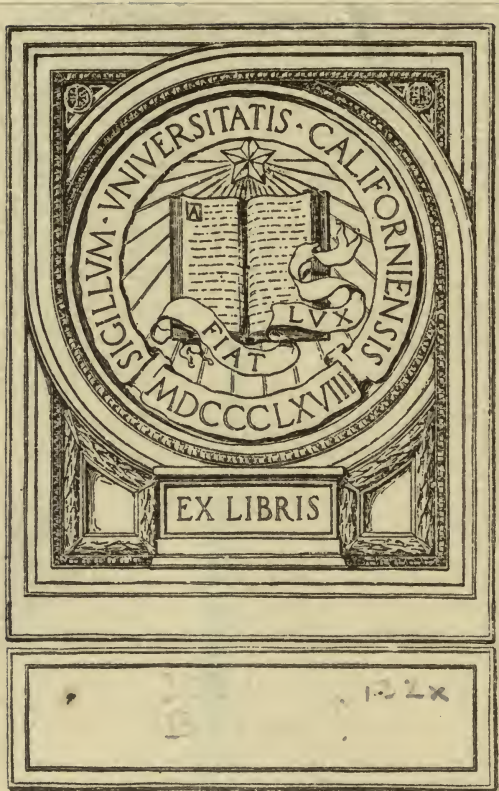


American House Building
in
Messina and Reggio

Reginald Rowan Belknap



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Frontispiece

GENERAL VIEW FROM THE CENTRE OF THE REGGIO VILLAGE, LOOKING SOUTH

American House Building in Messina and Reggio

An Account of the American Naval and Red Cross
Combined Expedition, to Provide Shelter for
the Survivors of the Great Earthquake of
December 28, 1908

By

Reginald Rowan Belknap

Lieutenant-Commander, United States Navy, late Naval Attaché
to the American Embassy at Rome

With 50 Illustrations

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1910

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1908 a

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BY
REGINALD ROWAN BELKNAP



The Knickerbocker Press, New York

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To

MY DEVOTED COLLEAGUE OF THE

ROYAL ITALIAN NAVY

TENENTE DI VASCELLO

CAVALIERI ALFREDO BROFFERIO

AS A MEMORIAL OF OUR SERVICE TOGETHER IN ROME, NAPLES, THE

U. S. S. *Celtic*, MESSINA, REGGIO-CALABRIA, VILLAGGIO

REGINA ELENA, ZONA CASE AMERICANE-MOSELLA

SBARRE-CALABRIA, ALI, SCALETTA, ROC-

CALUMERA, PALMI DISTRICT

AND CATANIA

263799

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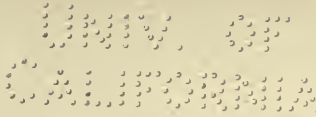
MESSAGE TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
FROM COLONEL THEODORE
ROOSEVELT

BEFORE leaving Messina I desire to say that I am sure the American people do not realize the splendid work which is being done in Messina and Reggio with the lumber sent from the United States. I have visited the American camp and seen the two hundred and fifty houses already completed and arrangements perfected for the rapid construction of twelve hundred and fifty more. The whole work is under the general direction of Ambassador Griscom, and the organization has been created and perfected by Lieutenant Commander Belknap, Naval Attaché of the Embassy, with the assistance of Lieutenant Buchanan, Ensigns Wilcox and Spofford, Doctor Donelson, and Paymaster Rogers, with forty enlisted men of our Navy and a number of stalwart American carpenters. In addition there is a fine group of generous Americans, such as John Elliott, Winthrop Chanler,

xii Colonel Roosevelt's Message

Jerome Brush, and Robert Hale, who are giving their time and energies to help a philanthropic work. I wish to say that I consider the American people deeply indebted to each and every one of these men. I cannot exaggerate how much pleasure it gave me to see the officers and enlisted men of our Navy adapting themselves to strange and unexpected circumstances and successfully performing with ability and thorough good-will a most difficult task. Our nation can well be proud of them.

**American House Building in
Messina and Reggio**



American House-Building Work in Messina and Reggio

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

TRAVELLERS in the Mediterranean whose tours lead them to Calabria and Sicily, or who pass through the Straits of Messina on their way to Egypt or the Syrian coast, will doubtless still find interest in the scenes of the terrible earthquake of December, 1908, in that region; and those whose desire for closer observation leads them to visit some of the places of the worst destruction, may also have the satisfaction of seeing there something of the work of recovery and restoration, in which the relief contributed by the Americans had a considerable share.

As all approach to Sicily must be by sea, passengers arriving from the north who are

on deck early may see, on the right hand as the steamer enters the harbor of Messina, standing out prominently on the slope of a hill, at the foot of which lie the ruins of a large church, San Salvatore dei Greci, a group of white buildings with red roofs. This is the Elizabeth Griscom Hospital, built by the Americans and presented by our Ambassador to Her Majesty Queen Elena, as one of the gifts of the American Red Cross. Below and on either side of this hospital lie compact and orderly rows of white cottages, those to the left also built by the Americans; those to the right by the Italian working party of seamen and soldiers, under the leadership of Captain Bignami, a naval constructor.

Higher up on the hill, back of the Italian cottages, stands the residence of the former owner of the ground on which these cottages have been erected. His villa is silent and empty, with doors and windows tight closed; the earthquake did it no injury, but all the family were spending the holidays in Messina, and perished.

This new settlement is known as Villaggio Regina Elena, where work was begun by the Italians on January 8th, at the instance of Her Majesty, who has ever since retained an



VIEW OF THE HOSPITAL FROM SEA-WARD

active and intimate connection with the growth and life of the village, and intends to keep it under her protecting oversight.

As the steamer proceeds into the harbor, the ruins stand out in all their ugliness; but now they are fringed with the reviving course of everyday life. The busiest stream leads one out to the southward, through the broad main street, Viale San Martino; and as one passes the last ruined house, the newly constructed habitations in Messina proper begin. This ground was formerly a lemon grove, but is now laid out in regular streets and blocks, like any newly opened suburban district in America. On either side of the main street are the houses—all of the same type—built by contract under the Italian authorities, in small sections, by co-operative societies of Turin, Lombardy, Venice, etc. This type of house is a long wooden building showing eight doors on the street, with four pairs of rooms inside, each pair having an interior door, two rooms so connected composing one dwelling. In the rear, small kitchen-L's are attached, their walls, floors, and fireplaces being of brick. Each group of these houses consists of two such large, four-family houses, back to back, with a

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shorter, two-room house, for one family, at each end, so that each group built around a central court houses ten families.

Going farther, to a distance of about one mile from the harbor, one crosses a newly built concrete bridge, thrown over the storm water runway called the *Torrente Zaera*. The contractor who built this bridge knew America well, and his card still bore a New York telephone number of the Gramercy Exchange. He had been engaged at Annapolis on some of the new buildings for the Naval Academy, a few years before.

This bridge connects the American section to the city of Messina proper, the octroi limits being formerly marked by the *Torrente Zaera*, along which ran a high, strong wire-mesh fence. Crossing the bridge, one sees a marked change in the street scenes, the appearance of some of the cottages nestling under the big mulberry trees in some corners suggesting a New England village. These cottages, too, as well as those first seen down the harbor, are painted white, with green doors and green trimmings around the windows, and a brick-colored streak around the base. The sides are of the familiar weatherboarding, and the windows and doors are of



GENERAL VIEW OF VILLAGGIO REGINA ELENA, LOOKING OVER ITALIAN QUARTER TOWARDS HOSPITAL
In the upper right-hand corner is a villa which was uninjured by the earthquake, but whose owner with his family unfortunately was spending the Christmas holidays in Messina, all being killed.

unmistakable American manufacture. The house fronts sixteen feet on the street, running back twenty feet, with a partition dividing the interior into two rooms, each ten by sixteen feet. Thrown out in the rear is a kitchen-L, which has one side and one end of brick, making an angle in which is a brick fireplace of the kind common to the country, and the floor also is of brick. There is a window in the front of the house and one in the rear, and the kitchen has a window on one side and a half-door, half-window in the rear.

There are about fifteen hundred of these cottages in this locality, which is commonly known as Mosella; and this settlement contains also a group of larger buildings, consisting of two school-houses, a *laboratorio* or working-room, in which to give indoor relief employment, and a church built in the form of a Greek cross, with a building attached to it for a dormitory or such other uses as the service of the church may require. This group fronts on one side of a large space reserved as a piazza. Opposite is a still larger building, erected as a hotel, of a size large enough to accommodate one hundred guests or more, which is to be used, however, as a school instead.

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This American village, lying on fairly high ground, commands a beautiful view of the Straits and of the mountains of Calabria rising beyond. One can see from here the city of Reggio, on whose outskirts shines out another white village, similar to the one in Mosella, containing five hundred cottages. Seeking farther, one may find along the road to Taormina, distributed among six or seven other points, smaller groups of houses, in all numbering three hundred and fifty or more, of a little smaller size and different type, yet bearing the signs of American origin. On the Calabria side, in a district some fifteen or twenty miles from Reggio, about Palmi and Bagnara, are five hundred more of these smaller houses, scattered in groups of thirty to sixty, among nine or ten different towns and villages. This makes a total of about three thousand houses, material for which was contributed by the United States Government and the American Red Cross, shipped in five steamer cargoes from New York and New Orleans, and the greater part of it erected into houses, ready for occupancy, under the direction of the American construction party.

In all the places to which reference has been made, and a score of other towns and villages,



SOUTHERN HALF OF MESSINA

Photographed from the Italian civil engineers' plan, showing the ruined portion, unshaded, and the new territory, hitherto under cultivation, acquired for the relief constructions.

In the American Zone, each rectangle represents twelve cottages.

are numerous other newly built houses, the majority of which are of the Italian design, or so-called Simonetti, eight-room type, housing four families. In Messina, Reggio, and elsewhere are many other types—English, Norwegian, Swiss, Danish, German,—as well as of the builder's own fancy, impossible to classify. More than fifteen thousand houses were arranged for by the Italian Government, and still more were built on speculation, or by survivors able to provide their own.

Seeing these results, or hearing of their accomplishment amid the ruins of two populous cities and among a stricken and homeless people, may arouse some interest as to how this work was undertaken and carried through to a successful issue. Certainly to all those of the American construction party the undertaking was of a unique character—the work so novel in its every aspect as never to be forgotten. Construction work in a foreign country is of course no new thing for a contractor, but ours was not contract work, nor did it in most respects have a precedent.

Our purpose was not merely to build the houses, but to do all in such a way that the good feeling between the nations would be promoted. How we succeeded in the latter

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endeavor may be inferred from the cordiality of our relations, official and personal, with every one, throughout our stay in the earthquake region. Judging by their utterances and demonstrations to us, the words of Mayor Nathan at the Lincoln Dinner in Rome, shortly after the *Bayern* expedition, found an echo among the Messinese,—“It is not money for which we thank you but your personal service.”

CHAPTER II

PREPARATION FOR THE AMERICAN WORK

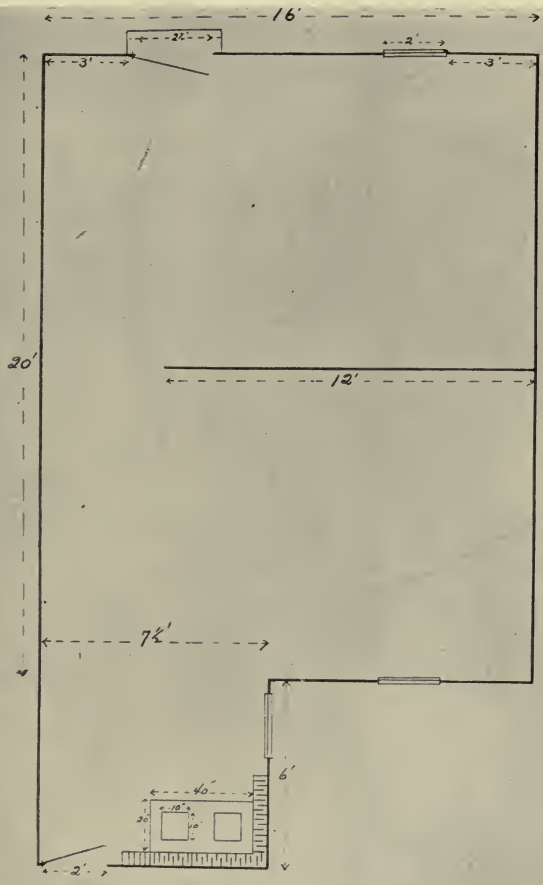
ABOUT the middle of January, the Italian Government having intimated to the United States Government that a gift of material for building houses would be more acceptable than the gift of five hundred thousand dollars which Congress had voted in relief, and the State Department having telegraphed Ambassador Griscom at Rome that four or five steamers were loading and would soon sail, Mr. Griscom detailed me to take charge of the matter, and at his request the Italian Government detailed one of their naval officers, Tenente di Vascello Alfredo Brofferio, to be my colleague. It was four weeks after the earthquake when Brofferio and I first met, and, as fast as information became available, we made such plans as were possible for conditions that changed from day to day. Reports from Messina and Reggio regarding the labor and transportation

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available were conflicting, and they changed from day to day; and, as no purchases nor definite arrangements could safely be made before the arrival of one of our steamers, our preliminary work was limited to obtaining all available information of what could be purchased in Naples, to supply the needs that might develop after we began work in Messina.

In New York, the four weeks following the order to purchase the house-building material must have been very busy ones. The whole matter had been placed by the Navy Department in the hands of Pay Inspector John A. Mudd, U. S. N., the Navy Purchasing Pay Officer at New York. Not only did he have to place all contracts, but he had in addition to approve the plans of the houses to be built, and to engage a number of carpenters to go out as superintendents of the erection work. Mr. Mudd acted with equal promptness and thoroughness, finding his chief carpenter immediately, and getting out his plans, estimates, and contracts in the space of two days. Four vessels at New York and one at New Orleans were chartered, and contracts let for about eleven million feet of lumber, doors, window sash, tools, nails, hardware, glass, roofing paper, wheel-barrows, shovels, picks,

Handwritten notes at the top of the page, including the number '17' and some illegible scribbles.



PLAN OF SINGLE HOUSE

SCALE. 1CM = 1 FT.

HOUSE PLAN

Corner houses had also two windows in the side on the street.

axes, fire-extinguishers, stationery, portable houses for use in the construction work—in fact, everything that would probably be required. All these preparations were made with such careful foresight that during our four months of work we found little need of supplementary purchases.

The steamers were loaded with all despatch, especially the first one, on which work went on day and night. On the 1st of February, after just two weeks of work in New York, this steamer sailed for Naples, thence as might be later ordered. She had on board material for five hundred cottages, with all accessories for the construction, and two of the seven American superintendent carpenters that Mr. Mudd had engaged. On the 10th of February the second steamer sailed, and the others during the succeeding few days, the last one on February 16th, four weeks after the order had been given to the New York Pay Office to make the necessary purchases.

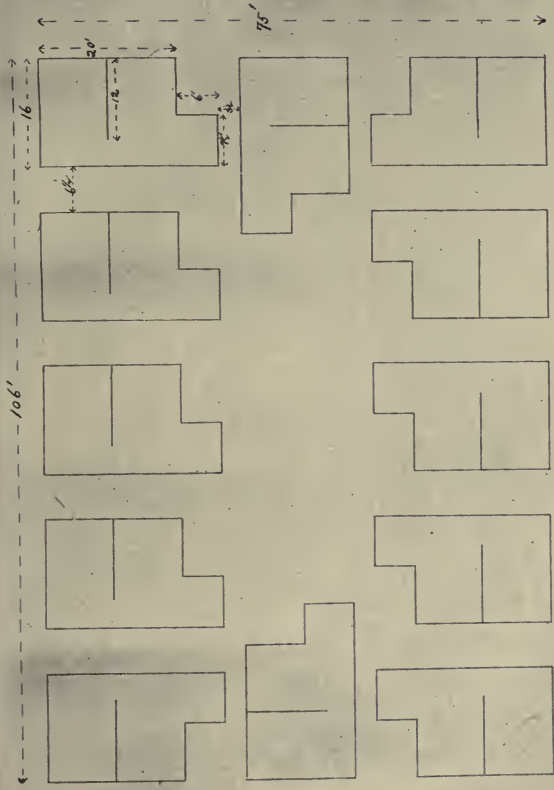
Meantime, the Navy Department in Washington had ordered the U. S. S. *Scorpion*, our station-ship at Constantinople, to proceed to Naples, for such assistance as she could render in this work; and the naval supply ship U. S. S. *Celtic* was placed at our disposal,

to carry the construction party down to Messina and establish it there. The *Celtic* had just returned to Naples, after a trip to various ports in the earthquake area, where she had delivered the supplies originally intended for our fleet, which was then in the Mediterranean, homeward bound from the Pacific.

As the *Celtic* steamed into the harbor of Messina, breaking out three large American flags at her mastheads as she let go her anchor, this display of bright bunting and her shining, clean, white sides made a very cheerful omen for the success of our prospective undertaking. "It is Washington's Birthday," was explained to the Italian officer who visited us, and the station ship *Dandolo* and other Italian naval vessels in port immediately hoisted their masthead flags, to share in our celebration.

Besides the *Celtic's* own complement, our party on board were myself, the representative of the American Ambassador to Italy, in general charge of the expedition; Lieutenant Brofferio; Lieutenant Allen Buchanan and Ensign John W. Wilcox, Jr., U. S. Navy, who had been temporarily detached from their regular duty on board the *Scorpion*, at Naples, to assist in this work; and Mr. John Elliott,

PLAN OF ARRANGEMENT OF GROUPS



PLAN OF ARRANGEMENT OF GROUPS.

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

STANDARD ARRANGEMENT OF COTTAGES IN HOUSE BLOCKS

This was prescribed by the Italian engineers

the artist. The last mentioned had been a member of the expedition in January of the Red Cross relief ship *Bayern*, and had responded to my invitation to take part in this new work by saying: "I would not think of not coming." He came away from the exhibition of his new painting, "Diana of the Tides," now in the new National Museum in Washington; and it was his participation that brought out the tribute of Prefect Trinchieri to our work, "the heart of philanthropy and soul of an artist."

The five previously mentioned, together with Ensign Robert W. Spofford and Assistant Surgeon Martin Donelson, who were detailed to our party from the *Celtic* after our arrival at Messina, and Mr. Howard L. Freet, Chief Carpenter, and Mr. J. J. Phillips, Superintendent Carpenter, who came by the first steamer, were the pioneers in the enterprise. For the first three weeks in Messina and Reggio, pioneering it certainly was.

Brofferio knew Messina well, having been on duty there during the two years previous to the earthquake. The ruins of the house in which he had lived with his family were within a few yards of the *Celtic* and could be seen from her poop-deck; he had been there

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during the premonitory shocks of November and earlier in December, but was fortunately ordered away from Messina on December 22d, six days before the great shock. Brofferio was invaluable. Always alert, reserved in speech, energetic and well-informed, firm, even in temper and most amiable in disposition, he made our interests his own and devoted his best ability and efforts towards making our success one that should be creditable and acceptable in every way.

Our arrival was on the fifty-sixth day following the earthquake, forty-five of these having been days of rain. Life was fast reviving in the city; half a dozen steamers were discharging lumber and other building material; several were loading lemons. On shore, small tradesmen multiplied daily, and foot and cart traffic passed in an ever-growing stream, mainly through Viale San Martino, and along the Marina towards the northern part of the city. Towards nightfall, however, all signs of life would melt away; half-past five o'clock was the curfew hour, soon after which only a pair of patrolling *carabinieri* or a sentry could be seen, or occasionally some solitary passer-by, having a special permit to be still abroad. Street lamps were lighted only here and there,



VIALE PRESIDENTE TAFT

so that when darkness came on there was nothing to detract from the grim solemnity of that gaunt, ruined Marina façade.

During our first visit to the Prefect, on the day of arrival, he called in Cavalieri Simonetti to see us, the Chief Engineer under whose general direction we were to work; and afterwards, Lieutenant Brofferio and I, with Lieutenant Buchanan and Ensign Wilcox, were taken by Cav. Simonetti to visit the site selected for our village. Brofferio took this opportunity to explain our plans to him, and to the other Italian officers and engineers interested; and about nine P. M., Signor Simonetti, with the Captain of the Port, the naval aide to the military commander, Lieutenant-General del Rosso, Lieutenant Commander Rossi, and several assistants, came on board to confer with Lieutenant Brofferio and me. Fortunately, the report of the punctual arrival of the steamer *Eva* at Naples that day and her sailing for Messina, telegraphed me by Consul Crowninshield, made it possible for us to proceed with definite arrangements.

About ten o'clock Tuesday morning, the quartermaster reported a British steamer standing in towards the harbor, flying the American flag at the fore and a broad white

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pennant under it, inscribed: "Headquarters U. S. Carpenters." This was our first steamer, the *Eva*, and by noon she was moored in a berth near the *Celtic*.



VIALE SAN MARTINO EXTENDED

Electric light and grading were put in by the municipal authorities. The bridge over the Torrente, in the right background, was built by the Americans. Note the lumber pile on the left and also the fire extinguisher provided by the municipal authorities, attached on the corner of each house group.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING OF WORK

NEXT morning, Wednesday, February 24th, at seven o'clock, the discharging of lumber began, and as fast as we could secure carts to do our service, they were loaded and sent out to the building site. A drizzling rain was falling, but this was a normal condition of those days, which did not interfere with any kind of work in Messina, though it impeded the progress of the carts. It was a devious route the carts had to travel through streets only partly cleared of débris—in many places allowing passage for only one cart at a time. The loaded carts had to go in groups of two or three, because often it was necessary to harness all the animals to one cart, to get it over a steep or slippery place, or through the deep mud. Going straight out Viale San Martino, the direct course, was impossible, as there was only a footbridge over the Torrente.

