.

*Rondinella pellegrina,
Che ti posi sul verone
Ricantando ogni mattina
La tua flebile canzone
Che puoi dirmi in tua favella
Pellegrina rondinella?*

Bellano, with its Orrido, formed by the falling of the torrent of Plovena, stands at the entry of Valsassina, famous from the days of the Crusades. To-day it is renowned for its



ON THE BEACH AT BELLAGIO



General view of Menaggio

The Lecco branch cannot be better described than by repeating the words of Alessandro Manzoni: "Quel ramo del lago di Como che volge a mezzogiorno fra due catene non interrotte di monti, tutti a seni ed a golfi a seconda dello sporgere e del rientrare di quelli, vien quasi ad un tratto a restringersi e a prendere corso e figura di fiume tra un promontorio a destra e un'ampia costiera dall'altra parte; e il ponte che ivi congiungono le due rive pare che renda ancora più sensibile all'occhio questa trasformazione e segni il punto in cui il lago cessa e l'Adda ricomincia, per ripigliare poi nome di lago dove le rive, allontanandosi di nuovo, lasciano l'acqua distendersi e rallentarsi in nuovi golfi e in nuovi seni..."

Those who have read Manzoni's "Promessi Sposi" (The Betrothed) and Grossi's "Marco Visconti", will be reminded of the romantic events described by these two famous authors when visi-



