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Dear Miss Flynn:

Just a line to let you know that I've finally had the opportunity to visit Rome - it was a trip I think I shall never forget. Time prevented us from doing all the things we would have liked to - but we did get to see most of the more famous spots -

We managed to spend the better part of a day visiting St. Peter's & seeing the Pope - when I say we could have easily spent the full time in the Vatican. I'm not joking - saw only a part of the many paintings of all the ancients - I was able to obtain a copy of a book which describes in detail all the works that we saw - I thought you might like to have one - will give you some thing to use on the tape - when you

start them working on the famous  
paintings - most of the ones I remembered  
from our study of them - I made  
a point to view - needless to say  
it was impossible to see them  
all.

Also viewed were the Coliseum,  
Pantheon - The Victor Emmanuel. Funerary -  
(seems to be partially the Tomb of  
an unknown soldier) - the famous  
Aqueduct - was shown through an  
ancient church - by a Franciscan  
Friar - whose order now uses the  
church - we saw little Roman playing  
hide & seek in the ruins of the  
Prison where once were kept the  
Apostles Peter & Paul - we even saw  
the famous balcony from where  
the now infamous dictator used to  
hold sway - I might add the deathness  
of the balcony - struck me quite strange -  
not at all in keeping with the <sup>as being</sup> pomp  
& splendor that we associate with him.

The city of Rome is like no other  
Italian city I have seen so far - Clean  
modern in appearance - wide streets -  
fine looking shops - people with

pleasant face. & moreover neatly  
groomed & pleasant of manner. Y. I. is  
that have seen Rome are willing to  
bet that there are more or at least  
as many "belle Signorine" - as there are  
in any city of its size in the States -  
to all of which I say - amen -

The trip to & fro Rome was  
equally as interesting - we didn't use  
the same Road both ways - so we  
were able to see a good bit of  
the country.

John Capone in Italy

I think I saw some of the  
most beautiful countryside I have  
ever seen - with rolling plains covered  
with huge orchards <sup>& vineyards</sup> extending back  
to the "piede di Montagne". Here & there  
little villages nestled close against the  
slopes - some times having ancient cattle  
looking dachs on the town & every where  
the trees forming a green covering.

~~By~~ ✓

We passed through Cassino - &  
if ever a picture could be painted  
showing the wreck - ruin - devastation  
wrought by bomb & shell in the hands  
of men at war here it was. The town  
burst upon you - suddenly. From an

area seemingly lightly touched by  
the hand of Mars. you come upon  
the site of what used to be a  
town - not a stone is left upon a  
stone - more words can't describe  
the scene - Some of the natives peered  
out at you from the rubble & you  
couldn't imagine any human being living  
there - We saw the monastery too - or  
what was left of it - I was glad  
when we left the town behind. ✓ and.

All along the way - were ~~some~~  
some walking - some riding on the  
backs of mules, - if there was a man  
& a woman together - the man was riding  
& the wife walked dutifully behind. We  
saw old women - with huge earthen  
jugs perched precariously atop their heads  
looking at us with unrestrained interest  
as we passed - then too there were whole  
families heading back.

We saw other villages - some  
had been hit harder than others. In some  
people had started to rebuild - in  
others families had shoveled away  
some of the debris in the dwellings &  
set up hawking again.

Throughout the whole trip - I couldn't help but get the picture of contrast - which was here - Beauty & horror - a countryside untouched by the war - & Cassino - now in Rome - The ancient & for all its age imposing Basilica - & the modern buildings which had sprung up amongst the ruins of what had once been the greatest city in the world.

One of the boys from our Squadron wrote a poem about this strange situation of contrast - I think its about the finest thing of its sort I've ever read - it certainly presents you with a true & I. view of ~~Rome~~ <sup>Italy</sup> - hope you will like it.