At the Marina, Ensign Spofford super-

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vised the discharging of the steamer and the loading of the carts. With him were a dozen or so sailormen from the *Scorpion*, who would be sent by ones and twos with each group of loaded carts to guard the precious material. Lumber was a scarcity in those days and many were the attempts to divert a load of lumber, nails, glass, or especially roofing-paper, to prevent which we had to be constantly on the alert.

At the other end of the line, out at Mosella, were Lieutenant Buchanan, Ensign Wilcox, Mr. Freet, and Mr. Phillips, the two carpenters, and fifteen or twenty more sailormen from the *Scorpion*, to manage unloading the carts and stacking the lumber.

Such was the beginning, and for a day or two the wheels creaked a little, as might have been expected. One could hardly tell, for instance, whether certain of the laborers at work were in motion or at rest; and in unloading the carts they began at a rate, piece by piece, that would have kept us there until to-day. Buchanan stood this for a load or two, then called out: "Here, all you Scorpions!" "This way, fellers," said Dougherty, gunner's mate, and half a dozen of our sailormen ran up, tipped the load off sideways, and started

MISSOURI
STATE
ARCHIVES



STREET CORNER IN NEW MESSINA

the cart back to the Marina with the oxen at a trot. The natives looked on, gaping a bit; but they took the hint and we had no further delay of this kind. They soon learned to stack the lumber as they were told, and through the long two months in which they had this monotonous employment, it must be said they worked faithfully and well. Sometimes our sailormen could even infuse their gangs with the spirit of a regular coaling-ship hustle, to get the last loads of lumber stacked and the ground cleared up, before quitting work at night, as it had been made the rule to do.

The first three days we had vehicles of all kinds, some of them drawn by horses that had evidently belonged to some gentleman's carriage. It was a relief to all of us when a new contractor was engaged who used only ox-carts, with large, handsome steers able to draw a load of nearly a ton over any grade.

It should be understood at the outset that the function of the American construction party was to direct and administer, our numbers being too few for any manual work on our part to count where so much was to be done. Our workmen were principally Messinese, but others from surrounding towns

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came later in considerable numbers, even from as far as Syracuse and Palermo.

Starting on Thursday with five Italian carpenters, first a lot of sawhorses, trestles, work-benches, patterns, and ladders were made, and men began cutting framing material to standard lengths; then by Friday night our portable house, for holding tools and office use, was erected and the frame of the first of our cottages was half done.

Saturday morning we had about thirty carpenters engaged in the same work and others busy on shelters for nails and hardware, when a heavy rain-storm, due to a sirocco, swept every person at work in Messina away to the nearest refuge, for the rest of the day. Next morning we began again as usual, but, wiser from our experience of the day before, set to building at once a large shelter for our workmen, and in doing this, we made the first approach to rapid, effective work. A workshed thirty by sixty-four feet was built in ten hours, hardly any material being cut in its construction; and by noon of Monday, there were twenty or more at work in this shop, which for three months was always the busiest spot in the whole settlement.

For interpreters we had at first Grandy,

THE
HOTEL
VIEW



VIEW OF THE HOTEL FROM THE RAILWAY

an ordinary seaman, born in New York of Italian parentage, and Tortorella, a Messinese who had enlisted as a bandsman on board the U. S. S. *Chicago* at Messina some years before. Getting leave from his ship at Port Said, he came by the *Yankton* to Messina, where he found his mother, brothers, and other relatives to the number of thirteen, safe in the outskirts of Messina. He proved invaluable to us, for he knew the people and locality as well as the language. As the work spread, other interpreters were employed, generally boys that had been in America.

Careful work and orderly system were insisted upon from the outset, the necessity for this being all the greater because of the demoralizing effect of ruin and destruction everywhere. To distinguish our workmen, we gave them white arm-bands, marked with "U. S." and the man's number, as "U. 29. S." We recorded their names, but to use them was beyond us, as well as unnecessary, because the man's number was sufficient. Laborers were taught to stack lumber the right way, and to do an honest day's work in handling it, being constantly encouraged in this by our sailormen; carpenters were held responsible for their tools, no man receiving

his pay at night until he had returned everything checked against him. Losses had to be paid for, our tools being superior to the native ones and much coveted.

About the camp was the three-year-old son of one of the carpenters, a familiar little figure in a red coat and cap, who guarded his father's tools, springing at any one who touched them. At five o'clock he would run to the nearest keg and help himself to as many nails as his little fists would hold, walking off with an air of perfect innocence. This was forbidden, but we were careful not to be caught seeing the little rascal. In the latter days at Messina, I lost sight of him, until one Sunday he went swaggering through the finished streets, now grown to trousers, and sporting a Fauntleroy suit to attest to the returning prosperity of his family.

Meantime, by the end of the second week, the second steamer, the *Herm*, had arrived and had been sent to Reggio with a construction party, headed by Ensign Wilcox and composed of a dozen of the *Scorpion's* men and four American carpenters, all of them being quartered on board the *Herm* until they could construct and equip their own camp. She was a Norwegian steamer, under Captain



CHURCH AND SCHOOL GROUP, AS SEEN FROM PIAZZA RE D' ITALIA

Zachariassen, who kept as clean and orderly a freighter as one may ever see, and did all in his power to make the stay of our party on board comfortable and to promote our work in every way. He had his wife on board and she helped to make things pleasant for them. When their camp was finally established and the steamer, fully discharged, was about to sail, they had an exchange of farewell dinners which must have been very enjoyable.

Wilcox took hold of his work at Reggio in commendable fashion, assisted most ably by his carpenters, Mr. Thomas Mackay at their head. Five days after the steamer's discharging began they had erected the portable house and finished the workshop like ours in Messina, put up five complete house frames, begun two more, and laid all but two of the remaining sills to complete their first group. It was a promising beginning, yet they were apologetic about it, giving repeated assurances that better and faster work would follow. It was noticeable throughout that the Reggio works endeavored to rival those at Messina, notwithstanding that the latter had far the greater advantage in numbers. Generally, the work at Reggio went on harmoniously and smoothly. Brofferio and I would go over

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to Reggio once or twice a week to adjust any difficulties that might have arisen, but there were seldom any, and the progress of the work always exceeded my expectations.

It was a great pleasure about this time to visit the Hotel Centrale at Reggio, which had been opened for the regular serving of good meals just one month from the day of the earthquake. This was due to Captain Cagni and General Mazzitelli, whose effective co-operation in widespread relief work I had occasion to admire during the visits of the *Bayern*, in January. Although relief poured into Messina, but a few miles distant from Reggio, across the Straits, hardly any came at first to Reggio, where the ruin was equally complete; but the Italian army and navy force did not wait to be helped. Without delaying, taking respite, or hurrying through to a superficial ending, they accomplished a difficult, disagreeable, and tedious undertaking, with a thoroughness and rapidity that could not have been surpassed by even the severest critics themselves. My long and rather extensive experience in conditions in that region, impressed upon me the unfairness of many of the criticisms, lavished with a fine impartiality on those who helped and



THE PIONEERS

From left to right, seated: Brofferio, Belknap, Buchanan; standing: Dr. Donelson, Chief Carpenter Freet, Ensign Wilcox, Mr. Elliott, Supt. Carpenter Phillips, Ensign Spofford.

those who did not. To the well informed, the fault-finding often revealed only the ignorance of the critic; and in Reggio in particular good work was everywhere evident,—this comfortable hotel, electric light (which the city had never before had), streets cleared for easy traffic, shops being reopened, houses of wood or of asbestos being built in every direction, and generally good order and cleanliness.

Returning at evening on board the *Celtic* at Messina after our first visit to Reggio, Brofferio and I found news of an incident that on its face seemed troublesome. One of our men had just been brought on board, apparently injured by a pistol shot, and a police officer was there asking particulars of the case. Commander Huse was awaiting the medical officer's report on the injured man, who fortunately proved to have no trace of a bullet-wound, nor any other hurt than a trifling bruise and cut.

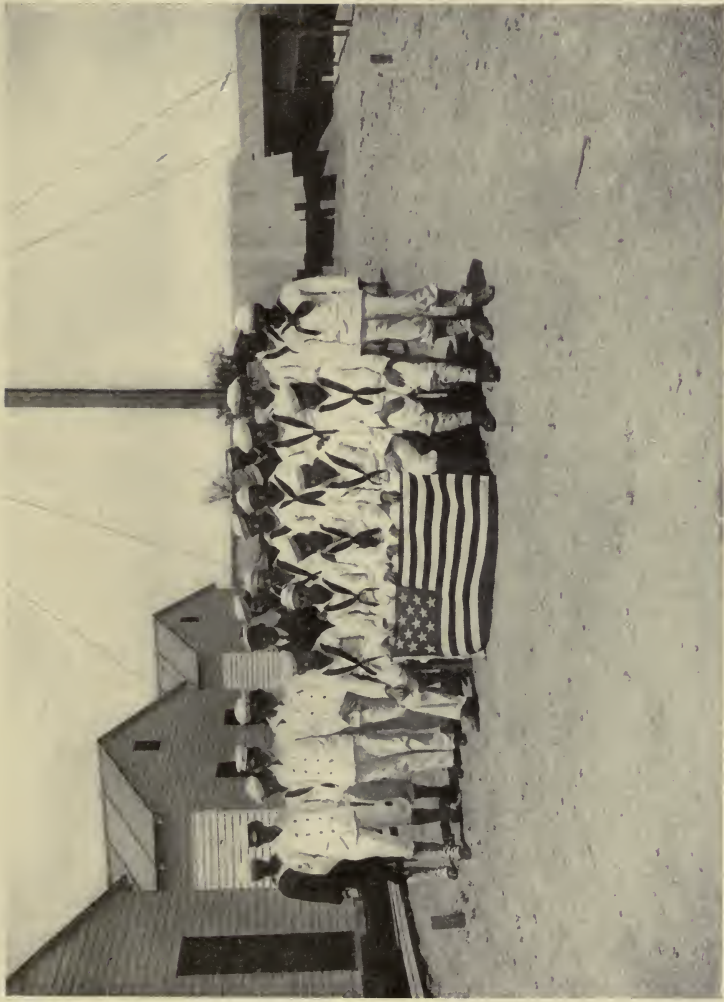
It developed that he had been in charge of a gang of laborers, mending the road near the building work, when a strange Italian, somewhat intoxicated, came along and tried to interfere. When told to move on, he

became abusive and began to flourish a revolver, and when one of our Sicilians asked him to go away without making any trouble, he grew quarrelsome and finally fired a shot at our workman. The man Hurley then jumped for him, assisted by another, and these two finally captured the disorderly man after a chase, but not before he had fired several more shots at them. In the chase, Hurley tripped and fell heavily, hurting his head, which had given the impression that a bullet had struck him; but the worst hurt was suffered by the original trouble maker, whom one of our men, in the scuffle, dealt a severe blow on the mouth.

Lieutenant Buchanan, in charge on the ground, had promptly called one of the soldiers on guard; had Hurley, who was infuriated, seized and sent back to the ship with an officer, and the offender and his revolver turned over to the police. Then our other men and Sicilian employees were ordered back to their work, and in ten minutes the scene was perfectly tranquil again.

The offender was not one whom we had discharged from our force, and as the sympathy and support of our Sicilians was heartily with us, there was no ground for uneasiness.

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THE "SCORPIONS"
Enlisted men from the U. S. S. *Scorpion*, with several also from the U. S. S. *Celtic*,
in camp at Messina.

It would have been unfortunate had there been malice behind such an incident; but there was no reason to suspect it; and the affair actually turned to our advantage, bringing home to the authorities the necessity for keeping a careful guard in that vicinity, more quickly and convincingly than might otherwise have been.

The trivial nature of the incident becoming evident as soon as the facts had been reported by the officers who were on the spot, Lieutenant Brofferio was then requested to go to the Prefect, inform him of all the facts, and acquaint him of our conclusion that the affair was of no importance, and to request him formally not to permit any report to be telegraphed to the press. Brofferio returned with the Prefect's thanks, and his assurance that everything would be done to prevent any telegraphic press report; and so, with the exchange next day, between Commander Huse and the Prefect, of expressions of cordial satisfaction over the unimportance of the affair, it passed completely from our minds.

CHAPTER IV

ESTABLISHING THE BUILDING CAMP

THE cardinal principle guiding us throughout was to make all possible speed consistent with carrying on our work properly. To do this, we must establish ourselves in camp as soon as possible, and so we made every effort to complete our first group of houses, for our own use. The Ambassador fully approving this plan, the necessary authority was obtained from the Italian Government, through exchange of letters with the Prefect, as follows:

U. S. S. CELTIC,
MESSINA, SICILY, March 2, 1909.

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

In connection with the erection of houses in Messina with the material sent from the United States, I have the honor to request permission for a camp to be established on shore, for myself and the party of U. S. Naval officers and men and the American

THE
ARRIVAL
OF
THE
"EVA"



ARRIVAL OF THE "EVA"

Noon, February 23d, the first of our five steamers, with material for five hundred cottages, Chief Carpenter Freet, and Supt. Carpenter Phillips.

carpenters, who are at my disposition for the prosecution of the work.

If it meets with the approval of Your Excellency, the plan would be to establish this camp at Mosella, our party using the first group of houses that we shall finish. By living thus at the scene of our work, we shall be able to carry it on more rapidly than would be otherwise possible.

This camp would be the residence and headquarters of myself, the American Ambassador's representative for this work, and I should therefore regard it as appropriate to denote its official character by flying the United States flag, during daylight.

I take this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

By direction of the American Ambassador to Italy,

Very respectfully,

(Signed) R. R. BELKNAP,

Lieutenant Commander, U. S. Navy.

Naval Attaché,

Representing the Ambassador.

His Excellency

COMMENDATORE DOTTORE A. TRINCHIERI,

Prefect of Messina.

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(*Translation*)

PREFECTURE OF MESSINA

MESSINA, March 4, 1909.

The moment your kind letter arrived, I duly proceeded immediately to inform his Excellency The President of the Council of Ministers, placing before him the opportunity of graciously making the concession indicated for a cause so highly commendable and just.

It is with great pleasure that I inform you that my Government, highly and fully appreciating the most noble work of Charity that you are doing in the name of that great Nation the United States, in the cause of the sufferers from the earthquake in Calabria and Sicily, entrusts me with the honor of according you the right, in the valley of the Mosella, to occupy the camp for your personal shelter and for your officers and men.

As this camp will be considered as the official residence of the authorized representative of the Embassy of the United States of America, His Excellency, the President of the Council, acknowledges the justice of the desire you express, that the National Flag of the United States of America should fly during the day above the place.

THE
LUMBER
INDUSTRY
OF
THE
WEST



ONE CORNER OF OUR IMMENSE STACKS OF LUMBER

Pray accept, illustrious Captain, the respectful exchange of my highest sentiments and believe me, with the greatest consideration,

The Prefect,
(Signed) TRINCHIERI.

Most Illustrious Sir,
R. R. BELKNAP, Lieutenant Commander,
U. S. Navy,
Naval Attaché, Representing the Ambassador of The United States of America.

Dr. Donelson looked into the water question and found that we could tap a pipe from an unpolluted source, about eight hundred feet above the camp. In fact, a safe water supply had been one of the earliest cares of the authorities, after the first throes of the disaster, and good water had been available in Messina almost from the first days of January.

A thousand feet of pipe from the *Celtic* and a few days' work of Lynch, her plumber and fitter, brought water into the camp. We had running water at the kitchen sink, in the men's washroom, in Buchanan's house for a shower bath, in my house, and at an

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outside faucet, for general use. For waste water, we had only to lead a wooden drain pipe to the Torrente.

One group of houses would be just enough for our party, with a house each for the petty officers and the men; a mess-room for each and a third for the officers' mess; four houses for the officers, civilians, and carpenters; one for the Doctor, with his office next his room, and the Paymaster, with the kitchen fitted up for his office; one house for the administration offices; and one for the storehouse. In the centre of the group, a temporary structure was put up, sixteen by forty-eight feet, with kitchen in the middle, officers' mess pantry and storeroom at one end, and men's wash-room at the other. On the side away from San Martino and therefore giving a beautiful view of the Strait, we reserved the space intended for House Group No. 2 and instead used it as our front yard, planting our flag staff in the centre. In one corner of it an icehouse was dug and roofed over, and here we stored thirty tons of ice from the *Celtic*, with refrigerated provisions enough for several weeks. Altogether, it bade fair as a comfortable camp, and we were eager to get into it.

On Monday, March 15th, we established our camp at noon, with a brief ceremony, which, as there was no prescribed form, was made similar to that of putting a naval vessel into commission.

All of the enlisted men were assembled in line, the officers of the detachment, Commander Huse of the U. S. S. *Celtic*, Tenente di Vascello Brofferio, Royal Italian Navy, and myself, constituting the participants. Mr. Bicknell, Mr. Elliott, and Sig. Donati, besides many of the workmen, were present as spectators.

At twelve o'clock, the *Celtic's* bugler sounded "Attention," and I then read the letter of the Prefect of Messina communicating the permission of the Italian Government to establish a camp here. At the conclusion of this reading, the bugle sounded the customary salute to the colors, and the flag was hoisted. I then read my orders of February 16, 1909, signed by the Ambassador, appointing me his official representative; and then Lieutenant Allen Buchanan, U. S. Navy, of the U. S. S. *Scorpion*, read his orders from the commanding officer of the *Celtic*, placing him in command of the detachment of U. S. Naval officers and

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enlisted men landed from the two ships for this purpose.

I then spoke a word to the men, Commander Huse and Mr. Bicknell offered their congratulations and good wishes, three cheers for the undertaking were given, and the ceremony was concluded.

Commander Huse, Mr. Bicknell, Lieutenant Brofferio, Mr. Elliott, and myself then went to lunch with General del Rosso. This had nothing to do with the camp, but it gave me an opportunity to tell the Prefect, who was at the lunch, that we had moved in. I had previously written him, on Saturday, that it was then our intention to go into camp on Sunday; but we had found it advisable to postpone one day, to avoid confusion.

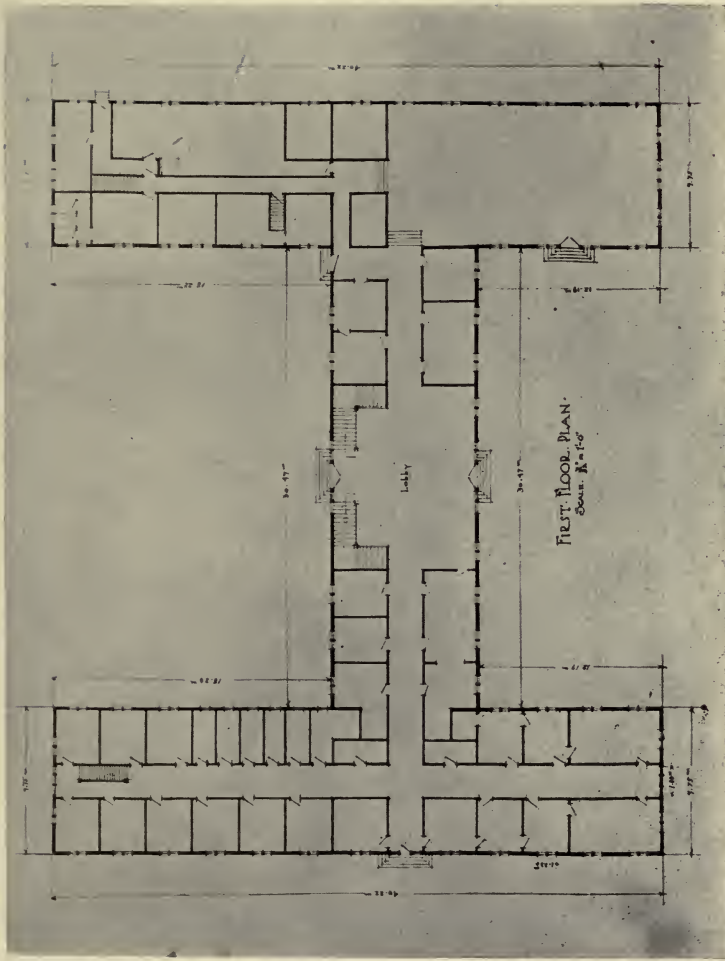
After the General's lunch, we went on board the *Celtic* to take our leave, and I received from the Paymaster the money and vouchers covering the relief funds. The *Celtic* then sailed, about four P. M., followed out into the Straits by a steam launch, having the General and a number of his staff on board, to bid her final farewell.

Thus, at the end of our third week in Messina, we were established in camp, left to our own resources. Besides the completion



ESTABLISHING THE CAMP

March 15th, at noon, the Construction Organization moved into the group of twelve cottages first built.



PLAN OF A HOTEL BUILDING
As offered to the Italian authorities, early in March.

of the twelve cottages constituting our camp, seventeen more were half finished, and sills had been laid for fifty-three others, making in all eighty-two built or begun. We were purposely holding back the framing, until the sill-layers could get far enough ahead to keep the lead, and allow the series of gangs to be spread out among successive groups, or pairs of groups, so that each supervising carpenter could better control his own men, by keeping them all together, and separate from the gangs employed in other stages of the work.