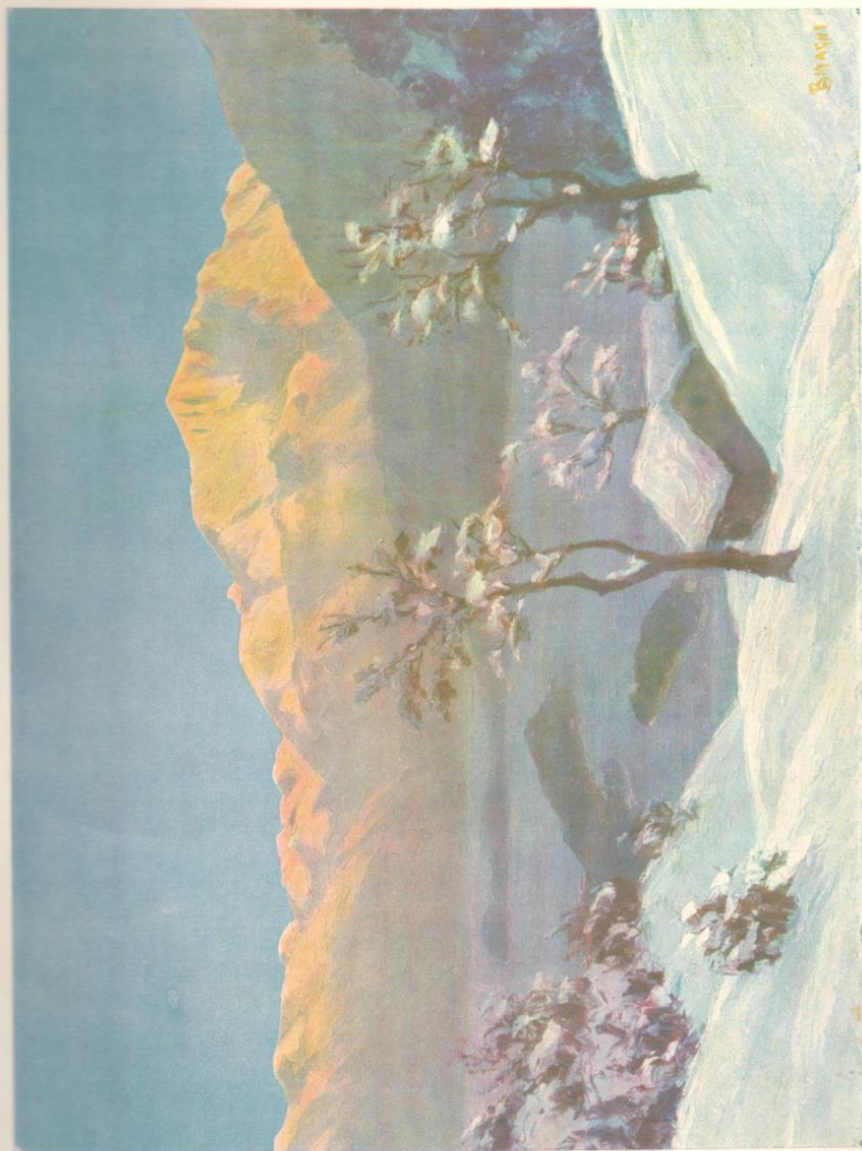
Sunshine and youth



Menaggio-Porto Cervo railway

of the Grigioni. Gravedona, the capital of the northern part of the lake, boasts the Palace of the Quattro Torre (Four Tower) and the ancient church of St. Maria of Tiglio. Colico, an important transit centre, being at the mouth of the valley formed by the Stelvio and the Spluga, contains the ruins of the fortress of Fuentes and the ancient Abbey of Plona.

ting this branch of the lake, Lecco stands at the other end where the Lario becomes a river again. It is a flourishing industrial city and a rival of its sister Como, not only in natural beauties, but in the progress it has made during the last fifty years. When one thinks that Manzoni called it "un borgo che s'avvia a diventare città"; (a town on the way to become a city) one marvels how the prophecy of the romantic writer should have been fulfilled in so short a time. Lecco deserves all the tourist's attention for its



SHAGGY

WINTER



View of Porlezza



Church of Porlezza

souvenirs of the past, for its picturesque position, and for the excursions that can be taken from here to the highest summits of the mountains around. The Valsassina, the Grigna, Resegone, Mt. Barro and the St. Martino, offer splendid sport to lovers of mountaineering. Those who prefer to follow in the path of "Renzo", letting their fancy roam among the memories of Manzoni, will find in the convent of Descarenico the serene figure of "Padre Cristoforo", over Somasca "a cavaliere d'una valle angusta ed uggiosa", the ruins of an old castle will speak of the "Innominato", while in all the barges that glide over the water gurgling through the eleven arches of the bridge of Azzoni Visconti, they will see Lucia Mondella's serious face, framed by its characteristic head dress, turning sadly towards her native village of Acquate. "Addio monti" sorgenti dalle acque, cime ineguali e distinte "note solo a chi è cresciuto tra voi..."

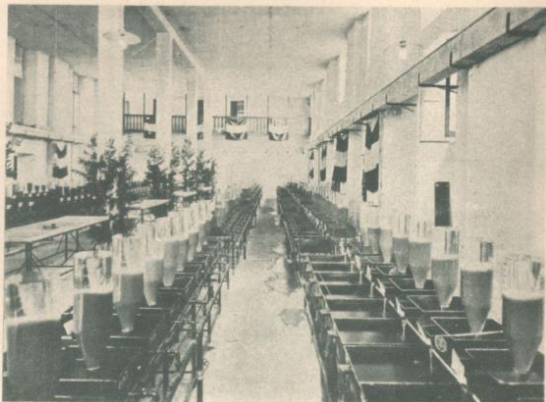


The Lario therefore owes its universal renown to its beauty and grandeur in places where the imagination is awakened at the sight of the historical remains which relate its ancient history. But these attractions would no longer be sufficient in themselves to maintain its reputation if good roads and modern hotels were not in continual construction, making the country ideal as a holiday resort and spa for effecting cures.

Only a hundred years have passed since one road only, the ancient Via Regia, coasted the Western Riviera from Como to Sorico. This road was narrow and difficult

and in some places even dangerous. Before the steam navigation began in 1826, rowing boats were the safest means for those who wished to travel on the lake. To-day cars can run comfortably along the roads which enter the valleys joining Como and Lecco, crossing the fertile hills of the Brianza, so dear to the Milanese aristocracy for their summer vacation. There is a well organised charabanc service which runs punctually and rapidly along these roads, which have a panoramic character. The scenery is always new and varied, so that travelling is a pleasure. By water the steamers of the Lariana Company receive many passengers, who can enjoy the natural beauties of the voyage in comfort, while a ferry-boat from Cadenabbia, Bellagio and Varenna is very convenient for private cars touring round the lake.

The hotels of the Lario are almost innumerable, and vary from the most luxurious to the most modest, but all compete in catering for the comfort and amusement of the guests. Whoever wishes to pass a few idle weeks in perfect tranquillity amidst the beauties of nature, should choose one of the little inns that lie hidden in the woods; whoever wishes for modern luxury should choose one of the great hotels frequented by the aristocracy. A warm welcome is everywhere given to the tourist, and he will go away with an unforgettable memory of his visit to the Lario, and of the hours passed on the Lombard Lake.