Finally heard from Lido - also received a fine letter from his wife - good hearing from them - no word from the other part of the triumvirate - Any news of the whereabouts of Big Ed. The "Skeeters" are waging a ~~win~~ tireless battle & are out to win by the sheer weight of numbers - Hope to hear from some of the gang soon -

Sincerely  
John

If I were an artist with nothing to do  
I'd paint a picture, a composite view  
Of historic Italy in which I'd show  
Visions of contrast, the high and the low  
There'd be towering mountains, a deep  
blue sea

Filthy brats yelling "Caramella" at me  
High plumed horses and colorful carts  
Two toned tresses on hustling tarts  
I'd show the Napoleonic cops (the  
carabinieri)

Dejected old women with too much to carry  
A dignified oldster with a Balboa beard  
Barebottomed bambinoes, both ends smeared  
Castle and palace, opera house too  
Hotel in the mountains--marvelous view  
Homes constructed of wood, bricks and mud  
Scabby people with scurvy and crud  
Chapels and churches great to behold  
Each a king's ransom in glittering gold  
Poverty and want--men craving food  
Picking through garbage practically nude  
Stately cathedrals with high toned bells  
Covered smelters with horrible smells  
Molding catacombs, a place for the dead  
Noisy civilians clamoring for bread  
Palatial villas with palm trees tall  
A stinking hovel, mere hole in the wall  
Tree fringed lawns swept by the breeze  
Goats wading in filth up to their knees  
Revealing statues all details complete  
A sensual lass with sores on her feet  
Big breasted damsels but never a bra  
Bumping against you--there should be a law  
Creeping boulevards, a spangled team  
Alleys that wind like a dope fiends dream  
Flowers blooming on the side of a hill  
A sidewalk latrine with privacy nil  
Two-by-four shops with shelving all bare  
Gesturing merchants arms flailing the air  
Narrow gauge sidewalk more like a shelf  
Butt-puffing youngster scratching himself  
Lumbering carts hogging the road  
Nondescript trucks frequently towed  
Diminutive donkeys loaded for bear  
Horse-drawn taxis seeking a fare  
Determined pedestrians courting disaster  
Walking in gutters where movement is  
faster

Italian drivers all accident bound  
Weaving and twisting to cover the ground  
Homemade brooms--weeds tied to a stick  
Used on the streets to clean off the brick  
Bicycles and pushcarts blocking your path  
Street corner politicians needing a bath  
Barbers galore with manners quite mild  
Prolific women all heavy with child

Are YOU happy in the Service?

score

Caused by his bonus which now is no more  
Arrogant wretches picking up snipes  
Miniature Flats of various types  
Young street singer, a hand organ tune  
Shoe shining boys; a sidewalk saloon  
A beauteous maiden, a smile on her face  
With a breath of garlic fouling the place  
Listless housewife no shoes on her feet  
Washing and cooking right out on the  
street

A family wash of tattle-tale grey  
Hangs from the balcony, blocking the way  
Native coffee--God what a mixture!  
Tiled bathrooms with one extra fixture  
Families dining from one common bowl  
Next to a fish store--a horrible hole  
Italian zoot-suiters, flashily dressed  
Barefooted beggars looking depressed  
Mud-smeared children clustering about  
Filling their jugs from a community  
A dutiful mother with a look of despair  
Picking the lice from her small daughter's  
hair

Capable craftsmen skilled in the art  
Decrepit old shacks, falling apart  
Intricate needlework out on display  
Surrounded by filth and rot and decay  
Elegant caskets carved out by hand  
Odorous factories where leather is tanned  
A shoemaker's shop--a black market store  
Crawling with vermin--no screens on the  
door

I've tried to describe the things that  
I've seen  
Panorama of Italy, the brown and the green  
I've neglected the war scars visible yet  
But those are the things we want to forget  
I'm glad that I came, but damned anxious  
to go  
Give it back to the natives, I'm ready to  
blow!

\* \* \*

That anonymous work, appropriated from  
Major Weir's station, undoubtedly deserves  
comment but we'd rather let you make your  
own. To you who have never been to Italy  
it truly pictures what you may find today.  
WHO will write us one about Africa?  
And then, from the pen of S/Sgt. Charles C.  
MacKechnie regarding an ending for his  
STATION DIARY: "We have w wonderful clos-  
ing chapter in mind. It has to do with  
the Statue of Liberty, bottles of milk and  
green slacks with a blue shirt and a purple  
tie if you feel like it and with eat-  
ing off plates. It's a silly enough  
chapter but one happily enough written--  
God willing."