CHAPTER V

SYSTEMATIZING THE CONSTRUCTION

IN constructing the cottages, although we had to depart somewhat from the original plans, which had been made and printed in New York, we still kept to the type and size, our modifications affecting only the number of windows, addition of a kitchen, and minor details of construction. Rough handling broke a good deal of the light dressed siding; so, to avoid a shortage in this kind of material, the height of house wall was lowered, to leave a clear head room of seven and one half instead of nine feet. This was high enough, and saved fifteen per cent. of siding, and at the same time made a much better proportioned house. But the main changes were in the framing. Keeping always in mind that each piece we cut out saved one thousand in Messina alone, or, as each had two ends to cut, saved two thousand pieces of work, we would eliminate one piece after another,



SOME OF THE REGGIO CONSTRUCTION PARTY

Reading from left to right: Head Carpenter Thomas Mackay, Supt. Carpenter Randall, Ensign Wilcox, Supt. Carpenter Thompson, Mr. Brush.

simplifying and standardizing the construction in every way that our experience developed as practicable. Every proposed change would first be freely discussed with Mr. Freet and Mr. Phillips, who would not let any considerations of good construction fail of due attention.

Naturally, we took interest in the houses that other people were building, which lay on either hand as we walked out to ours. From a visit to the Lombardy houses building, Mr. Elliott got the suggestion of a semi-brick kitchen, which we saw we must adopt, if we would make our cottages equally suitable to their occupants' habits of living, and as safe from fire as other types under construction. Building a fire on a wooden floor, or dangerously near a wooden wall, was a common sight.

Engineer Giovanni Pella, the Lombardy contractor, showed us his plans for the kitchens, and offered to undertake the construction of ours. I turned the matter over to Mr. Elliott, who understood the people as well as the language, and who, after the necessary period of negotiation, secured an agreement from Pella to build the brick part of each kitchen at forty-five lire (nine dollars), any work that was not satisfactory, or that

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would not stand the weather, to be rebuilt at the contractor's expense.

Signor Pella proved to be a valuable addition to our force; he was always to be relied upon for quick and honest work and straightforward dealing, useful in many affairs in which he received only thanks in return.

Less than two weeks after we began work, the fame of the systematic manner in which Buchanan was conducting the work at Mosella brought us visitors, notwithstanding that the site was rather far out and the walking bad; the extension of the roadway of Viale San Martino in our direction was then just begun. One of the first to come was Major Andrea Graziani, the General's Chief of Staff, who came out to attend personally to establishing an effective guard for our territory, where our piles of material were becoming large and necessarily somewhat scattered. We were so near the open country that a guard was indispensable, and one was required also as a precaution against fire. Major Graziani was so pleased with the general air of industry and the simple but effective system in force, for arranging and accounting for tools and handling the men generally, that the next day he brought the General out, who afterwards,



THE ANCIENT SCYLLA

73 Near which material for five hundred cottages was sent, for the district about Palmi and Bagnara.

whenever he had a visitor himself from out of town, would bring him to our works, as to one of the sights. We came to know these officers well and to be on the most friendly terms with them. Major Graziani maintained a close personal interest in our welfare throughout our stay, and I often observed him making a quiet round of inspection.

One day the Duca d'Ascoli came, one of the Queen's Gentlemen-in-Waiting. He had been sent down by Her Majesty to arrange for some schools and workrooms that were being opened at Villaggio Regina Elena, and Mr. Elliott, happening to be at Villaggio in connection with the site for our buildings to go there, had met the Duke and accompanied him out to Mosella. The Duke was especially pleased with the proceedings, when the workmen turned in their tools at knock-off and then went around to the other window to be paid. Next afternoon he came again, bringing the Prefect, whom I had the pleasure of showing over the place and to whom I pointed out the site selected for the hotel, with its fine, clear view.

This hotel had been offered to the authorities as soon after the *Eva's* arrival as we could

get the run of our material and determine its quality and quantity, with respect to larger buildings than the standard type of cottage. Mr. Elliott had been working on the hotel idea since leaving Naples. Beginning with a simple combination of a number of the standard cottages, he developed, by successive stages, a two-story structure, containing about seventy rooms of various sizes, averaging ten by twelve feet, each large enough to accommodate two occupants with comfort, considering the times; the dining-room would seat two hundred.

This plan was put before Cav. Simonetti and an inspector from the Ministry of Public Works, who took very kindly and quickly to the hotel idea, fully agreeing to it and saying that they would send an architect to assist us with regard to water, plumbing, drainage, and similar matters not in the line of carpenter work, to which our part was practically limited. The site finally approved for this hotel was magnificent, giving a wide sweep over the Straits and the Mediterranean far to the southward, and of the mountains of Sicily in the rear, and of Calabria, snow-capped, in front.



PAYING OFF ON SATURDAY

In April, the portable house had to be moved farther out the extension of Viale San Martino, to be nearer our work. On the left are our cottages, and in the middle background, a bridge we built across the Torrente Bagliva. Our average payroll included about six hundred and seventy-five men; the greatest for one week, eight hundred and seventy-five, at

Messina alone; nearly half as many more at the Reggio works.

CHAPTER VI

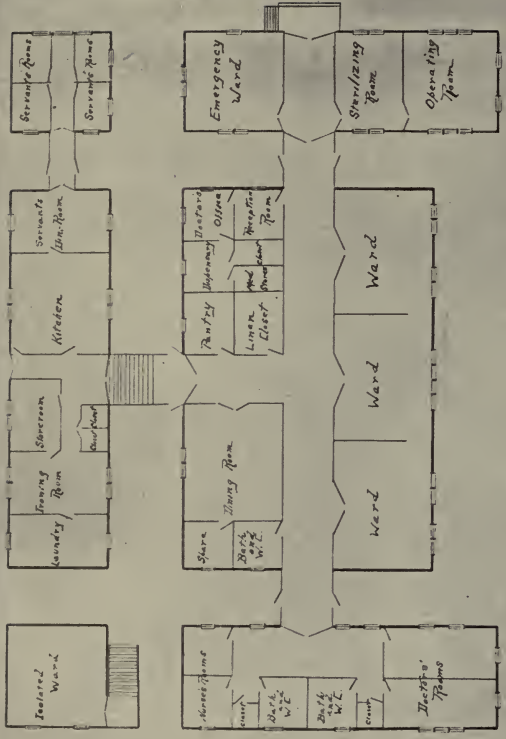
DISPOSITION OF THE HOUSES

SINCE our arrival, many applications, written and personal, the latter in some cases several times repeated, had been made to me for houses, especially by naturalized American citizens. My answer in every case had to be that these houses were not mine to dispose of; that they had already been given by the American Government to the Italian Government, and that my function was merely to superintend their erection and the distribution of the material to the several points indicated to me by the Italian authorities, namely, the Minister of Public Works, through the Prefect and Cav. Simonetti.

During my first visit to the Prefect, he had stated that the assignment of houses for occupancy was the most difficult part of the whole undertaking, and that he would leave it to a commission, appointed by him. I constantly maintained the attitude of not

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exerting any influence in favor of any individual, as I thought it only in keeping with definite, dignified relations with the authorities, especially with the Prefect; and, still more, because I was not in a position to determine the merits of any case, and would be encroaching upon the province of our Consul should I attempt to do so. If I had once made an exception, even to the giving away of a little material, there would have been a swarm of applicants that would have prevented my attending to anything else. There were many impostors, who wished to obtain a house in order to rent it; or wood, to sell it. But even in a perfectly worthy case, I could not have given the house without informing the Prefect, and had I asked his permission first, it would have been setting myself up in place of his commission. This was only one aspect of the matter. The time it took to dispose of these requests was considerable, and all at the expense of more pressing matters, which affected the progress of the whole undertaking. Neither was it practicable to give away a lot of material for an applicant to construct a house for himself, without involving much time and labor, out of all proportion to the assistance rendered;



PLAN OF ELISABETH GRISCOM HOSPITAL

AT

VILLAGE REGINA ELENA

SCALE - 1 cm. = 1 FF

ORIGINAL SKETCH PLAN SHOWING HOSPITAL GROUP

and it was, of course, impossible for us to build houses here and there, at the wish of the various applicants. We could not undertake to do more than carry out the regular plans for Messina, Reggio, and Villaggio Regina Elena, as we had not officers and carpenters enough to supervise scattered work. We were on the keen jump all day long as it was, to look out for work already in hand, organized and concentrated as much as circumstances would permit.

It was by no means easy to resist the pleadings for houses or lumber—just a few planks—or nails—only a handful. Eloquence, persistence, pathos, flattery, tears—every kind of appeal was resorted to. But it was necessary not only to be unyielding, but also to be insistent that the guards provided us should keep faithful watch over our stacks and stores of material, as any signs of indifference or leniency on our part would have resulted in their rapidly melting away.

On the very first day of work, one cart-driver made off with a load, nearly reaching the country before he was arrested. Next morning his fellow-carters refused to work unless he was released from jail; but much as one had to sympathize with the poor man,

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the interests of the whole work demanded that he should be held and punished.

An exception was made on the building site, where we let people pick up short ends for firewood, but no piece more than a foot long was allowed to be taken away.

THE SHOP



THE SHOP

On the left, one corner of a working shelter, thirty by sixty-four feet, erected in ten hours. Mr. Reinburg, the Shop Superintendent, unaware that a photograph is being taken, is coming out to remonstrate against the still life in the foreground.

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL LIVING CONDITIONS

OCCASIONAL visitors to our camp, and many other people since we left Messina, have asked whether the living conditions were not very disagreeable,—especially owing to the smell from the ruins. To all such inquiries the reply would be negative. Considering the hardy conditions usually found in a construction camp, we were altogether rather comfortable; as for the smell, it was noticeable sometimes to a disagreeable extent during the first three weeks of our stay in Messina, while we were still living on board the *Celtic*, moored within a stone's throw of the ruined Marina façade. Those days were rainy, and when the sun came out strong and the air was still, the odor was offensive.

General sanitary conditions were good, and notwithstanding the dire prophecies of all kinds of epidemics, there was no typhoid, nor were other ailments more prevalent than

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they would have been under ordinary conditions. As for our camp, it was on high ground with good exposure to the breeze, with a safe and abundant water supply, free from the close proximity of other habitations. Some of our building operations took us near a scarlet-fever house, and there were cases of all kinds of diseases, contagious and non-contagious, coming to be treated by our Doctor Donelson, who held office hours practically all day long, right inside the camp; yet we had no case of serious sickness among all our party, numbering over eighty, during the whole time.

Early and regular hours, and hard work in the open all day, not only kept every one in good condition, but also preserved harmony, which, had time hung heavy on our hands, would soon have taken wings from a camp composed of such different elements as was ours.

At first, before the progress of our work had afforded some visible means of encouragement, we worked Sundays—not altogether from choice, but because we could not afford to lose good weather, of which there was then so little, and because a large accomplishment in a comparatively short time was necessary

to maintain interest and generate enthusiasm in the whole undertaking. After we moved into camp, we stopped Sunday work as a general thing; and every one was left free to find such enjoyment as the neighborhood afforded. Free railway passes were furnished for the members of the organization, and were made use of by some of the enlisted men to visit Catania over one Sunday; but they returned with the verdict that it was "a pretty bum place" for liberty, and few others went there. They found much entertainment in the baseball outfit, which fortunately the *Celtic* had been able to furnish us; and this interested many outsiders also, the fence of our enclosure being often lined with on-lookers. Occasionally, one of these, unaware that a baseball has right-of-way over everything, would suffer for his ignorance, and be borne to the Doctor in a state of semi-collapse. I am glad to say that no one was ever really hurt, only frightened half to death,—without, however, dampening the enthusiasm of the other observers in the least. Sometimes the men would get our faithful but grotesque mess servant, Pietro, out to play, in a most laughable fashion, with the baseball mask on, or doing a few rounds with the boxing-gloves.

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For the others, walks and short excursions were the rule, visiting Taormina, Catania, or even Palermo over Sunday. As we became better acquainted, some of the carpenters and enlisted men went on picnics with the Sicilian workmen, on one occasion returning to the camp with a band playing, amid a large and enthusiastic following. In brief, as our warm advocate, Prefect Trinchieri, said in his proclamation: "We lived among them like brothers."

For two months after our arrival, excavation for the recovery of bodies could be seen on all sides, on some days two hundred being taken out. The cemetery lay below our building site, and nearly every day one or more cartloads of filled coffins would pass, on the way to burial. The sad sight of an excavating party at work soon became familiar to every one. It was always about the same, —a soldier, a carabineer, two or three diggers, as many boys with baskets to carry away the rubbish, one or two coffins ready, and, to one side, in the deepest black, the searching relatives, generally women. Diggers and boys wore sacks over head and neck; and on dry days a cloud of dust hung over the spot, which



STREET OF HOUSES AFTER THE "ENCLOSERS" HAD FINISHED
The Superintendent Carpenter in the middle is Mr. Neill Mackay who superintended
fifty enclosing gangs of four men each.

must have made it stifling for the workers. Ten francs a day was their wage.

The 1st of May all this came to a stop,—no more excavating allowed until October. Removal of débris obstructing the streets continued, however, and for this there was a system of forced labor, by which all workmen would have to give two or three days of their time to digging. The soldiers worked all the time, early and late, and got little credit for it. I always felt sympathy for them, and was glad whenever I saw a company, its arduous relief work finished, embarking for the North.

The middle of March began a strong increase in the tide of recovery. Débris clearing and grading of new streets was pushed ahead with growing vigor, and buildings began to spring up on all sides. The Government engineers had let contracts for dwellings and school-houses, and other contractors were putting up houses of various sizes and designs, for sale. The Municipality undertook the laying of a substantial and complete water system for the new extensions of the city area; they repaired their electric plant, and brought the mains out Viale San Martino. The local ice-making plant prepared to start up again as soon as possible; and meantime, several

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shops opened for the sale of snow from the mountain tops, ices being a staple article of food among the Messinese.

The building of small booths and shops spread all along Viale San Martino and the Marina. First to be noted in any number were "Salone," or barber-shops,—there must have been forty of them; then came restaurants, and provision and miscellaneous vendors. All these were in temporary structures, erected in the street by permit from the Municipality. Locations were in great demand, and had to be built upon immediately when allotted, otherwise the permit would be void.

Altogether, there was no lack of stir and energy; and unfortunately a new industry sprang up, more harmful than good, in the sale to strangers of misinformation about the earthquake and relief work. There were always a lot of able-bodied men loafing about the ferry, railway station, and steamer landing, eager to gain the sympathy and the coin of visitors. By constant practice, fertile imagination, and glib tongues, they made many a tale far too pitiful for the average traveller to resist, in this way gaining for themselves a living more comfortably than their worthier fellows could earn by honest

work. It was from these people that many false and malicious tales of official wrong-doing originated and were given wide currency.

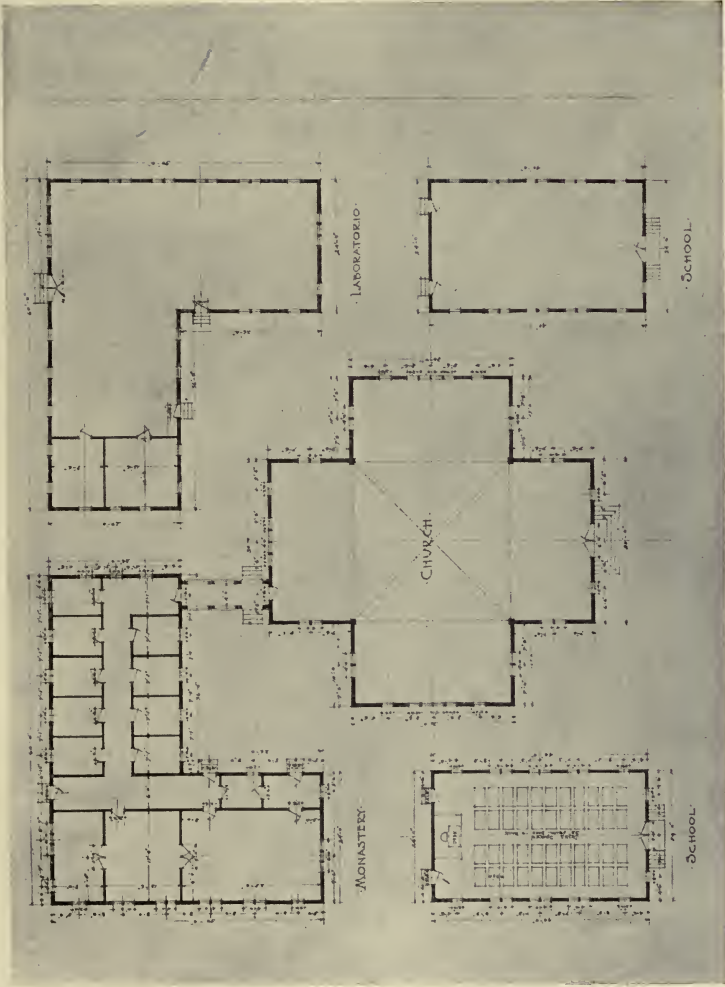
By April, the street lighting was re-established, the restriction on being abroad after dark was removed, and people began again to pass the evenings in the cafés. One enterprising man, having a concession for a restaurant, brought down from Genoa a portable cinematograph hall, and was soon able to offer a place of entertainment along with the serving of refreshments.

The good effects of profitable employment grew more and more apparent in the general spirits of the people. As the spring advanced, labor on Sunday was discontinued, first in the afternoons, but soon altogether. People would turn out in their best on that day, having now more than one suit of clothes. Afternoons, our camp and baseball game were favorite resorts for promenaders; and indescribable, never to be forgotten, were the beautiful, calm, moonlight nights of May and June, with serenaders strolling through our streets, playing mandolin and guitar.

CHAPTER VIII

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION

BY the time we moved into camp, the *Eva* had finished discharging and gone, her place being taken by the Red Cross steamer from New Orleans. The fourth steamer had been sent to Naples, thence to send her cargo of material for five hundred houses by rail to Palmi, for distribution to the towns and villages in the outlying district. The fifth steamer had been sent to Catania, which was outside of the earthquake area and had unimpaired port facilities, to discharge the forty-nine portable houses which had been sent by the Massachusetts Relief Committee, and the material for three hundred houses. They were destined to be distributed along the line of the railway, among the villages between Taormina and Messina, under the supervision of Mr. Bowdoin and Mr. Wood, two Americans staying in Taormina, who undertook to assist in this way in carrying out the in-



PLAN OF CHURCH AND SCHOOL GROUP

structions of Cavalieri Simonetti, the Chief Engineer in general charge of all the relief house-building work.

The disposal of the steamers took no small part of our attention, because the charters allowed us only a limited time for unloading the cargoes, after which demurrage would begin at an expensive rate per day, while facilities for handling cargoes at all these ports were heavily overtaxed all the time. In Reggio, for instance, the harbor was so small that it was difficult for a steamer to turn around; yet there were, on an average, nine or ten steamers unloading, which could only discharge their lumber cargoes by building rafts. This did not hurt our material but it made sad havoc of a large consignment of fifteen hundred portable houses sent out from England, the various parts of which must have become badly swelled and difficult to fit together by such a long soaking, six weeks, as some of them got.

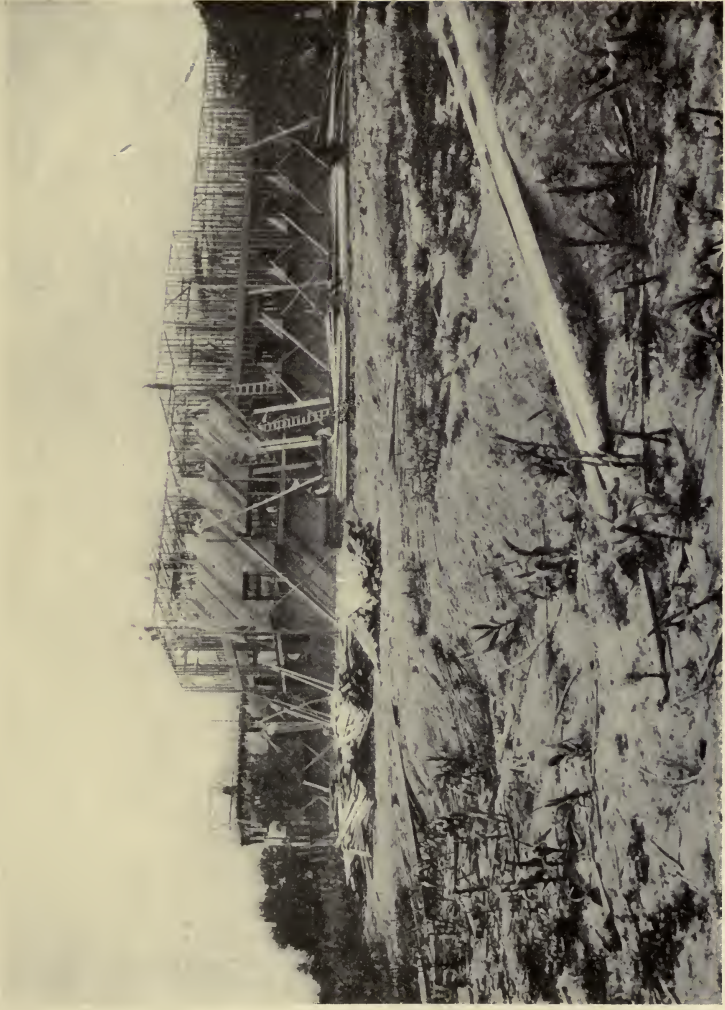
Our turn for bad luck at Reggio did come, however, when Wilcox was awakened at five o'clock one morning by the report that a big pontoon alongside the *Herm*, the only lighter available for our use, was sinking. He plunged overboard with the end of a line,

in the hope that he might possibly make it fast ashore and then beach the pontoon before it could sink; but as he reached the shore, down it went, with a final gurgle, carrying with it half his nails, glass, and roofing-paper. But after a few days he recovered everything through a diver; only the nails a little the worse for their submersion.