Incubation-room in the factory of Mr. De Marchi
for the improvement of fish-culture



View of Lecco with Mount Resegone

Picturesque costumes of Brianza



During the day, fast motorboats will take the visitor to see the principal curiosities, and to admire the artistic views of the lake; while the evening will pass all too quickly in concerts, dances and other pastimes while, in the month of September especially, attract numerous visitors. Lovers of tennis and golf will find modernly equipped courts and courses.

But the Lario is not only renowned as a holiday resort but as a place of cure for physical and mental diseases, since it has a climate which the doctors recommend. The quiet and the calmness that reign on its banks, the healthy pastimes of rowing and mountaineering, the abundance and the quality of its mineral waters and the mild climate, make it such, that all the year round it is favourable to those who seek health and solitude under the Larian sky.

January is beautiful in the sunny Tremezzina protected from the winds of the mountains, while in July the air is fresh in the valleys amidst the thick woods of pines and chestnuts; but in May



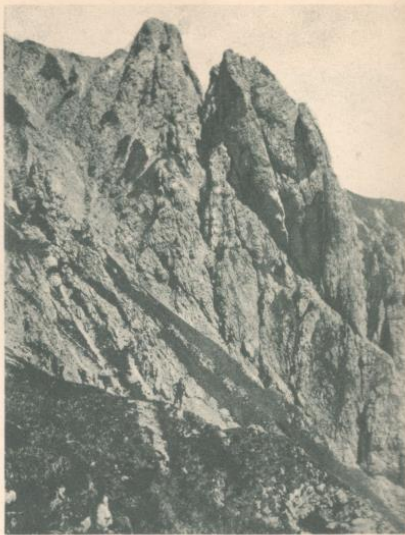
Roseng Peak m. 3936 (Bernina)



Towards Roseng Peak m. 3936 (Bernina)



Punta Sertori m. 3032 (Gruppo Badile)



Torroni Magnagli m. 2078 (Grigna Meridionale)



A field for winter sports - Monte S. Primo (m. 1200)

and September it acquires a most fascinating aspect. In these months, the gardens, transformed into beautiful bouquets of many coloured flowers, send forth a delicious perfume. In the evening the mountains stand out in the darkness in contrasting colours, which the lake reflects, and this scene of undescrivable beauty makes even the simplest of men poet.

It is the old Lario singing the eternal glory of the Creator, in a setting of such marvellous beauty that it made Virgil exclaim: "Tu sei il più grande, o principe dei laghi! Te l'ari maxime..."

AUGUSTO GIACOSA

THE BEST HOTELS ON THE LAKE OF COMO

Como

HOTEL METROPOLE SUISSE ALBERGO S. GOTTARDO
HOTEL VOLTA ALBERGO BARCHETTA
ALBERGO FIRENZE

Cernobbio

GRAND HOTEL VILLA D'ESTE

Moltrasio

HOTEL VILLA REGINA

Torno

ALBERGO VAPORE

Tremezzo

GRAND HOTEL TREMEZZO HOTEL BAZZONI DU LAC
HOTEL VILLA CORNELIA HOTEL HELVETIA

Lenno

HOTEL S. GIORGIO

Varenna

HOTEL MILANO ALBERGO SOLE

Valle Intelvi

ALBERGO BELLA VISTA - LANZO ALBERGO FUNICOLARE - LANZO
ALBERGO MILANO HOTEL VILLA VIOLET

Cadenabbia

HOTEL BELLE VUE HOTEL VITTORIA
HOTEL BRITANNIA HOTEL BELLE ILE

Gravedona

HOTEL ITALIA

Menaggio

HOTEL VICTORIA GRAND HOTEL MENAGGIO
HOTEL DE LA GARE

Brunate

ALBERGO PARADISO

Bellagio

GRAND HOTEL BELLAGIO HOTEL FIRENZE
HOTEL GRANDE BRETAGNE HOTEL GENAZZINI
HOTEL VILLA SERBELLONI HOTEL SUISSE
HOTEL SPLENDEDE HOTEL MONTE S. PRIMO

Argegno

HOTEL BELVEDERE

Grandola

GOLF HOTEL MIRAVALLE

Azzano

HOTEL MILANO

Loveno

ALBERGO PENSIONE LOVENO

ARTI GRAFICHE
TESTONI & C.
COMO-MILANO