

Reflection on Man and Nature's Beauty

Bob Petty

“Beauty is nature’s coin, must not be hoarded,
But must be current, and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss . . .”

Milton, *Comus*

TO GAIN full benefit of meditation one must find a spot where the mind can be as nearly to itself as possible, void of care and anxiety. Thus it is that we so often seek the out-of-doors to nurture our more peaceful and unrepining thoughts. We are indeed a funny animal. We cut down, dig out, and level off. We pour concrete, lay asphalt, and rear our temples till they blot out the sky. Then in our leisure time we race frantically with discontented hearts

to seek the solace of what yesterday was but a pagan barrier to our progress. We go forth with traps and guns, with rods and creels, even with baskets and shovels, as though we were trying to bottle up this thing called nature and take it home with us. We tread its enchanted paths, demanding our share of such a heritage.

Why is it that we react in such a way? It is because in nature we find a beauty unsurpassed, the living vision of a beauty vanquished from the steel and concrete; a beauty, elusive as the wind among the branches, whose taunting whisper comes from the prehistoric layers of our minds. A winding path we follow . . . obscure amidst the shadows, and we are back where the cool breath of the forest soothes our restless blood, where yawning woodland pools reflect the physical conformations of tranquility, mocking our discontent, healing our tribulations, calling us friend. How can we help but love such beauty, when we know that it is God? What truer token could man ask to nourish his faith?

Waiting for the "Princess"

Hans Steilberger

THE bright, warm sun which beamed benignly from an absolutely blue October sky seemed to presage a perfect holiday for us as we alighted from the still throbbing Army truck which had just rumbled to a halt over a pair of railroad tracks protruding from the aging pavement. We had arrived at the Port of Naples. Joking, laughing, shouting we sauntered to Pier D where we were to board the "Princess"—more precisely, *La Principessa*—the compact, dirty-white excursion steamer which had been chartered by Army Special Services to take us, the semi-weekly quota of 30 enlisted men, to the Isle of Capri for a luxurious week's rest and relaxation. We had been designated the recipients of this privilege by our various organizations and had traveled to Naples on the "Eighty-eight," the Army-operated express train which connected Naples and Trieste for the convenience of Army personnel and civilian VIP's only. The truck from which we had just disentangled ourselves had been awaiting our arrival at Garibaldi Station to whisk us over narrow, cobbled streets to the port, where we were now milling about in excited anticipation.

With a feeling somewhat akin to panic we suddenly discovered that Pier D, a narrow, concrete wharf which jutted about 70 feet into the slightly rippling, scummy gray water, was completely devoid of anything even slightly resembling a sea-going vessel. All three berths were empty. However, our first excited speculations were soon in-