Saturday afternoon, March 24th, we finished the first week on the regular system of employing labor. When we first began, we had asked for laborers and carpenters from the Genio Civile, and they had sent them in numbers increasing from day to day; but the proper expediting and handling of the work obliged us to engage still some more men of all kinds ourselves,—laborers for stacking lumber at the camp and better class carpenters, especially men capable of being foremen.

Men on our pay-roll were paid off every day and we gave better wages than anywhere else; we also exacted more work and promptly discharged every man that proved unsatisfactory. In this way we built up a good force of men, who had a fair idea of how to do our work, understood that shirking would not be tolerated, and that pay was certain,

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HOTEL IN PROCESS OF ERECTION

regular, and good. It was a good advertisement for us as employers of labor.

When the work was well under way and I had time to make the arrangements with Simonetti, it was agreed with him that our entire force of native workmen should be carried on the rolls of the Genio Civile. Simonetti or his local deputy would establish the rates of wages for different kinds of workmen, and the American officer in charge at each camp would have authority to engage or discharge men, or raise them from one pay grade to a higher. Every day we would furnish him a report of the amount of labor of each kind employed, and on Saturday send him a summary covering the whole week, indicating the amount of money required to pay off at five P.M.

The rates of wages fixed by Simonetti in accordance with this agreement were to be the current market rate. This would have lowered the wages of some of the men already in our employ, and as we did not wish to lose them, we retained a small pay-roll of our own, paying the difference in some cases; in others paying the whole, as it was desirable to keep some of the men as our own employees absolutely. Good men were scarce, and we

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could not afford to take any chances with those we had once secured.

Paying off under the new arrangements began Saturday at five P.M. It progressed slowly, as the engineer paying off, having little change, had to pay two or three men together in many cases; some men disputed their time and wage-rate, as they always will; and there were other delays. But by six-forty-five they were done. Then Lieutenant Buchanan paid his extra pay men in five minutes, about thirty appearing, and the affair was finished. A number of our extra pay laborers then left us; we were not sorry, as the first pressure was over and we wished to keep down the extra pay-roll. Those that returned to work did so at the standard rate. The others were not to be blamed for leaving, as they had had a hard four weeks, working every Sunday until three P.M. and every other day until six, sometimes later, and all the time well driven.

Few of our Sicilian carpenters really deserved to be so called, and those who did were not the kind our American carpenters were accustomed to dealing with; yet by a division of the labor, teaching one man only one thing, instead of how to build a whole house, we

managed to control a large force, who produced a gratifying amount of work.

It being soon evident that the greatest lack in expanding our force would be for sufficient competent supervision, Pay Inspector Mudd was requested by cable to send nine more American carpenters. None of these could arrive before the latter part of March, however, so that the brunt of the organizing fell upon the original seven.

At Messina, we had Freet, an energetic and skilful manager of men; Phillips, an experienced organizer and builder, a good executive driver; Stratton and Cook, naval chief carpenter's mates, men of less experience, though they soon acquired a good deal and proved to be among the best of our superintendent carpenters. Besides these, we had employed Nick Natole, who had worked for twelve years in the Baldwin Locomotive Works, and "Jim," "John," "Sam," "Russo," and "Tony," all of whom had been in America, the last named having brought back with him from Boston a pronounced Harvard accent. All these could speak English and handle a gang of other men, after a fashion; but a great number of our workmen were not only not carpenters but had never done any manual

labor before. Our first impulse was to discharge all incompetents, after two or three days' trial, but we soon found that there were too few good men to be had to permit that, and therefore, if we would have a large number of carpenters, we must teach them.

We set about this early, making each man learn one thing and then keeping him at it. This must often have been heart-breaking to the American carpenters. Many and many a time it would be discovered that men who had been making the same things right, day after day, would suddenly begin making them wrong; set them right again, explain, and show them how,—yet a few days later would come the same causeless mistake again. There had to be a close watch everywhere all the time. Some of the more promising ones would be advanced to more important work; and if a new man could not make good at one job, he would be tried at a second, and a third, even more, before deciding that we could not use him at all. Beginnings were very elementary; for instance, it was found in cutting standard lengths that, unless a man was put at each end and both sawed at the same time, the pieces would vary in length by inches. Patterns were not enough; boxes and other

guides had to be made, to *force* the tools to cut at the right place; and when it came to erecting the houses, some of our carpenters looked at the level and plumb-bob with unfeigned curiosity.

Aside from the usefulness of the houses that we built, the employment and regular payment of so many men helped much in the revival of everyday life in Messina, especially as a large proportion of the money spent under our direction was paid out to Messinese or Calabrians. Men flocked by scores to the little yellow portable house, sometimes two hundred in a single morning, clamoring for employment.

Buchanan sat in judgment within by the window, from seven until half-past eight or nine o'clock, turning away the repeaters, triflers, or evident incapables, and passing on the promising ones to the further scrutiny of Mr. Phillips, who had a keen eye for mechanical possibilities. All kinds of dodges were resorted to, to get accepted,—although our wages were no higher than elsewhere, and we certainly did not exact less work from our employees than others did. Applicants as carpenters had to produce their tools, and

often a likely man that had been accepted and sent to fetch his tools, would sell the use of his name to some one else, who would return, bringing the tools and answering to the same name, but showing an entirely different face and figure.

Wilcox discharged one of his mess servants one day, and the next day he appeared at the office with a few "boy's size" tools, applying for work as a carpenter. And at Messina, a stranded "American" barber from Allston, Massachusetts, visiting Messina to look after some property, who spurned laborer's work at three francs a day but condescended to shave us, complained: "Plenty shoemakers here workin' as carpenter, but so long Buchanan is remain here, I can't get no job as carpenter."

The workmen on the Calabria side, at first unsatisfactory, proved much better mechanics as a rule than those in Messina; many had been in America, and they were in general a comparatively sturdy, independent lot. Mountaineers were numerous among them, even as cargo stevedores, so many of the former Reggio longshoremen having been killed. One form in which this hardy spirit showed itself we could have dispensed with.

THE
MASSACHUSETTS
RELIEF COMMITTEE



PORTABLE HOUSES AT ALI

Forty-nine of these were sent out by the Massachusetts Relief Committee, and were erected in two groups at Ali, about fifteen miles south from Messina.

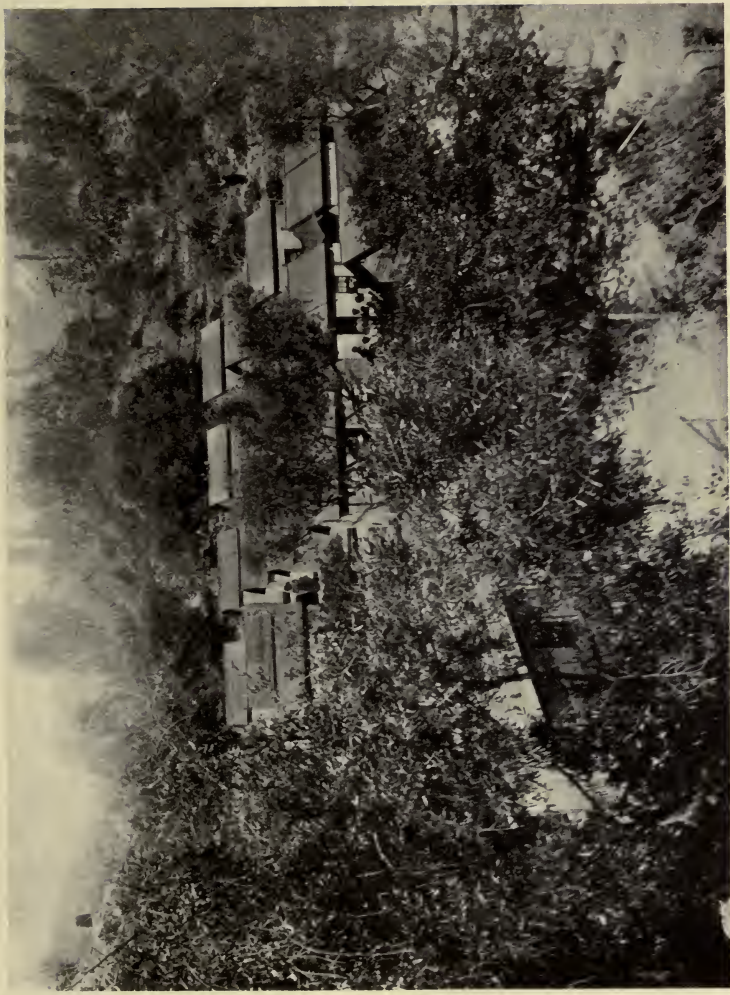
Some of these people were determined to loot the *Herm's* cargo, to prevent which imposed upon Wilcox a great deal of extra effort. Nails, tools, roofing-paper, glass, and hardware were at a premium. All had to be watched and the men working in the holds to be searched every evening before they left the ship.

Wages to workmen was not the only means by which we could help increase the local money circulation. In establishing camp we had to buy nearly everything, the *Celtic*, though she was a supply ship, having been nearly cleaned out earlier in distributing relief. Our first purchases were made in Catania, as shops in Messina had not yet opened; but after the middle of March we bought nearly everything in Messina or Reggio, in some cases the shopkeeper digging into the ruins of his shop to produce enough to fill our order. For some of the outfit for our working force, an order was given to the *laboratorio* of sewing women organized at Taormina by Miss Hill, an English lady residing there, with funds contributed in considerable part from America. Thanks to her we were able to have quickly made the necessary hundreds of workmen's arm

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bands and nail aprons, and the sheets and pillow cases for our camp, amounting in all to the sum of about fifteen hundred francs.

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GROUP OF PORTABLE HOUSES ERECTED AT ALI

CHAPTER IX

THE WORK EXTENDING

AT the beginning of our second month in Messina, March 23d, ground was broken for the hotel, the contract for the foundation being given to Signor Pella, who promised to finish it in fifteen days. The ground at a depth of three or four feet was sand and gravel, so that a foundation consisting of masonry piers twenty inches square, sunk to a depth of six feet and spaced ten feet apart, would carry the two-story building we proposed to erect. As soon as all the additional carpenters arrived, one Mr. Faust, from California, was put on the hotel work, with half a dozen or more of Italian carpenters and some laborers, to get out the sills, studs, and other framing. Then Mr. Elliott's troubles began,—to furnish detail plans as fast as they were needed.

About this time, I wrote to Mr. Griscom:

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ZONA CASE AMERICANE, MESSINA,
March 25, 1909.

DEAR MR. GRISCOM:

We are all looking forward with eagerness to seeing you down here early in April. I hope you may bring Mr. Roosevelt, but if not, we count upon your coming in any event. I have not promised that you would come, of course; but the expectation of it is in the air. It will give us most pleasure to have you stay in the camp here with us for a day or two; you will find enough of interest for a day or more here, and for another day on the Reggio side. Such a visit will brace our people up as nothing else could do; and I am sure you will enjoy it, and find some interesting subjects for photographs.

Please give me as much notice in advance as you can, stating the number of persons coming, so that we may be prepared; I can easily arrange to borrow from one of the closed hotels at Taormina, with Mr. Bowdoin's help, if only two or three days' notice can be had. It is rough living, but not uncomfortable, and it is against all principles of good administration not to feed one's people fairly well. We even have a dress suit at dinner now,—a new importation since

Mr. Bicknell left; but it is only one suit and our butler wears it.

I hope it has not been very inconvenient for you to have to wait so long for the hospital plans for Her Majesty. We tried to get them off yesterday; but I have had to call Mr. Elliott off to other work outside the office frequently during the past week, and then while we were about it, it seemed worth while to make a plan that would stand some examination from the point of view of real usefulness, as being in keeping with Her Majesty's intentions.

The hospital referred to was one that the Queen desired to be built at Villaggio Regina Elena. Like the hotel, it began as a combination of several standard cottages, but as Mr. Elliott was never content with a makeshift when he could improve upon it, a plan was ultimately evolved which embodied all of Her Majesty's ideas, and at the same time made the most of the ground area that would be available to cover. The Queen had stipulated for kitchen, laundry, and servants to be in a building separate from the hospital proper, and for a detached house to be available close at hand. Mr. Elliott's plan was of a

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large main building forty by sixty feet, containing three wards, dining-room and pantry, bath, office, dispensary, and linen-closet, with a wing thrown out on the north containing operating-room, sterilizing-room, and emergency ward, and another wing on the south for doctors' rooms and bath, and nurses' rooms and bath. In the rear were to be kitchen, laundry, and dining-room, with servants' sleeping-rooms and a store-room in a semi-detached building in one corner, and, symmetrically placed in the opposite corner, a small isolated building for a contagious ward. With the hospital, as with the hotel, our part was at first limited to the carpenter work, Her Majesty sending an engineer down to arrange for plumbing, drainage, lighting, and furnishing; but later we arranged for, and carried through, the plastering and the tiled flooring in kitchen, surgical, and bath rooms.

The first six of the additional carpenters cabled for arrived from America none too soon to help out in the fast growing area over which our work was spreading. On the map our territory showed all one level and nothing to interfere with the uniform erection of block after block. Lemons were still ripening on



HOUSES OF THE "PALMI" TYPE

Material for five hundred of these was landed at Naples, sent thence by rail to Palmi, and erected by the local contractors, from thirty to sixty houses being assigned to each of ten or eleven towns in the surrounding district. A sample house was built at Palmi by

Mr. Freet; and other samples were built by our carpenters at three places in the district between Taormina and Messina, to which about three hundred and twenty were assigned.

the trees when we began, however, and their picking had to be done hastily, when it was seen that we meant to push ahead as fast as we could drive. Here and there were buildings, ruins, walls, or patches of growing vegetables, which, interfering in one way or another with our regular advance, forced us to spread out more than we would have chosen.

Then economy of material was becoming a serious problem, as these workmen were wasteful; and it was imperative to have some inspection after the work of each gang, to insure the observance of necessary precautions. For instance, there were many cases of men getting a nail in the foot, because the framing-gang forgot or neglected to back out the nails when they knocked off the temporary braces and left them on the ground; also we had long pieces of heavy planking built into the roof framing of about twenty houses, because the gang placing the rafters, using this long planking to stand on, forgot to take it out, and the men following them had no interest in removing it. The men were all improving, but we were also continually increasing their numbers, in order to attain to a desired rate of speed in building; so the

demand for supervision was greater than ever.

Our aim was to build at the rate of two groups a day, or twenty-four houses, so that, allowing for bad weather and other delays, we could count upon one hundred houses a week. At present our advance gang, clearing ground and laying sills, could place about eighteen a day; but in another two weeks, with more experience and some tools for site-clearing, which were still on board the steamer *Achlibster*, they would be able to construct their twenty-four, and perhaps more. The next gang, framing, could keep up with the gang ahead, but the difficulty lay with the "Enclosers," who sided up, sheathed the roof, and laid the floors. They needed close supervision, and we wanted forty-five or fifty gangs of them, of four men each, unless with more experience they learned to work faster. We expected to stimulate this work by a piecework bonus of four lire for each house that a gang completed. The brick work for kitchens was being done by contract, very well, rapidly, and satisfactorily.

Work conditions in Messina were fairly well established by the end of March, the

THE
MOUNTAIN
COUNTRY



MOVING IN

main requirement being extending, supervising, and driving. With the full number of American carpenters, and the transportation of the lumber up from the Marina finished, the work would progress systematically and rapidly, with noticeable economy of labor and material.

At Reggio, on the other hand, conditions were not so promising. One Sunday morning a telegram came from Ensign Wilcox, reporting that one of his men had been cut slightly in the hand by a native, for whom the police were looking; that there was trouble over pay; and could I come over easily? "Easily" was characteristic of Mr. Wilcox, who never represented or saw a difficulty worse than it was. Lieutenant Brofferio and I went over to Reggio accordingly by the eight-thirty ferry.

The affair of the man having been cut proved of small importance. The native had been dissatisfied with waiting for payment for some service, and was airing his grievance to no one in particular while being taken ashore by this man. The latter asked him something insulting, to which the native replied in identical terms, whereupon the other struck at him with an oar. The native slashed at

him with a knife, cutting his finger and thumb and clothing near the waist, but not his body; then he ran away. I concurred in Wilcox's opinion that it was a trifling affair, that our man was the aggressor and got only what he might have expected, and that no further action was necessary.

The previous Wednesday, when in Reggio, I had asked particularly that the coming pay-day be seasonably provided for by having the necessary money on hand, and was told that it would be done, pay-day to be on Sunday, according to local custom. The general arrangements for Reggio, in so far as they applied to the functions and authority of the American officer in charge, were the same as for Messina.

On reaching the camp Sunday morning, in answer to Wilcox's telegram, we found the office surrounded by a clamorous crowd of workmen, Mr. Wilcox and the engineers inside, with some money but not enough, and with the wage-rates that Wilcox had assigned to the men, respectively, in many cases altered to a lower rate by the engineers. They were arguing with Wilcox that he was giving them too much, although he had in no cases exceeded the rates which the Reggio

engineer in charge had established. The question was about the lower rates for carpenters, which had been established at from three to five lire; Wilcox had rated them all at five, whereas the engineers contended that five was to be given only to the best.

Wilcox's ground, which I fully approved, was that, under our superintendents, the Italians worked more industriously and better than they did elsewhere. There was no doubt about this, because elsewhere the superintendents or foremen were all natives, who certainly did not drive and keep after their workmen as constantly and energetically as our American carpenters did. Further, Wilcox held that unless a carpenter were a five-franc man, he was of no use to us, and was discharged. As he had rated his men on the recommendation of his American superintendent carpenters, who had seen what work the men had done, whereas the engineers had made their alterations in the wages only on general principles, according to what they thought the men were worth, their action was indefensible.

It was a fine mix-up, and the rolls were in no state to pay off the men on that day. However, it was promised that everything

should be done to make payment next day, on fresh rolls to be made out by Wilcox; but early Monday morning I was informed that the money had not arrived from Naples. I had anticipated that and told Wilcox I would be present at the paying off, and would bring money enough, in case the engineers should fail, since it was important to keep our promise to the workmen to pay them on Monday.

At three P.M. Brofferio and I went over to Reggio in a torpedo boat, taking about ten thousand lire. Brofferio went to get the engineers, and I directly to the camp, where Wilcox said that the engineers had sent word they were not coming, not having money enough. Brofferio succeeded in bringing them however; their money was eked out by some of ours, which they would return later, and the men were paid. It was nearly eight P.M. before we were through, but the workmen were satisfied, and the danger of an interruption of work, and having to begin all over again with a new lot of men, all of them second choice, was averted.

Wilcox had a birthday dinner waiting for him on board the *Herm*, but Brofferio and I had to return to Messina. We had ex-

THE
COTTAGES
WAS
BUILT
BY
THE
FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT
FOR
THE
HOUSING
OF
THE
ARMY
AND
NAVY
PERSONNEL
DURING
THE
WORLD
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SOME EARLY OCCUPANTS OF THE COTTAGES

pected to finish much earlier, so no one on board the torpedo boat had had any supper, as they were looking for us at any moment. In getting out from the crowded harbor, the boat got a line foul of her screw, which took more than an hour to get clear, so that it was nearly midnight before Brofferio and I groped our way into camp, tired and hungry. The pantry yielded only some slabs of cold fried fish, bread, and oranges, a none too palatable combination, and, as Brofferio had been dieting, not exactly suitable for him, after such a trying day; but we both felt such relief over the settlement of the Reggio payment that he was none the worse for the heroic treatment.

CHAPTER X

MR. ROOSEVELT'S VISIT

SUCH had been the arrangements, organizing, and progress, in six weeks' time from our arrival in Messina, when Mr. Roosevelt and Ambassador Griscom made their visit. This long awaited occasion had been a spur to every one. We wanted to have something worth while ready for them to see; and the realization of our expectations was gratifying to every one connected with the American building work. For some days prior to Mr. Roosevelt's arrival by the Hamburg-American liner *Hamburg*, from New York to Naples, Mr. Griscom had been arranging with the Italian and the steamship authorities, and by cable and wireless telegraph with Mr. Roosevelt himself, for the German East African steamer *Admiral* to make a non-schedule stop at Messina, so that Mr. Roosevelt could visit there, which he had expressed the wish to do. Arrangements were finally



AMERICAN VILLAGE BUILT AT REGGIO

Each rectangle represents a cottage, five hundred being built here.

completed for the *Admiral* to make a stop of three hours, and she accordingly arrived at Messina about three P.M. of Tuesday, April 6th. Having gone to Rome for a couple of days in connection with these arrangements, I returned to Messina with Mr. Roosevelt's party.

