Da Charles Dickens, *Pictures from Italy* (1846)

(Naples)
But, lovers and hunters of the picturesque, let us not keep too studiously out of view the miserable depravity, degradation, and wretchedness, with which this gay Neapolitan life is inseparably associated! It is not well to find Saint Giles’s so repulsive, and the Porta Capuana so attractive. A pair of naked legs and a ragged red scarf, do not make all the difference between what is interesting and what is coarse and odious? Painting and poetising for ever, if you will, the beauties of this most beautiful and lovely spot of earth, let us, as our duty, try to associate a new picturesque with some faint recognition of man's destiny and capability; more hopeful, I believe, among the ice and snow of the North Pole, than in the sun and bloom of Naples.

(Rome)
Boys tried to climb up wall, and tumbled down again. Priests and monks elbowed a passage for themselves among the people, and stood on tiptoe for a sight of the knife; […] After a short delay, some monks were seen approaching the scaffold from this church; and above their heads, coming on slowly and gloomily, the effigy of Christ upon the cross, canopied with black.

Da Wilkie Collins, *Letters*

(Naples)
The sea was of the real Mediterranean blue. […] the Islands in the bay showed their lovely forms with a soft indistinctness indescribably visionary and beautiful to look at – and the unrivalled scene of Naples itself, with its gardens, its lofty houses, and its grand forts, gleaming again right under the sunny portion of the sky. Every part of the view was familiar to me, though it is 15 years since I saw it last.

(Wilkie Collins, Letter to Edward Pigott, 1853)

Naples – as far as the rain has allowed me to see it – is not much changed.

(Wilkie Collins, Letter to Caroline Graves, 1863)

Here are all the old stinks flourishing – all the fruit-stalls and iced-water stalls at all the old corners of the streets – here are the fishermen with the naked [mahogany] legs – here are the children with [-] a short shirt on, and nothing else, and here are their fond mothers hunting down the vermin in their innocent little heads. Political convulsions may do what they please – Bourbons may be tumbled down, and Victor Emmanuels may be set up – Naples keeps its old cheerful dirty devil-may-care face in spite of them.

(Wilkie Collins, Letter to Caroline Graves, 1863)


(Naples)
Nothing in Naples, at first sight, conveyed the slightest idea that the city was threatened by a wasting pestilence. The gaieties of the place all moved on unchecked, and the idle and good-
humoured populace lounged about the streets with the same sublime carelessness of all industrious considerations that had ever characterized them.

**Da Wilkie Collins, Memoirs of the Life of William Collins (1848)**

(Rome)

Another of his models was a beautiful boy, with features dazzling perfect, who had sat to every one for cupids, angels and whatever else was lovely and refined; and who was in 'private life' one of the most consummate rascals in Rome—a gambler, a thief, and a 'stiletto'-wearer, at twelve years of age!

The model of the face of our Saviour, in the picture now under review, was the beautiful Italian boy, mentioned in the notices of Mr Collins's first sojourn at Rome. Although the expression of his countenance is refined and elevated from the original, in the painter’s work, the features retain the resemblance to the first study from Nature – thus mingling in the personation of Christ, the human with the Divine, in a singularly eloquent and attractive manner.

**Da Wilkie Collins, The Woman in White (1859-60)**

{Count Isidoro, Ottavio, Baldassare Fosco}

[He] is more real, more genuine, more Italian even than the whole array of conventional Italian villains (Margaret Oliphant, 1862).

He had a broad straw hat on, with a violet-coloured ribbon round it. A blue blouse, with profuse white fancy-work over the bosom, covered his prodigious body, [...] He was singing Figaro's famous song in the Barber of Seville, with that crisply fluent vocalisation which is never heard from any other than an Italian throat, accompanying himself on the concertina, which he played with ecstatic throwings-up of his arms, and graceful twistings and turnings of his head, like a fat St. Cecilia masquerading in male attire.

I am a citizen of the world, and I have met, in my time, with so many different sorts of virtue, that I am puzzled, in my old age, to say which is the right sort and which is the wrong. Here, in England, there is one virtue. And there, in China, there is another virtue. And John Englishman says my virtue is the genuine virtue. And John Chinaman says my virtue is the genuine virtue. [...] John Bull does abhor the crimes of John Chinaman. He is the quickest old gentleman at finding out faults that are his neighbours’, and the slowest old gentleman at finding out the faults that are his own, who exists on the face of creation. Is he so very much better in his way than the people whom he condemns in their way? English Society, Miss Halcombe, is as often the accomplice as it is the enemy of crime.

{Professor Pesca}

Without being actually a dwarf — for he was perfectly well proportioned from head to foot — Pesca was, I think, the smallest human being I ever saw out of a show-room. Remarkable anywhere, by his personal appearance, he was still further distinguished among the rank and file of mankind by the harmless eccentricity of his character. The ruling idea of his life appeared to be, that he was bound to show his gratitude to the country which had afforded him an asylum and a means of subsistence by doing his utmost to turn himself into an Englishman.