As we steamed into the harbor, the Italian Royal Standard was observed at the mast-head of a man-of-war at anchor inside, which confirmed our expectation that the King and Queen were visiting Messina, as it had been rumored they would do about that time. As the *Admiral* approached her anchorage, the Adjutant of Vice-Admiral Mirabello, Italian Minister of Marine, Lieutenant Carlo Pfister, formerly Naval Attaché in Washington, came alongside with the message to Mr. Roosevelt that His Majesty was about to go ashore at Messina but had delayed on board in the expectation of seeing Mr. Roosevelt there. Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Griscom immediately embarked in the launch with Lieutenant Pfister and went to the King. After a brief visit on board the man-of-war, His Majesty with his guests went ashore, where, at the landing, the King took leave of them, being on the way to Villaggio Regina Elena.

As soon as he was gone, the throng filling

the streets and landing place pressed about Mr. Roosevelt's carriage, so that only with the greatest difficulty could it make its way. First an attempt was made to visit the ruins of the former American Consulate, but the road and the crowd getting worse, this had to be abandoned and the carriage returned southward, to where the Marina was clearer. Mr. Roosevelt then led the way, which was generally indicated to him, to see the ruins of the Cathedral and of the adjacent interior streets, where the débris was for half of the way piled to the level of the second floor windows. The better part of an hour was spent among the ruins, then the carriages were regained and headed for the American village.

Passing by our two remaining steamers still unloading, Mr. Roosevelt stopped to shake hands with the two sailormen, Banask and Patterson, who were in charge of the lumber transporting, and commended them for the faithful and efficient manner in which they had carried out this tedious duty. The carriages and the crowd then swarmed out through Viale San Martino to our camp.

Lieutenant Buchanan had his sailormen lined up and the carpenters assembled, to

greet Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Griscom, and Ensign Wilcox and his head carpenter, who had been ordered over from Reggio for the occasion, were present also. After exchanged greetings, Mr. Roosevelt was conducted down Via Bicknell, then through Viale Roosevelt (which took its name from this event), past the hotel site, and up through Via del Rosso, by Viale Stati Uniti, Via Zaera, and Via Spofford to the camp. There he inspected our offices, general camp arrangements, and the facilities for offering refreshments in our mess-room. He gave the toast: "To every man of every nation engaged in this worthy enterprise," adding some words expressing the sense of deep obligation to Italy that all civilized nations must ever feel.

The time fixed for departure now approaching, Mr. Roosevelt took his leave, after expressing to those engaged in the construction work most cordial commendation and encouragement. The crowd outside was waiting for him, and upon his re-appearance resumed the cheers and clamor which had attended him since the moment of setting foot on shore. "Our President," "Our King," and many other endearing and extolling terms, almost invariably with the possessive

pronoun, were shouted aloud repeatedly and taken up by other voices. In previous contemplation of this visit, I had hoped that Mr. Roosevelt might see what to me was the best feature of our whole enterprise, namely: the hundreds of men busily employed, earning good wages, making the air ring with the noise of their saws and hammers; but it would have been futile to try to keep the workmen at their places while he was passing. The men were in sight to be sure, by the hundreds, and fresh from their work, with tools in hand, nail aprons on, and other signs of labor in evidence. I doubt if much work was done the whole of that afternoon, notwithstanding that Mr. Roosevelt was in the camp only an hour; yet the time lost then was more than made up afterwards by the enthusiasm and stimulus that the visit gave them.

Before six o'clock, he was back on board the *Admiral*, with good-byes said, the whole visit carried through so expeditiously, yet thoroughly, that one could hardly realize it was over.

Next morning about eight o'clock, as Mr. Griscom was taking a brief walk through the building work, an automobile came to convey him to Villaggio Regina Elena, where Her

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145 VIEW FROM THE CENTRE OF THE SETTLEMENT AT REGGIO, LOOKING INLAND

Majesty would receive him. It was a dismally wet day, but the Queen visited the whole village, working-rooms, shops, schools, and a number of the cottages, and discussed with Mr. Griscom some of the features of the Hospital that we were to build. The King had gone to the Reggio side, and towards ten o'clock the Queen left Villaggio, to join him. The close and practical attention which Her Majesty gave to the condition, needs, and plans for the development of her village were very marked, so that, knowing how good the executive manager, Captain Bignami, was, it was easy to see how the village had already developed so successfully, and gave such promise for future good, as a model settlement.

After looking over the site assigned for American cottages and the Hospital in Villaggio, Mr. Griscom returned to camp, and after lunch went over to Reggio, inspecting our village and dining in our mess there. The next day he devoted to other American relief work in the vicinity and to points of interest near by, then returned to Rome. Then with these visits behind us, we had only the completion of the work to which to look forward.

CHAPTER XI

SOME DETAILS OF THE ORGANIZATION

FREQUENT heavy rains which had hitherto retarded the work everywhere in the district now practically ceased, and we could take advantage of protracted good weather. The house building progressed at a stimulating pace in our works, at both Messina and Reggio. More and more carpenters were taken on, requiring more laborers and more carts, to distribute material and clear the ground; and the dry and warm weather brought a new need into the organization, of a corps of water-boys for the thirsty at their work.

Lieutenant Buchanan's record of his daily reports of labor employed showed that on our first day in camp, March 15th, there were six foremen carpenters, one hundred and thirty-two carpenters, two foremen laborers, and sixty laborers, a total of two hundred men at work, the pay-roll for the previous



GENERAL VIEW FROM THE CENTRE OF THE REGGIO VILLAGE, LOOKING SOUTH

week having amounted to three thousand five hundred lire. Four weeks later there was a total of five hundred and forty-six workmen, with a pay-roll of thirteen thousand two hundred and forty-six lire; and during the week ending May 1st, we reached our maximum figure in Messina, of twenty foremen and thirteen sub-foremen carpenters, five hundred and fifty-three carpenters, eleven foremen laborers, and two hundred and seventy-eight laborers, in all eight hundred and seventy-five men, with a pay-roll of twenty-four thousand seven hundred and twenty-two lire, or equal, with our bonus payment, to about five thousand dollars. In Reggio we had at the same time over three hundred workmen, so that the whole number in employ under our direction came to more than twelve hundred.

Besides the general control of the whole force, Buchanan kept in his own hands the management of the force of laborers, who were divided into gangs, for lumber-stacking, ground clearing, delivery of material, cleaning up or emergency calls, hotel material handling, interpreters, water-boys, and carts. For the organization and management of the force of carpenters, however, every one of us con-

ceded a large measure of credit to Mr. Phillips, whose natural bent led him into the position of head carpenter of the Messina division. Beginning at the shop, as a testing and training place for recruits, as well as a producing plant, he went on to systematize the outside gangs, so balancing their numbers, as the work progressed and the force increased, that the several successive stages of building were carried on evenly, and the output of the shop regulated correspondingly. In the erecting work, one gang was required to be clear of a group of houses before the following gang should enter it; and as it became difficult, as the building area grew more extensive, to tell whether each gang was maintaining its proper rate, not allowing the next behind to gain on it, a large "Progress Chart" was tacked up on the office wall, on which each superintendent carpenter would check off each house on which his men had finished their work that day. By an inspection of this sheet, after five-thirty P.M., it could be told which gang needed urging, or to be increased in numbers; and at the same time, each superintendent would state the place and amount of his needs for material on the following day.

The pioneer division in our gang system

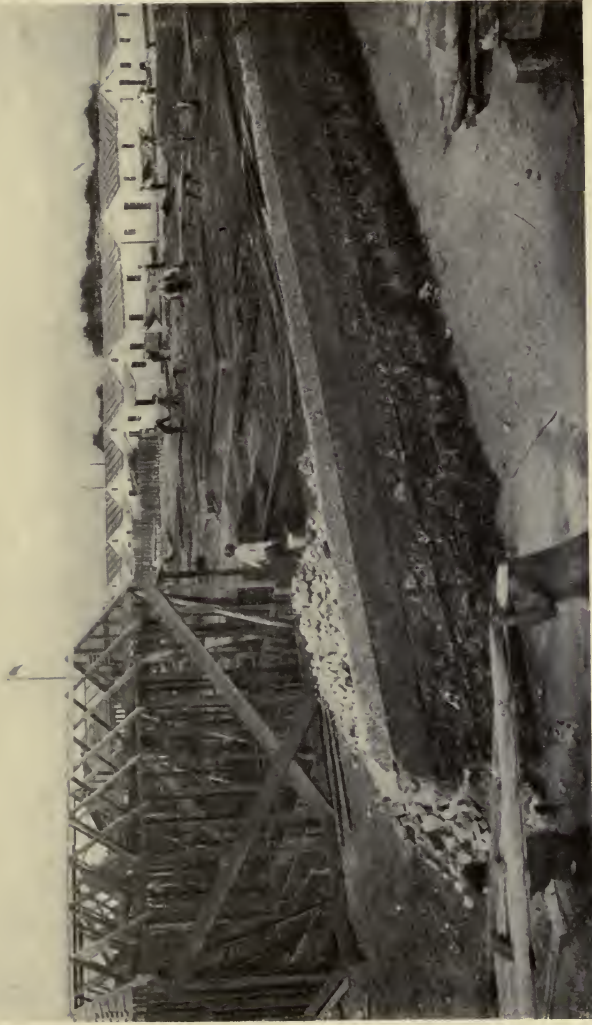
was in charge of Cook, Chief Carpenter's Mate, from the *Celtic*, with a ground clearing gang of laborers, and another gang of carpenters, placing the house sills. He began at the rate of a group and a half a day, or eighteen houses, and worked up to a maximum of fifty-three in one day. His rate varied with the character of the ground, which was part vegetable garden, part lemon grove, part terrace or brick wall to be evened off. Ahead of him went the assistant of the Genio Civile, laying off the corner stakes for the groups of houses; and Cook had orders to keep close on his heels.

The next gangs were in "Frame 1," under Mr. Emerson, who put up the side framing, roof framing, complete gable-ends (which were made in the shop), and laid the floor joists. Following was "Frame 2," in charge of Mr. Cox, placing the end studs, door and window frames and their "cripples," and the kitchen framing.

Then came the "Enclosing" gangs, about two hundred men divided into gangs of four each. In each gang, the first number was the leader, responsible for its work and accountable for all its tools, each gang having a separate tool box, which the leader had to turn in

every night. For every house finished by each enclosing gang, a bonus of four lire was paid on Saturday. We discussed this measure a good deal before adopting it; but it had a marked success, as some gangs would finish five houses in a week, whereas at the beginning it had seemed that two a week would be a good average. A gang would be assigned to a house, furnished with a ticket (a large quantity of which we had printed), showing the gang, the designating number of the house, and the time: and these four men would side up, sheath the roof, lay the floor, and put in the partition. Then the gang leader would report that house finished and get a ticket for another house, to which his gang would *run*, so as not to lose a few precious minutes.

Mr. Neill Mackay managed these enclosing gangs, fifty of them, only by the most untiring and conscientious activity. He was here, there, and everywhere, explaining, correcting, admonishing, or jumping in himself, to show how the work should be done. At the end of every day he would be hoarse and worn out; but next morning ready and eager as ever. He admitted to Mr. Elliott one day, "We have to work a bit hard here—but I don't mind that." I was told by one of the others that



LAYING THE SILLS FOR THE LAST COTTAGES AT MESSINA

This ground was adjacent to the ground first built upon and was used for lumber stacks and for the factory until, towards the completion of the work, the lumber piles were used and the factory torn down for cottages to be built in its place.

he was regarded among his fellows in New York as "a king among men," and I can quite believe it, as every one of us admired his fine, manly character.

After Neill Mackay came the roofers, the only gang headed by a Sicilian, Ferrara, and one with whom our first experience had not been promising. He spoke English, and had taken kindly to putting on siding, not an easy part of the work; so, when the siding on this house, which happened to be our first, was done, Ferrara was set to work at laying flooring, at three P.M. When, at five o'clock, after two hours, he had laid only three boards, there was such mutual disgust, he did not appear at all next day, and we rather lamented a good "siding" man gone. However, the third day he came back, just in time to be tried at putting on roofing-paper; and this he did so well, and soon proved to be so good a manager of this work, that he was put in entire charge, with complete satisfaction.

The last carpenter gangs were the "Finishers," who hung doors and windows, put in the glass, put on locks and window catches, and front steps. This work was in Stratton's charge most of the time, Chief Carpenter's Mate from the *Scorpion*.

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After the carpenters were clear of a group, the masonry material would be brought, and the contractor's men would build the kitchens—their part of them, as they built up against the parts of the frame prepared for them. Then, with a short length of stovepipe in the kitchen roof, and two coats of paint, white, with green trimmings and a brick-colored base, the houses were finished.

Here is a sample of the summary of the entries made in one week on the "Progress Chart":

DAILY PROGRESS REPORT, WEEK ENDING MAY 1, 1909

| Date | Sills | Frame 1 | Frame 2 | Enclosing | Roofing | Finish | Brick |
|-------------------------|-------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|--------|-------|
| Monday, 26 | 37 | 33 | 28 | 28 | 22 | | |
| Tuesday, 27 | 53 | 31 | 25 | 26 | 26 | | |
| Wednesday, 28 | 49 | 31 | 24 | 30 | 18 | 17 | |
| Thursday, 29 | 42 | 35 | 26 | 32 | 27 | 22 | |
| Friday, 30 | 42 | 34 | 31 | 27 | 27 | 19 | |
| Saturday, 1 | | 47 | 31 | 33 | 27 | 23 | |
| Week | 223 | 211 | 160 | 176 | 147 | | 146 |

The rate of progress was gauged by that of the "Enclosing" division, since that was the portion of the work employing the greatest number of men. The foregoing report was



VIALE SAN MARTINO, AND LOOKING DOWN VIA BICKNELL
American camp on the left; corner house on the right used as the office for the occupation
of the cottages, presided over by Avvocato Donati. Gang of laborers in
foreground grading and macadamizing Viale San Martino.



of the best week; and had we been going to continue much longer, "Frame 2" would have had to be increased, as its lead on the "Enclosers" had been almost overtaken. The last day of that week marked the beginning of the end, however, as the "Sill Gang" finished their work at Mosella on Friday, and began the sill-laying at Villaggio Regina Elena on Saturday. After three days' work at Villaggio, their work as sill-layers was done, and they went mainly to increase the "Finish" gang, which had purposely not been pushed as much as the others, because thereby we could hold a larger force longer in employment and reduce our numbers more gradually.

Although our progress for two successive weeks averaged twenty-nine houses daily, making three hundred and fifty in two weeks, or twelve working days, which was faster than we had planned to go, it was found that a still greater rapidity could not be attained, on account of the difficulty of delivering material fast enough for the several gangs, especially the enclosers. We had ten ox-carts regularly, and on some days additional ones; all were constantly on the go, but the distance from the lumber piles, ever increasing, and the soft ground, as well as inability to man-

age a greater number of carts to advantage, made a limitation that we tried in vain to pass. At one time we hoped to reach the two hundred mark in a week before we stopped, but could not quite make it. Road building was not under our control at all, and except in the case of a few of the principal streets, through which it was imperative to have a metalled surface for the heavy carts, our building work preceded any work on the roadway.

It was a testimonial to the skill of Lieutenant Buchanan and Ensign Wilcox, and their respective head carpenters, Mr. Freet and Mr. Phillips, and Mr. Thomas Mackay, that such large working forces were built up and maintained smoothly, without the incurring of any serious difficulty. No fear nor favor was the rule: encouragement for those who did their best, and short shrift for those who did not try. Buchanan's records contain the terse entries of "cause for discharge" in every case—"undesirable," "incompetency," "his wish," "laziness," "too slow," "not wanted," or occasionally "drunk."

When the weather began to get warm and the days longer, the feasibility of extending the hours of work to ten a day was considered,

but the men immediately got wind of it; it caused uneasiness at once, and so we let the matter drop altogether. Then followed a counter move, leading us to suspect that a strike was brewing. Many of our foremen were padrones, and some of these were of an agitating turn of mind, whom we suspected of trying to foment trouble, though we could not detect them doing anything tangible. One day a number of them came in a body to Buchanan, asking for a general increase of wages; but he gave them so prompt and emphatic a refusal as to leave no excuse for presenting their reasons, and they never asked again. Then, as we were rather anxious to get rid of one of them whom we thought was the most to blame, Mr. Freet, who was then running the works at Villaggio, offered to take care of him among his force; and he did handle him so effectively that we had no further apprehension of labor difficulty. We could have discharged this man, of course; but we could never know beforehand how many men would go with him voluntarily. In some previous cases, experience had shown that the padrone had too strong a hold upon his followers for any to remain with us after he had left.

Toward the finish, there was a marked tendency among all the men to slow down, not wishing the work to come to an end too soon. This was especially noticeable among the enclosing gangs, whose proper rate of work could be accurately gauged. As our plans to finish all the cottages by a certain day were being deranged by such slackening, Buchanan mated that move successfully by means of the "bonus," giving out that any gang failing to finish three cottages in a week would get no bonus at all, but those that finished four or more would get six lire for each, instead of the usual four.

Some of the notices to our workmen, posted from time to time, tell their own story.

"Workmen have been discovered absent from their work, idling away their time in a wineshop or elsewhere. Hereafter, every time that a workman is found absent from his work, he will be fined one half of the day's pay. The Sopra Intendente Carpentieri will inspect each house frequently, to see that all the men who should be there are at their proper work. No workman may leave his work without permission from his Sopra Intendente Carpentiere. Work-



PLAN OF AMERICAN VILLAGE IN MESSINA, SHOWING ABOUT TWELVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY HOUSES COMPLETED

Each small rectangle represents a house. The line-shaded rectangles show house lots not built upon owing to lumber piles, ruins, or other obstructions.

men must work for the whole day; any workman who does not return to his work after dinner will not be paid for that day.

“Every workman must wear his arm-band on his left arm at all times when at work; and when he comes to be paid, he must show his arm-band and present his time-check. No man will be paid unless his arm-band and his check show the same number.

“Workmen will be paid every Saturday evening, for all work done up to Thursday night. If any man believes that he has not been credited with his full time, he must make his complaint on Monday at the office, at twelve-thirty o'clock.

“Hereafter, any workman that is absent from work two days in one week without permission will be discharged.”

Some certain means of keeping the men at their work throughout the day, the one thing most important to satisfactory progress, was an early care of Mr. Phillips to provide. A man of great energy and activity, and up to all the tricks and dodges of the per diem genus of workman, he knew how to make life a burden for shirkers. His book showed where

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every man ought to be each day, and several times during the day, at irregular hours, all the hands were checked at their respective places of work. Any man found away from his work forfeited a half-day's pay, and persistent idlers were discharged. Besides these several daily round-ups, it came soon to be generally known that, anywhere on the grounds, the forceful tones of the Head Carpenter might at any time rudely break in upon a too dreamy contemplation of the beauty of Sicilian nature.

With a large increase of the force, and at the same time of the work, especially as the hotel began to assume considerable proportions, this tallying of the workmen took more of the Head Carpenter's time than could be spared on a mere matter of routine, indispensable though it was. Opportunely, Mr. J. Lloyd Derby, Harvard, '08, who had been one of Mr. Roosevelt's guests in the party visiting Messina, had accepted the invitation to join us. He had first gone back to Rome with the two chums with whom he had made a trip around the world, and I had almost given him up, when he telegraphed that he was coming, and, evidently recalling our previous shift to find accommodation for our guests, asked,

THE
MOUNTAIN
VILLAGE



GENERAL VIEW OVER ONE HALF THE AMERICAN VILLAGE IN MESSINA, TAKEN FROM
THE SECOND STORY OF THE HOTEL

should he bring bedding? I replied no, but asked him to call at the Embassy and at the *Scorpion* at Naples, to bring anything they might have to send. The Embassy entrusted him with some cigars and champagne, which was all right; but the *Scorpion* produced fifty thousand lire, which was startling. However, another means of sending money appeared, and Derby arrived with his other charge safe. He stepped right in as Buchanan's assistant, taking over Mr. Phillips's work of tallying the men, and shortly after, as he found time for more, he was made the inspector of kitchens. The shop made him a measuring, or "divining" rod, and he fared forth among the masons, who soon found out that poor workmanship was no match for his eye or his muscle.

We were fortunate in gaining accessions to our managing staff just when it seemed impossible to proceed without more help. The first one so to come was Mr. Gerome Brush, son of the painter, whom I sent to Reggio just as Wilcox was finding more than he could attend to unaided. As interpreter, accountant, and factotum, Mr. Brush made himself invaluable. Then, early in April came Avvocato F. Saverio Donati, who had

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been in Messina and lived in our camp before, as Mr. Bicknell's secretary. He was a faithful and untiring worker, and, with Avvocato Rodolfo Serrao, son of the former Prefect of Rome and Messina, who joined about the first of May, took over entirely the harassing duties attendant on the assignment of the houses for occupancy. The last to join the camp was Mr. R. R. McGoodwin, a young architect who was studying in Rome. We had already begun on the hotel, church, schoolhouses, laboratory, and dormitory, at Messina, and the six-building hospital group at Villaggio Regina Elena. All these were on the lines laid out by Mr. Elliott and the work was progressing well; but in the absence of complete plans—which were more than one man could accomplish, even without many other things to do—questions of detail were continually arising, which Mr. McGoodwin was able in a large measure to settle. Mr. Elliott, McGoodwin, and I made the traditional three required for every good firm of architects; but in justice to them it must be said that, on account of our exceptional circumstances, I assumed to outvote them occasionally, to the detriment of artistic effect.

CHAPTER XII

THE AMERICAN CONSTRUCTION PARTY

FROM the pioneer party of eight with which the work had begun in February, our administration organization grew to thirty at the time the work was at its height, operating in four different places.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Lieutenant-Commander Belknap, Ambassador's Representative, in general charge.

Tenente di Vascello Alfredo Brofferio, Royal Italian Navy.

Lieutenant Allen Buchanan, in command of entire naval detachment.

Ensign Spofford, in immediate charge of cargoes.

Assistant Surgeon Donelson, Medical Officer.

Assistant Paymaster Rogers, Pay Officer of Naval Detachment.

Mr. John Elliott, Architect, Draughtsman, and Interpreter.

Mr. R. R. McGoodwin, Architect and Draughtsman.

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Avvocato Rodolfo Serrao, Interpreter, Photographer, and Assistant.

Mr. Howard L. Freet, Chief Superintendent Carpenter.

MESSINA—MOSELLA DIVISION

Lieutenant Buchanan, commanding camp and in general charge of work.

Mr. J. L. Derby, Assistant to Mr. Buchanan, kitchen and paint inspector.

Avvocato Donati, Interpreter, in charge of Swiss carpenters and of house occupation.

Mr. J. J. Phillips, Head Carpenter of Division.

Mr. Neill Mackay, Superintendent Carpenter, enclosing gang.

Mr. A. H. Faust, Superintendent Carpenter, in charge of hotel work.

Mr. H. A. Cox, Superintendent Carpenter, in charge of "Frame 2" gang.

Mr. J. T. Gray, Superintendent Carpenter, in charge of saw-filers.

Mr. G. W. Emerson, Superintendent Carpenter, "Frame 1" gang.

Mr. L. A. Reinburg, Superintendent Carpenter, in charge of the shop.

Mr. H. Gehlke, Superintendent Carpenter, on hotel work.

Mr. C. T. Judson, Superintendent Carpenter, concrete foundation work.

R. Stratton, Chief Carpenter's Mate, U.S.N., finishing gang.



STREET IN THE AMERICAN-BUILT PART OF VILLAGGIO REGINA ELENA

The boys are sitting on the rails of a bridge, jointly built, connecting the two parts of the village. On account of the narrow space available for building, on the slope of the hill, the American cottages were built in pairs, the brick kitchens placed between, and having a common party-wall.

In Messina and Reggio 177

A. Cook, Chief Carpenter's Mate, U.S.N., sill-laying gang.

VILLAGGIO REGINA ELENA DIVISION

Ensign R. W. Spofford, in general charge.

Mr. Howard L. Freet, Head Supt. Carpenter.

Mr. William Mackay, Supt. Carpenter

Mr. J. Booth, Supt. Carpenter

} These two
came from
Reggio late
in May.

ON DETACHED DUTY, AT ALI

Mr. H. W. C. Bowdoin, although not a regular member of our organization, made all the arrangements for the work in the Ali district, and supervised it.

Mr. Philip Dowling, Superintendent Carpenter, erecting portable houses, and constructing model houses of Palmi type.

REGGIO DIVISION

Ensign J. W. Wilcox, Jr., commanding camp and in general charge.

Mr. G. Brush, Assistant, Interpreter and Accountant.

Mr. Thomas Mackay, Head Carpenter of Division.

Mr. William Mackay, Superintendent Carpenter.

Mr. Harry Randall, Superintendent Carpenter.

Mr. J. Booth, Superintendent Carpenter.

Mr. J. T. Thompson, Superintendent Carpenter.

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AFTER COMPLETION OF REGGIO WORK

Mr. T. Mackay, to Mosella, in general charge of church and school group.

Mr. W. Mackay and J. Booth to Villaggio Regina Elena, for hospital.

Mr. Randall to Mosella, for church building.

Mr. Thompson to Mosella, to assist.

Mr. Judson was first assigned to Reggio, on sill-laying work, but was needed more for superintending concrete foundation work, and other contract masonry work, at Messina and Reggio.

No statement of the organization would be complete without the names of our leading sailormen:

B. F. Hood, Master-at-Arms, in charge of policing the camp, and mail orderly.

D. A. Bachman, Chief Yeoman, Accountant and Men's Commissary.

T. Wilson, Bos'n's Mate, leading man at Reggio.

J. J. Dougherty, Gunner's Mate, master of transportation.

F. Banask, Water Tender, in charge on the Marina.

J. Rogan, Fireman, in charge of laborers with sill-layers.

J. F. Hickey, Fireman, delivering material.

F. Tortorella, Musician, and
J. Grandy, Ordinary Seaman } Interpreters.

H. M. Baker, Ship's Cook.

E. Distupe, Mess Attendant.

W H. Seligman, Seaman.

J. Patterson, Ordinary Seaman.

S. Schlegel, Fireman.

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HOSPITAL IN COURSE OF ERECTION

J. N. Williams, Fireman.
T. F. Bristol, Chief Gunner's Mate.
C. C. Thome, Hospital Steward.
G. Malet, Bos'n's Mate.
S. C. Haas, Electrician.
S. J. Murphy, Yeoman.
A. A. Bowsby, Seaman.
C. Holleman, Ordinary Seaman.
L. R. Pace, Ordinary Seaman.
P. E. Fisher, Ordinary Seaman.
A. T. Ritzel, Ordinary Seaman.
J. Deutsch, Coal Passer.
A. Desio, Coal Passer.

Many of these were hardly more than boys, not long in service; yet their part of the work was important and well done, much of it requiring the exercise of intelligent discretion, persistence, and patience, and the careful supervision of a large number of men. It may be said of their whole number that they conducted themselves in a manner to command the respect and good-will of all with whom they came in contact.

For the extra work that we had undertaken—hospital, hotel, church, and schools—more of the real, experienced carpenters were required than our force at Messina afforded. It became necessary to import some skilled hands; and on Signor Pella's sug-

gestion to write to Fribourg and Geneva, for some Swiss with whom he had had experience as a contractor, I applied to several *entrepreneurs charpentiers* and also to our Consuls at Berne and Geneva, asking for fifty carpenters, on terms stated in my letter, as follows:

“TERMS OF AGREEMENT FOR SWISS CARPENTERS
FOR AMERICAN HOUSES AT MESSINA AND
REGGIO

“The carpenters to agree to work for three months, unless sooner discharged on completion or discontinuance of the work, or for other necessity, to be determined by me.

“Their railway and steamer fare to Messina, via Genoa, third class, to be paid by me; return fare to be paid the same, provided the men keep their agreements; return fare not to be paid for men who quit work, or are discharged for incompetency or bad behavior.

“Wages to begin with day of arrival at Messina, and to continue until day of discharge here, inclusive.

“Men to bring their own tools.

“Lodging, including shelter, mattress (blankets also unless the men bring their

own, which is preferred), and washing facilities (except towels), to be furnished the carpenters free of cost.

“Work to be done on Sundays and holidays at my choice; if no work is done on these days, no wages.

“Workmen to submit themselves to the American Officers and Superintendent Carpenters in charge of the work; and to work either at Messina, Reggio, or Villaggio Regina Elena (just outside Messina), as directed.”

One *entrepreneur* replied with three pages of precautions; a second declined to receive the letter from the post, as I had inadvertently spelled his name the way it was pronounced, with a V instead of a W; but the third went to see our Consul, Mr. Francis B. Keene, at Geneva, who, on the contractor's recommendation of the men, engaged first twelve, and later fifteen more, and sent them down, all having signed individual agreements on my terms, with the addition of an insurance provision and a wage stipulation of one franc an hour. These men came by steamer to Catania, where the Consul, Mr. Lupton, got them free rail transportation to Messina.

Avvocato Donati met them at the station, and as he could speak French, he became their shepherd thenceforward.

The Swiss generally worked very well, especially on the erecting of the hotel. The Messinese carpenters did not like to go up on the scaffolding, and worked rather gingerly there, whereas the Swiss would walk about on the second story frame with confidence. They were also good stair-builders, and in all the finishing work they needed little more than to be given their heads. Our American carpenter in charge of the hotel work, Mr. Faust, and another working with him, Mr. Gehlke, a Heligolander, spoke German, so that they could easily direct the Swiss, through several among them who spoke both German and French.

They expressed themselves as disappointed with only nine hours' work a day. They had come from Geneva with the purpose of earning as much money as they could, and were prepared to work even thirteen hours. Eleven a day was all that was practicable, and this proved enough for them. They were not popular, and had they been more numerous, their presence might have led to trouble. As it was, their overtime work caused marked dis-

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REAR OF ONE WING OF THE HOTEL

favor among the local agitators, who threatened them and sought to annoy them; so a few *carabinieri* were kept always in the vicinity where Swiss were at work after hours, and any disturbance was avoided. As if eleven hours were not enough, they spent many of their evenings in dancing and jollification in their quarters.

Besides the Swiss, we had two English carpenters, who had left another place dissatisfied. They were not very keen workmen and remained only two or three weeks with us. Two English ex-soldiers applied for work about the same time, and proved good hands, capable and trustworthy, remaining until the last of our party left Messina.

CHAPTER XIII

GROWTH AND PROGRESS OF THE WORK

THE further progress of the work is told best in the following letters written to the Ambassador from time to time. Scarcely had we got a large force going at a satisfactory rate of progress, when we had to begin shaping towards the finish. Once the settlement became largely occupied, the presence of such an emergency organization as ours would be out of place; therefore the plan was so to arrange matters that all our different kinds of work would come to an end together, the main body to leave at once on its completion. Further building with our remaining material would go on under local control, as the authorities might decide; and the loose ends of contracts we had made would be cared for by a small party that we should leave behind.

"ZONA CASE AMERICANE, MESSINA,

"April 17, 1909.

"YOUR EXCELLENCY:

"Replying to your letter of the 13th instant,

stating the wishes of Her Majesty in regard to the houses to be placed at her disposal in Reggio: I would recommend that one entire group of twelve houses be placed at the disposition of Her Majesty, at Reggio, as this will enable her to secure compliance with such sanitary and police regulations throughout the entire group as she may decide upon. If only eleven houses were to be so assigned, the family in the twelfth could, of course, make all sorts of trouble.

“Assuming that this disposition will be approved, I will at once direct Mr. Wilcox to set aside the entire group of twelve houses, in one of which the family of Pietro Carone is already installed, for occupation and control in such manner as Her Majesty may direct. He will enclose the group in a suitable manner; and as its location is good and convenient, on the main street, at the very end of our settlement, towards the town, its being conducted on model lines ought to have a good effect.

“Enclosed is a form of agreement that has been prepared, in the attempt to safeguard these houses and the interior space of the groups. The great difficulty is the disposal of garbage and refuse. As long as we are here,

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we shall try to enforce this ordinance; but it is a municipal affair, with which we really have no business, and it is only necessity that can justify our interference. The standard latrine that we are constructing I have ordered to be doubled in size since you left; and if it is used only as intended, it will serve for several years without redigging; but using it as a place to throw tin cans and vegetable refuse will make it an intolerable nuisance in a week."

(Enclosure.)

"Conditions Obligatory upon the Occupants of American Houses

"Zone of American Houses,

"Messina, _____ 1909.

"The undersigned, in taking possession of the house No. _____, in _____ Street, assigned to him, declares that his family is composed of the following:_____

"He obliges himself to maintain the house, which he must occupy, in the best condition, without altering it in any manner, nor its appearance for any reason. He binds himself and every one of his family to good behavior, not to create any disturbances in the neigh-

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CHURCH AND SCHOOLHOUSES

Looking down Viale Griscorn, showing church, built in the form of a Greek cross, flanked by two schoolhouses, the group being completed by two L-shaped buildings, one attached to the church, the other, a workroom.

THE
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borhood, not to keep, in the house or vicinity, sheep, pigs, cows or oxen, horses, asses, mules, or poultry, nor to use the house as a shop or office without permission in writing from the Municipality.

“He agrees, moreover, for himself and every member of his family, not to commit any nuisance in the adjacent streets, or against the walls of his own or neighboring houses, or in the passageways between the houses, but to use the latrine provided in the centre of the group of houses; not to throw rubbish in the latrine, but to place it in the boxes provided therefor, which will be emptied; to use for cooking the kitchen provided, and not to build a fire for any reason in the street or in the space between the houses; and to hold himself and all his family in readiness to assist in case of fire.

“Violation of any of these requirements will forfeit the right of occupancy, and subject the tenant, with all his family, to expulsion by the local authorities.”

Queen Elena herself took a personal interest in the conditions that should be established for occupancy of the houses. Just before Mr. Roosevelt's visit to Messina, I had gone to

Rome and had been received by Her Majesty, who spoke of the difficulties that had already developed among the house occupants in Villaggio Regina Elena, and wished that the same safeguards that had proved necessary and effective at Villaggio, against misuse, uncleanness, and fire, might be applied also to the American built cottages.

The preceding form of agreement was accordingly drawn up, patterned after the one that Captain Bignami had already, with royal approval, put in force at Villaggio Regina Elena; and I gave assurance of doing everything that lay in our power, to aid the municipal authorities in this matter, as it lay with them to determine the stipulations that should be imposed, and to enforce them. Lieutenant Brofferio and our two legal mess-mates, Avvocati Serrao and Donati, took charge of the details of all this; and during our stay in the American village there was little trouble experienced in keeping the houses, streets, and interior courtyards in an orderly and sanitary condition.

As in every other matter connected with the relief work, the Queen showed familiar knowledge of the conditions and difficulties likely

1915



PARADE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AT VILLAGGIO REGINA ELENA, JUNE 6TH

to be encountered, and had devised measures to meet them.

“April 18, 1909.

“I have just returned from a morning at Reggio, where things are going very well, with one hundred and fifteen houses completed, and thirty or forty more framed complete; all their material is now delivered on their building site, and they are in condition and spirits to increase their rate of progress. I have arranged about the Queen's group; so that it will soon be ready.

“An urgent request having come from the Genio Civile and from Mr. Bowdoin, for a man to help erect the portable houses at Ali, Mr. Dowling, Superintendent Carpenter, was sent to Ali, to superintend that work, and assist in any way he could. He was glad to have the detail; Mr. Bowdoin writes me that he has taken hold well; and it will prevent the pieces of those portable houses from being mismated and so going to waste.

“Two days ago a request came also from Palmi, for a superintendent carpenter to show them how to build a house out of our material; and with Brofferio's and Simonetti's approval, Mr. Freet has been sent, our Chief

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Carpenter. He went this morning, taking an interpreter from here, also some tools, and a couple of door and window frames made up ready for fitting in place. His instructions are to build one complete house on the simple plan given, which has been approved by Simonetti, and build also one other complete frame. I gave him all the discretion necessary, and he has tact enough to get along, and patience enough to be of real assistance.

“In general since you left here, events have been thick and important, beginning with the discovery of rotten work on the hotel foundation. It was a great blow, as I had thought that contractor was one man who need not be watched very closely. However, everything was taken down, level with the ground, to be built up again in an honest fashion, and I took advantage of the opportunity to increase the wall-thickness all around; so that now that is going nicely.

“The preparation of the ground at Villaggio Regina Elena is progressing well, and we shall soon begin there. The plan is to do it like a section of our work here, sending gang after gang down, each to do its own part clear through the whole lot of houses, so as to get it

off our hands quicker. The hospital will be done differently, of course.

“Here we now have a beginning of speed, twenty-five houses on Friday, ninety-five houses in five days, three hundred and forty-four houses practically finished. I say practically, because the kitchens must wait until the carpenters are well clear of the whole group, so as not to mix material and men too close together. We paid off over five hundred carpenters here and about one hundred and ninety at Reggio yesterday.”

“April 26, 1909.

“Thank you very much for the cigars and the champagne; I will reserve this for an appropriate occasion; perhaps to celebrate the completion of the Hospital, or of the work. Of the cigars, I took one box over to Reggio and told the Mess there that it was sent with your compliments, and did the same with the other box here. Thank you also for the newspaper extracts about Mr. Roosevelt’s visit.

“The past two weeks have been very full ones, so that I have not been able to get the time necessary to draw up a money statement, but that I hope to do in a day or two. All or most of us have had a little touch of stomach

or bowel trouble, due to flies or meat, probably, and rather disturbing to work; but now all of our fly screens have come and been put in place, and we have almost entirely cut the meat out of our bill of fare, so that I hope we may get on without any further sick days.

“I have not yet closed a contract for the painting; but think I can get it done for thirty lire per house, or a total of sixty-three thousand lire, against the forty-six thousand I had estimated for whitewashing, or a difference of seventeen thousand. Thirty lire per house would mean good work; possibly they may do it for less, although this is lower than the price of painting would be in America.

“Young Derby is doing very well, and helping a great deal; I hope he can stay through to the finish. We are working now for June 15th. Please tell Garrett he would better come down before it gets too hot, and I recommend him to bring a couple of travelling rugs, as it gets cold at night and our beds are none too warm with the blankets we have here.

“Our weekly pay-roll Saturday amounted to nineteen thousand lire, for eight hundred and thirty-three workmen; and there were about two hundred and fifty paid off on the Reggio side, making a total of about eleven hundred.

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DINNER GIVEN BY THE ITALIAN OFFICERS AT VILLAGGIO REGINA ELENA ON JUNE 6TH, THE GREAT NATIONAL FESTIVAL

“ Mr. Elliott brings word from Mr. Breck that if I would like to have a young student architect to help here, he has one that he could send. I would like such a man, not to take charge but to work at things given him, in the line with which he is familiar; and the sooner he comes, the better for the work on all sides, especially now, when there is so much computing and detail drawing to do.

“ We finished the last steamer yesterday, by great personal exertions on the part of Spofford and Brofferio, thus beating the agents' estimate by one day, and saving the Government appropriation three hundred dollars. As soon as we get rid of several lumber shipments for the district between Messina and Taormina, Brofferio will probably go up to Rome, in response to your request. It will do him good and he deserves it.”

The houses for the Palmi and Ali districts were of a design made while we were on board the *Celtic*, containing but one room, thirteen by sixteen feet, with one door and two windows, and a shed roof. They were made as light as could be, consistent with necessary strength; because they were to be built by native carpenters, who were accustomed only to simple construction, and in order to deliver the material

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at many of the destined points, it had to be carted long distances up steep mountain roads. These houses were very popular, we heard afterwards.

It is due to Signor Pella, the hotel foundation contractor, to say that he did prove to be a man on whom one could rely, and that the wretched work on the beginning of the foundation walls above the ground was done while he was absent in the interest of other work for us. His assistant was a man of no force and would make no move to correct the shamefully haphazard bricklaying going on all about him. To me the most discouraging of all experiences in Messina was to find that so terrible a lesson as the earthquake had given, of the crime of dishonest masonry work, was absolutely lost upon the local workmen.

Pella had already had troubles of his own with his kitchen contract. One of the disappointed bidders was the local *patron*, owning the right to the water which Pella had expected to use for his hotel work. The *patron* shut it off, demanding payment; and although I did what I could to help avoid such extortion, there was no other water available, and we found that the fellow did have a legal right, which we could not infringe. So Pella was

out of pocket there, and he had further to sublet a contract to this man, for a number of kitchens, before he could secure peace. Until he had done so, kitchen walls, newly constructed, had a mysterious way of getting damaged, which no vigilance could detect, but which we felt pretty sure was done by our friend, the local *patron*.

On the bad morning at the hotel site, I had found Pella in the midst of all this "rotten work," and in my rising indignation failed to notice signs of distress on his part; but after I had spoken to him as plainly as my imperfect French would permit, I unburdened myself further in English to Mr. Elliott and asked him to communicate it all to Pella in Italian. He did so, arranging everything to satisfaction. Pella, it seemed, had ordered new workmen from Turin, counting on their arriving earlier than they did; but, as they were delayed a day, and knowing my wish not to lose time, especially in good weather, he had ventured to allow the local workmen to begin on the walls, with results contributing as much to his unhappiness as to mine. We had no more trouble, as he had good workmen; and wherever he was himself, supervising the work, there was no cause for uneasiness. Derby, who had

a good deal to do with Pella, spoke most highly of him.

He did us a good service in breaking the combination of masons at Reggio, in regard to the contract for kitchens there. Beginning at one hundred and twenty-five lire, we were offered, one after another, so-called bottom prices, each lower than its predecessor, until fifty-five lire was reached. Below that it seemed no one would go, although labor was cheaper in Reggio than in Messina. Pella, with an eye to the contract, made a sample kitchen that was satisfactory, offering it for forty-five; whereupon a Reggio contractor offered to do it for forty-four. I was glad to award to the latter, aside from his lower price, because he was well recommended. I found out later that he was the son of a large masonry contractor, who had been buried in the ruins of Reggio, and that the dead father's workmen were loyally standing by this son, doing everything for him, as he knew nothing about this, or apparently any other kind of business. We also found out that Pella's competition was not popular in Reggio, as might have been supposed, and had the Reggio contract been given to him, we would have incurred all kinds of trouble and delays.



GROUP TAKEN AT VILLAGGIO REGINA ELENA

Lieut. Buchanan, Sottotenente Alberto Cucchi and Tenente Arrigo Usigli, 19th Infantry, Avvocato Donati (just visible), Captain Bignami, the head of the Villaggio work, Ingegnere Pella, our masonry contractor, Lieut.-Comdr. Belknap, Mr. Elliott, Tenente di Vascello

Brofferio, Ensign Wilcox, Supt. Carpenter Booth, Tenente Bruno Brivonesi,
 Chief Carpenter Freet, Supt. Carpenter William Mackay.

Handwritten text, possibly a list or index, consisting of several lines of small, illegible characters.

The food question really gave us a great deal of trouble and some uneasiness, as soon as the supply of pork loins and turkey and a small quantity of frozen beef had been consumed. These had been loaded on board the *Celtic* for the delectation of our men on board the world-circling fleet; but we enjoyed them just as much, as they certainly did taste good after a long day's work in the open. By the beginning of April, however, we had to depend on the local markets for meat. Fish was good, and poultry killed in the camp was safe enough, and all meat offered for sale bore the stamp of inspection; but, when half the table was dining on soft-boiled eggs, something had to be done, and we could not quite determine what. Dr. Donelson was in charge of our mess and of sanitary supervision in the camp generally; but a steady stream of native patients, from early until late, of all ages and conditions and ailments, left him little time to experiment with the bill of fare. Had it not been for the spaghetti family of dishes, we might have been in a bad way. Our Sicilian cook's repertoire was limited too; but when the Reggio camp was broken up, we took on Baker, ship's cook, who immediately gave us a change and some familiar dishes.

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The water was good, and we found that we could freely use it without boiling. Our supply was so convenient for the neighbors that our one outside faucet, intended for general use, was so used in fact—nearly worn out before the city water supply reached our camp.

Notwithstanding indifferent fare, our mess was a jolly one. Our latest accession, Avvocato Serrao, contributed much entertainment. He was a talented caricaturist, and often during the course of the day would disappear to his room for a while, evidently to record his impressions pictorially. Nearly every evening he would produce one or two caricatures at the dinner-table, setting forth the latest camp event. Mr. Elliott managed to capture all these—sometimes, unfortunately, failing to do so before they got into the butter—and it is hoped that some day we may have them all reproduced.

One evening there was an alarm of fire during dinner, and every one rushed to the scene with whatever water receptacle lay nearest to his hand. It proved to be not smoke, only the dust of a heated domestic argument; but it gave Serrao a fine opportunity to portray each one of us. Mr. Elliott was always repre-

sented with a roll of the hotel drawings in his hand; and Dr. Donelson with a squalling baby on his arm.

For our beds or bunks, we had sea-grass mattresses, of the kind used in steamer steerages, costing forty or fifty cents apiece, and cheap cotton blankets, at two dollars or less each. I have felt softer and warmer beds, yet we soon got accustomed to conditions; and the fact that we lived comfortably in our own cottages for three months is a good proof of their habitability. There were some leaky roofs; but this is a fault shared by some more expensive structures; and in the heat of the day they were hot, as all unceiled structures must be. The ventilators in the gable ends helped this much, but, of course, the best remedy was to ceil the interior, which some of the occupants assigned to the houses very sensibly proceeded to do at once.

Earthquakes were of frequent, almost daily, occurrence. A severe one came as we sat at our first dinner in camp, and the jar and loud rumbling were rather startling, breaking in on the evening stillness, though we had nothing to fear. There were some casualties in the city, however; and our Sicilian servants were frightened and anxious for the safety of their

families. Afterwards the shocks came so often that we barely noticed them.

In the middle of May, we had a severe shock about nine o'clock, our little frame structures quivering for nearly half a minute. It caused a small panic among our workmen, a stream of them leaving their work and coming to the office for their discharge, saying they were not going to work in Messina any more. An hour or so later one of the engineers passed by, with the news that Palermo was destroyed. He belonged there and seemed much disturbed. It began to look like more houses for us to build; but the report proved to have originated with an old woman working in the fields.

“April 29, 1909.

“Chief Carpenter Freet, who went to Palmi last Sunday, returned here Thursday, to my surprise, as I had not expected him before Sunday at the earliest. He had, however, done what he had been sent to do—built them a sample house, of a pattern very simple, different from and smaller than the standard type here, and had done it in nineteen working hours. The local engineer expressed himself as satisfied with the house for the purpose intended, as well suited to that locality. Mr.



STREET IN THE ITALIAN-BUILT PART OF VILLAGGIO REGINA ELENA

On the hill in the background can be seen the surgical wing of the Ospedale Elizabeth Griscom, the gift of the American Red Cross.

Freet also left a complete set of patterns, full size; and the foreman he had employed there was an Italian who had worked in Brookline, Massachusetts, and is fully competent to build more houses of the same type.

“This morning we began on the preliminary, so-called “shop” work at Villaggio Regina Elena, cutting the sills, studs, and floor joists; so that we may, I hope, begin on Monday, May 3d, to build the cottages. There is a strike of laborers there at present which affects the preparing of the site for the hospital; but I contemplate little delay of our work therefrom. Ensign Spofford and Mr. Freet will live with the Italian officers at Villaggio Regina Elena, for the present at least. The masonry contractor has about finished with his part of the hotel; and I will start him on the hospital foundation without delay. Reggio work has gone on well and the report to-day is one hundred and seventy-six practically finished.

“In Messina we erected one hundred and thirty-eight houses in six days, twenty-seven each of the last three days; next week we count on one hundred and sixty, if it does not rain. There are now four hundred and ten

houses practically finished, with sill-laying and framing far in advance. I had expected to turn over a considerable number of the houses for occupancy to-day; but the Genio Civile now wish to construct their standard cement-lined latrine, which will be much better than our provisional one; so that the course that seems to me advisable to pursue will be to notify the Prefect when a section of houses is ready for occupancy, as far as our work is concerned, and let the authorities decide for themselves when to let the people in.

“A few days ago, there was a correspondent here from the London *Mirror* who introduced himself, and to whom I explained things. He seemed pleased with what he saw and inclined to correct the report, which he said the London papers had, that the American houses were finished but the people were being kept out of them. About this, I told him there were already several families living in the houses; but that, of course, until a water supply had been laid in the streets, they would not only be unfit for habitation, but also dangerous in case of fire. Street lamps and a provisional water supply are now being placed; so that I hope the first of May will see a considerable number of occupants.”

“ May 10, 1909.

“ Work is progressing well at Messina, Reggio, and Villaggio Regina Elena. At Reggio, three hundred and fifty-three houses were enclosed on Saturday, and this work is proceeding at the rate of about seventeen per day; so that we count on their getting through by the 18th or earlier. After that, only the roof-papering, door and window hanging, masonry of kitchens, and painting will remain to complete; but only a small force will be left at Reggio to take care of that; and on Saturday next we shall bring over here some of the best carpenters, with several superintendent carpenters, to push the extra work on this side. The brick work and painting at Reggio will hang on for several weeks; and to provide for that I propose to leave Mr. Brush at Reggio, as an inspector upon whom I can rely, to report upon the contractors' work there. I am urging the contractors, and think they will get their work well on the way shortly. Already a good beginning has been made with the painting.

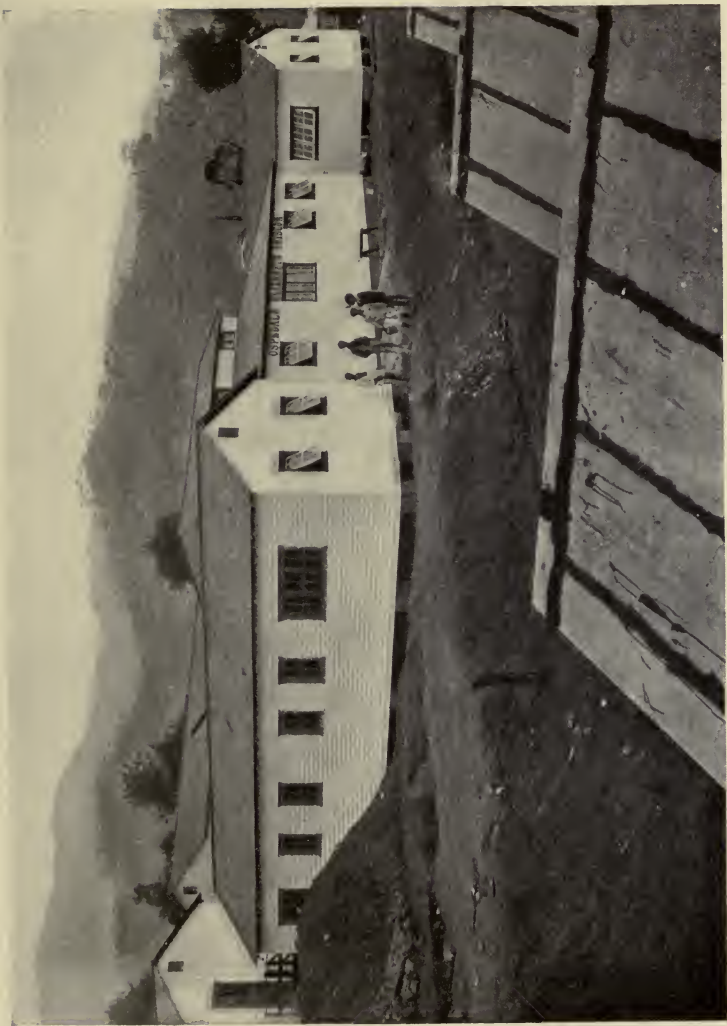
“ I have told Mr. Wilcox to turn over to Mr. Raimondi his one portable house, if he wants it; and also to look about for a responsible hotel proprietor (acceptable to the Prefect)

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to whom he can turn over his camp and camp gear, as this would make a good beginning of a small hotel, and the best disposition that could be made of all that equipment, especially as there is running water in the camp, and everything is in place and use, with accommodations existing for twenty.

“ Here in Messina, we finished one hundred and seventy-six houses a week ago, one hundred and seventy-five the week just closed. We shall not exceed one hundred and seventy-six in any one week, as there are not enough left favorably placed, and our gangs are split up this week on account of work at Villaggio Regina Elena; when they return, there will be less than two hundred to enclose. Masonry work and painting are behind; but both are well in hand and will go ahead fast from now on. So far, only white paint has been put on; yet the improvement is so great that we have difficulty in restraining an impatient populace from rushing the incompleting houses. When the green trimmings and brick-colored base go on, we may need a regiment. The cottages do look very attractive, especially in many places where they are nestled among the trees; and there is nothing anywhere around that can touch their appear-

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS



OSPEDALE ELIZABETH GRISCOM

Built by the Americans and entirely furnished and equipped with funds furnished by the American Red Cross.

ance. The white color marks them out from a good distance.

“All our sills are down, except a few we are reserving for the last, when the ground is cleared a bit. I came to the conclusion that we had better draw the line at a certain street, making, with the vacant lots built over where we can, about ten hundred and fifty houses. Going beyond that line meant the immediate despoiling of a beautiful country-place, small, but unharmed by the earthquake, occupied by the original proprietor, who has all his land under cultivation and well cared for. His gardens and trees are exceptionally attractive; and it seemed to me much better for our good name here not to invade such property, especially as it is not at all clear to me that the houses so far out will be occupied as intended. Besides, after we leave, the material will remain to build houses there, if they be needed later.

“Our other work at Mosella is progressing well, especially the hotel, which will have the second story begun in a day or two. It is a larger building than any one had thought it was going to be, and has aroused a good deal of interest. It is being well constructed throughout. So far, although many are professedly eager to take over the proprietorship,

none have yet come to the mark. Avvocato Donati has a company which is constantly on the verge, but always hesitating. With such a magnificent site, one so prominently in view from everywhere, especially from the railroad, it is hard to see why there is such timidity, if it be that. I am planning and proceeding to make as good and complete a job of it as funds and time at disposal permit.

“After much consideration, the idea has occurred to me that about the best disposition to make of our camp and camp outfit here would be to turn the whole establishment over to the Little Sisters of the Poor. Yesterday I sent Mr. Elliott and Mr. Phillips, Head Carpenter here, out to examine their former building, to see whether we could do anything to help them; but it is in complete ruin, requiring to be rebuilt from the ground up—an undertaking of course beyond us. They still have the property and garden; and in time their house could be rebuilt. Meantime, if they want this camp and its equipment as a temporary dwelling, it would be suitable and available. I know of no other charitable disposition equally good; and as the Little Sisters are indeed poor, it would trouble them

little to move what little they own in, as we move out. Of course, all we take away will be our personal belongings, and everything else—bedding, table gear, lamps, and such furniture as we have—would be theirs.

“The other disposition would be to set up some small hotel proprietor here, the same as at Reggio. Any other course would be simply opening the way to looting, by people who were on hand to grab, to add to that already acquired in a similar way.

“At Villaggio Regina Elena, we began work April 26th and hope to finish the enclosing by Wednesday night, having taken it like a section of the work here, sending one gang down after another to do its division of the work. Mr. Neill Mackay is there now with thirty-eight of his gangs, or about one hundred and sixty men, four to a house.

“The hospital foundation is in hand, and will be done on Thursday, I hope. No move had been made to prepare the site, beyond an elaborate and mathematically exact drawing and calculation of what was necessary to do. They said about twenty days would be required, but I thanked them for their trouble, saying that I would proceed to do it myself, and my contractor has undertaken to finish it

in fifteen days. For every day under that, I offered him one hundred lire.

“To make the foundation secure has cost more than I estimated, and this extra work still more; but I have kept in mind the permanent character of the hospital; and I think every reasonable precaution has been taken to make a secure foundation. The Engineers' idea was to make a masonry retaining wall, fill in, and place the foundation in that; but it seems much sounder to dig down into the earth already well packed solid, as we are doing, and not trust to the retaining wall and comparatively loose filled in earth, done by some one else on contract. Our foundation piers go one and one half metres down into earth that we find solid; then the filling in above it will support the extra length. The concrete is better than most that we see about here in the new work—in fact, it is really good concrete; so that the one-story hospital ought to be really secure. Once the foundation is done, the building will go up quickly, especially after the Reggio people can be spared to work on it.

“The houses here are being occupied, only two or three at a time, strong effort being made on both sides to preserve the hotel



THE HOTEL BUILDING, IN THE MIDDLE OF JUNE

In the foreground are the roofs of Italian-built barrache, standing on ground of a lower level.

vicinity for better class people. One of the houses near the camp has a family recently moved in, in direct competition with the one in the Queen's house in Reggio, for the first baby born in an American house. I shall telegraph the arrival, whether it occur first here or at Reggio."

People of all classes moved into our houses. A considerable number came from the refuges in Palermo and Catania; others from shacks and shanties which had been put up anywhere, built out of any and everything, in the first days of the ruin. In our territory we moved about twenty families out of these temporary structures into our cottages, so that we could tear down the former, which were in the way of our building.

Our plans for turning over our Reggio and Messina camps to small hotel proprietors were not realized, none wanting them, because, for one reason, with so many doors, people would come to pass the night and escape next morning without paying. We did, however, place our outfit at the disposition of the Little Sisters, and they availed themselves of it.

“ May 12, 1909.

“In regard to the houses in the district between Taormina and Messina—yesterday morning I went to Ali, where by appointment I met Mr. Bowdoin, to see what was being done there. Ali is the place for which the forty-nine portable houses were designated, and where Mr. Dowling, one of the American carpenters, was sent about three weeks ago, to take charge of putting them together. It was a Chinese puzzle, but the pieces are sorted out at last; about thirty-five are completed, and they will all be ready about the 15th instant. Some of them have been damaged in handling and by being left exposed on the dock for so long at Catania before shipment to Ali, and all of them show the effects of such delay, but none are badly injured, and a coat of paint will make them useful and weatherproof for a long time.”

The difficulty in fitting the portable houses together was due to there being houses of two different types and three different sizes. Once sorted by sizes, the assembling was easy.

(Telegram)

“ May 17, 1909.

“ AMBASCIATORE AMERICANO,
ROMA.

“ Since May 5th three hundred and seven houses opened for occupancy; first child born yesterday, Teodoro Lloyd Belknap Paratore; doing well.

“ BELKNAP.”

(Letter)

“ May 17, 1909.

“ Confirming my telegram of to-day, reporting that three hundred and seven houses have been opened for occupancy since May 5th, I beg to inform you that, beginning that day, we began to move people in, first assigning houses temporarily to families living in shacks about our territory, where we wished to build; and later, on the 13th, 15th, and 17th, furnishing the Prefect lists enumerating one hundred and eleven, sixty-two, and ninety-four houses, respectively (in addition to forty already occupied), ready for occupancy by such persons as might be designated under his direction.

“ Having these houses to assign has evidently

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been very acceptable to the authorities, as the Prefect first wrote me a letter of thanks (translation enclosed), and then came by appointment to call and to make a tour of the work. The same day also the Pro-Sindaco came, Commendatore Martino, who expressed much satisfaction with all he saw, and was very complimentary, even intimating that he would become a siren, to endeavor to retain our party here, to continue such energetic work.

“Our houses are the first, the Prefect tells me, to be occupied in the intended manner, those previously occupied elsewhere having been seized by the first people who could get into them, before they were finished, many having no doors nor windows hung and being only half roofed. Another feature that gives them satisfaction is that our houses are separate; and they are beyond any question very attractive.

“In fact, the work has spread so since you were here that what you then saw was relatively insignificant. Mr. Derby said this morning that, remembering how comparatively little there was when he was here in April, six weeks ago, he can hardly realise that it is the same place. Then we were just beginning in series

MISSISSIPPI STATE COLLEGE
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VISIT OF THE ARCHBISHOP TO THE CAMP ON JUNE 10TH, TO EXPRESS HIS THANKS
FOR SERVICES RENDERED TO MESSINA

E; now we are working in M; and the hotel second story is up, and part of the roof on. The growth, the white paint, and the clearing up of the streets have made a complete transformation; and from the top of the hotel one gets a view of the whole settlement that gives an idea not to be gained in any other way.

“At Reggio, all but twenty of the houses are practically finished; a large part of the working force have been laid off; two of the American carpenters have come over for work here and at Villaggio Regina Elena; and now only the window and door hanging (well advanced), kitchens, and painting remain to be finished there. Some of the enlisted men will be sent back to the *Scorpion* on Wednesday; and as fast as they can be spared from Reggio, the party there will be gradually transferred to the camp here.

“At Villaggio Regina Elena, all our houses were finished on Friday afternoon; the door and window hanging and the kitchens will probably be done by the end of this week; and a contract has been given to another painter, to paint them by the end of this month. The job has been done very well and quickly, and when the white paint is on, the appearance will be all that could be desired.

“The foundation for the main buildings of the hospital is finished, and the framing is beginning to-day. I will push that work all possible, so that we may leave a cleanly finished set of buildings. The roofing, foundation, and plastering will each cost more than I had estimated, considerably; and the hardware for the doors and windows must be bought.

“Here at Messina, we are on the last week of cottage building, all houses being framed that we are going to build. I have told the Prefect that I would leave here on June 12th.

“As the houses are completed, after Mr. Derby has inspected the kitchens and passed them, Lieutenant Brofferio and Avvocato Donati go over them, note whether they are ready for occupancy, or whether some minor repairs are needed, and then, on the revised list given by Brofferio, I report to the Prefect that the houses specified are ready for occupation. After the Prefect's Committee have assigned a house, the applicant brings the written authorization here, and Donati installs him or, generally, her.

“The new aspect of the settlement since the painting began and the towering bulk of the hotel have brought a steady stream of visitors;

and on Sunday there are crowds, all over the place and through the hotel. These conditions are gratifying, but they make it difficult for us to remain and work; so that the date June 12th must be regarded as definitely fixed."

(Translation of parting letter from the Prefect.)

"PREFECTURE OF MESSINA,
"May 14, 1909.

"ILLUSTRIOUS SIR:

"Being soon to give up the government of this Province for my newly designated post of the Prefecture of Ancona, I do myself the pleasure in leaving to make you, Illustrious Commandant, my cordial salutation.

"At the same time I desire to express my respectful compliments for the untiring activity with which the difficult task of extensive house-construction has been undertaken and carried in a short time to a good termination, by which the glorious American nation has chosen to manifest its good will towards Italy and its fraternal interest for the unfortunate people of Sicily and Calabria.

"Further, I feel impelled to convey especial thanks to you for the uniform cordiality of our relations, personal and official, and for the

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great support, thanks to you, that has been rendered to the cause of public order and tranquillity, throughout this trying period.

“Accept, Illustrious Commandant, the best and most agreeable sentiments of my esteem.

The Prefect,
(Signed) TRINCHIERI.

“Most Illustrious

“Commander Belknap,

“Naval Attaché,

“Representing the Ambassador of the
United States, Messina.”

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

ALL along I had striven to maintain the work at a high pressure throughout, and bring it to a close with a grand-stand finish, as it were; and having set a final date, the subsequent, unexpected development of three church festivals and two rainy days, in the course of three weeks, materially assisted in making our remaining working days busy ones. Still another cause of loss of valuable time was the white bull terrier of the paint contractor, Signor Ingegnere Saraceni, an energetic manager and good driver of his workmen, everything going well as long as he was on the ground. He is the one who said, looking over the list of street names to be painted at the street corners, when he came to "Via McGoodwin," "Well, I can paint that, even if I can't pronounce it." The dog was full of tricks, Saraceni having a photograph of him doing a high dive. One day he was miss-

ing, and as soon as Saraceni found it out, he was missing too; and not only he, but his foreman also, and several of his men—all to search for the dog for a whole day, let what would happen to the work. And then the dog came back by himself, wagging his tail as if the disturbance on his account mattered nothing to him; and, as may be supposed, nothing *had* happened to the work in the meantime.

Our last Sunday in camp, June 6th, the great Italian National Festival, was celebrated at Villaggio Regina Elena by throwing open the bridge which had been jointly built by the Italian and American working parties, connecting our respective quarters in the village. A very festal occasion was made of it, the children marching around the village in procession, guided by the teachers of the schools provided for them by the Queen, all of them dressed in clothes made in the village *laboratorio*, and waving paper flags of all sizes and nationalities, the Stars and Stripes being prominent. Then there was a dinner at long tables under the trees, for the Italian naval men and the soldiers of the Nineteenth Infantry, who had built the Italian quarter; and later a dinner for the rest of us, given by the Italian officers at Villaggio.

The achievement of the Italians, in building and equipping this model settlement of Villaggio Regina Elena, called forth the admiration of every visitor. The site was well laid out; the cottages neat, attractive, and comfortable; the streets clean, with a good surface, and cement-lined gutters on each side. Sanitary conditions were well cared for; and there was ample provision of fire extinguishing apparatus. There were schools for the children, and a large workroom for women and girls, sewing, embroidering, and knitting, by hand and machine. The whole atmosphere of the village was cheerful and encouraging, as if the earthquake were to be looked upon only as a blessing; and when we started to do our building in this village, we felt that here only the very best quality of work would be in keeping.

On Monday we began to organize at Messina for more house-building, which was to be carried on under the direction of the Genio Civile after our departure, using the material still remaining, of which there was a large quantity. All was so arranged that, our work-week ending Thursday night, on Friday morning the men would go to work just the same, with only a change in the office control.

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Ensign Spofford was to remain behind, with Mr. Freet, to superintend the finishing work at the hospital, and Mr. Thomas Mackay with five other American carpenters, to supervise the house-building, until the new organization should be well under way and able to take care of itself. Avvocato Donati remained with Spofford, and Mr. Brush kept on at Reggio, until the last.

The carpenters who remained finished up the loose ends by the last of June and were sent home; Spofford stayed until the 8th of July, when all the contract work was finished, and our task complete. All our houses were occupied, Donati seeing that this was done in an orderly manner most conscientiously, until another heavy earthquake shock towards the end of June, causing twenty deaths, sent a panic-stricken crowd out Viale San Martino, who took possession of every unoccupied house, a proceeding which nearly upset Donati completely.

House-building still continued after Spofford left, in the same manner but with a reduced force, the necessity for hard driving having passed.

On the day of departure of the main body from Messina, June 11th, I gave a lunch in the

dining-room of the hotel we had built, to which were invited Lieutenant-General del Rosso, Commanding the Division, with his Brigadiers and his Chief of Staff, Major Andrea Graziani (since promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel, for exceptional services rendered at the time of the earthquake), the new Prefect, Commendatore Buganza, Pro-Sindaco Commendatore Martino, Captain Pericoli, the senior naval officer, representatives of the Genio Civile, other officials of the government, our own party, including Mr. Bowdoin and Mr. Wood, from Taormina, and our faithful contractors, Signor Pella and Signor Saraceni, the painter. In all, about seventy persons sat down, at a horseshoe table built for the occasion. The room was freely decorated with flowers and green, the two national ensigns draped together at the head of the table; and, barring a rather slow service due to the fact that the cooking was done in our camp kitchen four hundred yards away, and that our serving staff were not only new to their surroundings, as well as to their duties—many of them,—but also struck an attitude whenever they thought a photograph was going to be taken, the first meal in the hotel was a success.

The meal being our last in Messina, there were many speeches, with a warm interchange of the most friendly sentiments, the Prefect saying that the occasion marked the beginning of a new life in Messina, where until now there had been a banquet of death; and the Pro-Sindaco, in the name of the Municipality, conferred the honorary citizenship of Messina upon the officers of the expedition and Mr. Elliott. The first toast given was, of course, "Their Majesties the King of Italy and Queen Elena, and the President of the United States"; and immediately following this, General del Rosso, who was on my right, rose and offered, "À la prospérité des États-Unis; au Président des États-Unis; et à vous, Monsieur!" Later, when I had to bid them farewell, and in doing so commended to their kind offices Ensign Spofford, who was to remain behind for a little while, the General held out his hand across the table to Spofford, saying, "Vous êtes nôtre camarade!"

Shortly after the farewell lunch, the main body left Messina, by the five o'clock ferry to Villa San Giovanni, across the Strait. We were given a popular and official demonstration that will never be forgotten by any of us, many people, even those of rank that had

been at the lunch, coming down to the ferry landing to see us off, and waiting there more than an hour, until the connecting train, very late, finally arrived and allowed us to go, followed by their cheers, with waving of flags and strains from the military band.

Next day in Naples, the Vice-Admiral in command of the Naval Station sent his Chief of Staff to meet me at the train, and at lunch time we had a foregathering on board the *Scorpion*. After our arrival in Rome, Brofferio joined us again, and he, Mr. Elliott, Derby, Serrao, and I had some pleasant hours there, part of the time with Mr. Griscom, who was then just closing his service as Ambassador.

On the day following my arrival in Rome, Her Majesty received me in private audience, expressing the warmest thanks for the work that had been done under my direction, and for the kind spirit in evidence in all our actions. In the afternoon, the King received me also in private audience, had me sit down near him, and talked for five or ten minutes, partly on the relief work, partly on matters of naval interest. This ended my service in Italy, and I returned to Berlin, another officer having been appointed as Naval Attaché in

Rome. After the lapse of some months, when the Italian Government gave out its expressions of recognition for the work done by individuals prominent in the earthquake relief, I had the gratification of receiving most appreciative thanks, communicated formally through the Italian Ambassador in Washington and our Department of State; and the other officers also received like acknowledgment.

What our American party built in the earthquake area may be seen in the following summary; and, to quote some of the things said of it by those directly concerned, a translation of the decree of citizenship, a letter from the Little Sisters of the Poor, and an inscription on a visiting card, which was left in the camp office by one of the occupants of our houses, have been added.

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION WORK AND
MATERIAL FURNISHED

Cottages constructed, each of two
rooms and a kitchen:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| Messina, | 1,261 | |
| Reggio, | 500 | |
| Villaggio Regina Elena, | 75 | 1,836 |
| | | |

In Messina and Reggio 245

| | | |
|--|-----|-------|
| Houses of smaller type, one room, built as models: | | |
| Palmi, | 1 | |
| Ali, | 5 | |
| Roccalumera, | 3 | |
| Santa Teresa Riva, | 2 | 11 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Portable houses erected: | | |
| Ali, | 49 | |
| Messina, | 3 | |
| Reggio, | 1 | 53 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Total number of houses erected by American party, | | 1,900 |
| Material furnished for building other similar houses: | | |
| Palmi and vicinity, | 500 | |
| Ali and vicinity, | 300 | |
| At Messina, after we left, | 200 | 1,000 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Other structures built by American party: | | |
| Messina: hotel building, | 178 | |
| church, | 24 | |
| dormitory or mon- astery, | 15 | |
| laboratorio, | 12 | |
| two schools, | 12 | |
| Villaggio: hospital group, | 30 | 271 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Total of all in terms of stand- ard cottages, | | 3,171 |

Under the last heading, of "Other structures," the figures denote the equivalent number of cottages that might have been constructed with the material used. The labor on these extra constructions, however, was nearly four times that required for the equivalent number of houses, all the work on the latter having been standardized and the men being well practised in their respective parts. Much of the material for these extra buildings had to be cut and dressed down from larger, rough stock, and all was done carefully and thoroughly, in a workmanlike manner.

Allowing an average of six to a family, which is not high for the people who occupy our cottages, the number we built would house twelve thousand; and six thousand more could be provided for by the remaining one thousand for which material was provided.

The church would easily hold three hundred or three hundred and fifty people; fifty or sixty sewing women or other people could work in the laboratorio, comfortably; and seventy-five to eighty children in each school-house. The laboratorio and schools were ceiled and plastered, and built on concrete foundations. All these large buildings are

permanent structures, and should last for years.

The Elizabeth Griscom Hospital at Villaggio Regina Elena, especially, is a worthy group of buildings, based on a substantial concrete foundation, strongly framed and well finished, all corners rounded in the wall plastering, tiled floors in the surgical rooms, bathroom, and kitchen, and roofed first with rubberoid, then with artificial slate. Painted white, with red slate roof, and situated high up on the hillside, it stands out from its surroundings, as seen from the harbor, most attractively, while from the windows of the wards of the hospital itself, the view is unsurpassed.

The hotel building was turned over to the authorities with all the wood-work parts finished, and in such general condition that a *concessionaire* could in a short time complete and open it. The form is a wide H, the central part one hundred feet long, by thirty-two wide, and each wing one hundred and thirty-two feet, by thirty-two feet wide. It is arranged for seventy-five bed-rooms, of several sizes, and thirteen or fourteen bath-rooms, so grouped as to minimize the amount of branch piping necessary. Great care was taken with

the foundation and to make a strongly built structure; and also to make one that should be in some degree worthy of the beautiful site on which it stands.

Nothing but cottage building had been contemplated when we went to Messina, and this task had been accomplished at the rate of fifteen cottages built for every day we spent there, including Sundays, holidays, and days of rain. The other buildings—schools, work-room, church, hotel, hospital—were all additional work, their undertaking made possible by the allotment of more funds by the American Red Cross.

To mark the givers, each house completed bore on the door a plate, reading U^{ITALY} S¹⁹⁰⁹ or "American Red Cross for Italy, 1909." These were placed on the cottages, in the proportion of three to one, which was about the ratio of the respective expenditures of the United States Government and the Red Cross for this particular work, roundly \$450,000 and \$150,000.

As nearly as could be figured, the whole cost of each cottage came to not more than \$235, of which about \$35 represented the cost to the Italian Government. This figure is exclusive of the cost of the land, but it does

include the clearing of the land and all the transportation of material.

" Date 9 June, 1909.

" Subject.

" Honorary Naturalization of the Commandant and Officers of the Navy of the United States of America who directed the construction of the American houses.

(Decree of Citizenship)

" COMMUNE OF MESSINA

" Extract from Deliberations of Municipal Council.

" The year nineteen hundred nine, the day nine of the month of June.

" The Municipal Council of Messina being called together by a notice of meeting, convened to-day in a hall of the Public Palace, with the following present:

" 1. Mr. Commendatore Antonio Martino, Mayor, presiding.

" 2. Mr. Avvocato Auguste Bette, Assessor.

" 3. Mr. Cavaliere Avv. Francesco Martino, Assessor.

" 4. Mr. Cav. Ingegnere Amilcare Martinez, Assessor.

" 5. Mr. Cav. Ing. Arturo Lella Assessor.

" 6. Mr. Dottore Orazio Ciruolo, Assessor.

“The Secretary-General, Mr. Avv. Giacomo Crisafulli, assisted at the meeting.

“The President at 1 o'clock P.M. declared the session open.

“On motion of the President,
“The Municipal Council,
“considering that, in the tremendous disaster of the 28 December et seq., all the civilized nations of the world, sympathizing in the distress of the surviving Messinese, united in various ways to relieve and mitigate their sufferings; considering that the Republic of the United States of America chose to take part in this great manifestation of the solidarity of humanity by means of enduring works, namely, by the construction of one thousand five hundred houses, for the shelter of a good portion of the surviving population, a magnificent hotel, a church, and three school buildings; considering that this new proof of affection furnished by the worthy American people merits being signalized, and that a tribute is due in equal measure to those also, who,

with so much zeal and affection, have devoted to this work for several months their energy and activity; convinced in consequence that the executive body interprets the voice and feeling of the entire populace, in solemnly expressing the most sincere sentiment of gratitude, at the moment in which the gallant officers and sailors of the glorious American Navy are leaving these shores, tried by suffering; assuming, on account of urgency, the power of the Community Council, by unanimous vote

DETERMINÈS

(a) to communicate to His Excellency the President of the United States of America, through His Excellency the Ambassador, resident at Rome, the profound gratitude of the survivors of Messina for this proof of the common bonds of humanity, furnished on the occasion of the tremendous disaster of the 28 December;

(b) to confer the honorary citizenship of Messina upon Messrs.

(1) Reginald Rowan Belknap, son of

the late George, Lieutenant Commander, Naval Attaché, born in Boston, the 26 June, 1871,

(2) Allen Buchanan, son of the late Cicero, Lieutenant, born at Evansville, Indiana, the 22 December, 1876,

(3) John W. Wilcox, son of John, Ensign, born at Macon, Georgia, the 22 March, 1882,

(4) Robert W. Spofford, son of the late Henry, Ensign, born at Portland, Oregon, the 10 March, 1884,

(5) Martin Donelson, son of the late Martin, Assistant Surgeon, born at Concordia, Mississippi, the 4 January, 1882,

(6) John Elliott, son of the late John, born in Lincolnshire, England, the 22 April, 1859;

(c) to make the aforesaid Commandant Mr. Belknap the warmest expression of appreciation for the kindly care with which he attended a difficult undertaking, superintending an extensive and complicated work;

(d) to recognize also the zealous efforts, effective and harmonious, of the other officers and of the Engineer

Elliott, who contributed so much by their co-operation.

“After being read, the present proceeding is approved and signed.

“ The Mayor,
(Signed) “A. MARTINO.

“The Senior Assessor,
(Signed) “A. MARTINEZ.

“ The Secretary-General,
(Signed) “G. CRISAFULLI.

“The present document has been published on the pretorial bulletin of this Community on the feast day tenth of June, and no objection has reached this Office.

“The Secretary-General,
(Signature) “G. CRISAFULLI.

“The present copy conforms to the original, and is furnished solely and exclusively for administrative uses.

“At the Municipal Residency, the 11 June, 1909.

“Compared, (SEAL)
(Signature) “G. LARGARO.

“The Secretary-General,
(Signature) “G. CRISAFULLI.

“Visé The Mayor,
(Signature) “A. MARTINO.”

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(Letter from the Little Sisters of the Poor)

“To the Directing Manager and Gentlemen engaged in the Erection of Barracks at Messina.

“GENTLEMEN:

“I the undersigned, Superior Provincial of the Little Sisters of the Poor, having been apprised of your approaching departure from Messina, feel it my duty to thank you for the great kindness shown to our Sisters in that unfortunate country; no words can express our gratitude for the noble manner in which you have treated us.

“We have every reason to hope that our Home will soon be reopened, as it is the desire of our Holy Father, Pius the X, that the aged poor should be taken care of.

“Gentlemen, you may rest assured that your benevolence for our work will never, never be forgotten; you will always be considered as our first benefactors and our prayers and the prayers of our dear poor will follow you everywhere. If you come back to visit this desolate country of Messina, we hope you will come at once to see us, as we are really your ‘protégées.’

“Receive, Gentlemen, my most grateful
homage, and believe me

“Your most humble servant

“In Christ our Lord,

“Sr. AIMÉE DE LA PROVIDENCE

“Provinciale des Petites Sre. des Pauvres,

“Piazza San Pietro in Vincoli,

“Roma.

“August 8th, 1909.”

*(Translation of an inscription on a visiting card
left in the camp office by one house occupant)*

(A crown)

“Comm. Luigi Majolino.

“Messina.

*(Written) “Having the concession for the Amer-
ican house A-7, No. 11,—before occupying it I
feel it due to salute the Eminent Doctor Donel-
son, Commandant Belknap, Lieutenant Bu-
chanan, and Sub-Lieutenant Spofford, who,
with love and self-sacrifice, have borne in among
us for all time the good will of the great nation of
the United States of America.*

(Signed) “LUIGI MAJOLINO.”

During the autumn following the conclusion
of our work, a report appeared in some news-

papers, to the effect that the houses built by the Americans had already gone to rot and ruin, making the gift after all valueless and wasteful. When I read this, I felt that there must be some mistake, because our houses could not possibly so soon go to pieces. At the time we were building, there were some other groups of houses being put up in Messina, using wood so freshly cut that it was still damp with sap, and many of these houses were already in bad condition before our party had left Messina—great cracks and splits in the planks, which were badly warped and shrunk by the strong sun. It therefore seemed probable that the unfavorable report referred to other houses than those we had built. I was confident that the wooden part of our houses would stand service for a number of years, with ordinary care on the part of the occupants, and my only uncertainty was about the brickwork of the kitchens. This might be undermined by heavy, prolonged rains, of which we had such emphatic proof at the outset of our undertaking. Every reasonable precaution had been taken to make the brickwork foundations secure, but the outlay and time available for that purpose were limited, and the ground was soft from

recent cultivation; so that, altogether, it was a case of making the best of a doubtful situation. Fortunately, no great harm could follow, if a half dozen kitchen walls did fall down; but naturally we did not wish such a thing to happen, sparing no pains to insure durability in all our structures; and it would have been most unwelcome news had the bad reports in the press proved to be true.

Simultaneously with them, however, several acquaintances in Berlin, just returned from travel in the south, told me of seeing the American village in Messina,—populous, attractive in appearance, and showing no signs of dilapidation. These reassuring accounts were confirmed by later ones during the winter, one year after the earthquake; and in the spring of 1910, twelve months after the completion of our first cottages, Mr. Bowdoin revisited Messina, Reggio, and the outlying district, to see how general conditions had developed and how the cottages had stood through the summer and winter. Writing to me in the month of March, he gave the following account:

“Yesterday I spent in Messina. The houses in the American camp seem to be in good

condition, and all are crowded with occupants and very much appreciated by them. They have almost all been roofed (over the original roof of paper) with either corrugated iron or 'Eternit,' which consists of squares of an asbestos preparation.

"The 'Piazza della Bandiera' is filled up with similar houses, which are not made with the American weather-boarding, but with ordinary boards used in the same way; they look quite well at a distance, but on closer inspection are not so well finished. In more than one place left vacant by you (the land was only appropriated later, they say), houses of another type have been put up; but, on the whole, the impression of symmetry remains, and it all looks very delightful and is full of life.

"In regard to public buildings,—the church was open and I went in and found many people there, with lights burning on the altar; it looked extremely well and well cared for. The schools are in constant use. The hotel is still unused, but is now slept in by a small number of people, presumably soldiers, connected with some military board. I think this is a good thing, as they will for their own comfort keep the weather out. The

whole building from outside looks as it did; in fact, I was again struck by its appearance.

“At the back of the hotel there was a small Piazza with some fine trees (lemon); this is now filled up with houses, and part of them are of another type—two-storied with vertical boarding; in regard to looks, it is a pity, but, barring the loss of the trees, not as serious a change as it may sound. On the north end, the vacant space is filled in with houses, and on the south end only a few trees remain (mulberry they were), bordering the road. Yet, altogether, these changes do not really affect the hotel unfavorably; it still stands and looks well.

“The land side of the hotel is now the ‘Viale Roosevelt,’ which they have quaintly spelled ‘Rooswelt’ on the new corner house. The smaller Piazza between the wings of the hotel is put up as ‘Piazza Bertolini,’ which is painted on each wing of the hotel. A simple neat balustrade surrounds the terrace.

“As for Villaggio Regina Elena,—the hospital is still unoccupied, though furnished. ‘Next month’ a commission is to examine it and make a ‘*collando*,’ and then let us hope that many poor people will benefit by it; it is indeed a most ideal place for such a thing.

The houses in the Villaggio are as they were, roofs included.

“In regard to general conditions, things are changing. There is some business, and the population of Messina must be sixty thousand; there is work of kinds, with more to come. The two sets of people that distress me most are the old and more or less helpless ones, and the widows with many children. The orphanages only take those without father *and* mother. Any relief work now is a matter of isolated cases, of course.

“I went to Reggio and found everything there apparently most satisfactory. All the American houses have been roofed with ‘Eternit’ over the paper roofs. They all seemed to be in thoroughly good order. There are several open spaces amongst them, and these have not been filled up, as at Messina. One must remember that at Messina the demand for space is far more pressing, and the Genio Civile no doubt were hard put to it. I was amused to find in Reggio the ‘Via Rosuvett’ and also the ‘Via Brocchlin.’

“Wherever one goes, one finds that the people appreciate as fully as ever what America did for them. If there has been *any* lack of appreciation anywhere, it can only

have been in a few isolated cases. The Lombard Committee are putting up a large building on the land side of Via San Martino (in ferro-concrete), and as it stood back from the road, the Genio Civile ran up a large two-story *baracca* in front! So everyone is treated alike.

"I am going to all the points in the south of Messina district, but still have some left unvisited. The painting seems quite satisfactory. Corrugated iron roofs have been put over the paper roofs of these houses too, and kitchens built on in brickwork. Sanitary arrangements have also been provided. De Giani did everything possible to make it all as nice as could be."

Another, an English resident of Messina, writes: "The American village is splendid,—perfect roads, well guttered; and better lighting than the pre-earthquake Messina ever knew." The roads and the lighting were none of our work; but their being in such a satisfactory condition is substantial evidence that the village stands well in the esteem of the authorities.

The final word comes from Ingegnere Saraceni, who was in charge of the contract work of painting the houses. On May 22,

1910, he writes that the company that has finally obtained the concession for the Grand Hotel Regina Elena has placed him in charge of completing the construction, and preparing the hotel for regular business; and he gives assurance of doing his best to preserve the distinctive American character in which the building was begun. We may therefore look forward to being able soon to find comfortable accommodations in a Messina hotel so situated that, looking out upon the beautiful view, one would never imagine that such a thing as destruction could ever be.

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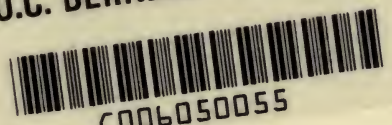
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