

WILLIAM WALDORF ASTOR'S PURCHASE FOR A VILLA ON THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST.  
 (1) The villa; (2) the convent and church, included in the purchase; (3) Mount Vesuvius in the distance.

**A VILLA AT SORRENTO.**

*Bought by William Waldorf Astor—  
 Overlooks Bay of Naples.*

William Waldorf Astor has bought, in the old town of Sorrento, Italy, a villa, a convent and a church on the cliffs. The Mediterranean Sea laps the rocks over a hundred feet below. From the front windows one can see Vesuvius spouting smoke by day and fire by night, and the lights of Naples crowning her lovely bay.

Its comparative remoteness from the centres of trade and commerce probably forms a part of the charm of the lovely Italian town of Sorrento in the eyes of Mr. Astor, worn with the duties of a rich man and an editor in busy, noisy London. No railroad reaches Sorrento to disturb its calm. Twice a day a steamer from Naples halts under its cliffs, and discharges, in the small boats which swarm about it like busy bees, a bevy of tourists and travellers; then the steamer goes to the Island of Capri. One may come by carriage from Castellammare, the nearest railroad station, ten miles away, or from Amalfi, on the Gulf of Salerno, covering in the latter case the fifteen miles which are said to constitute the most beautiful drive in the world.

Mr. Astor's villa stands on a point of rock jutting out into the sea between the orange and lemon groves which separate the old city walls from the hills to the southwest of the town, and the old church and monastery of San Giorgio, whose picturesque pink arches are now also his property. The monastery and church of San Giorgio were built as early as the thirteenth century. Until the beginning of the seventeenth century they sheltered a community of Dominican nuns. Daily, for centuries in the old church, now so bare and silent, rose their prayers and chants. When the Saracens ravaged the coast in the latter part of the sixteenth century the convent was nearly destroyed. Afterward it was suppressed by the Archbishop of the diocese, and it then became a monastery of the Dominican Friars. About 1835 it passed into the hands of the Jesuits, who occupied it until the suppression of convents and monasteries by the Italian government in 1860. The property was then bought by a private family, who, in turn, are selling it to Mr. Astor.

Not another site on the cliffs of Sorrento gives as fine a view as that occupied by the suppressed monastery of San Giorgio. Built with offices and church on the first floor, cool cells on the next floor, and a third floor above that, it is a spacious dwelling, containing about seventy rooms in all. A lovely garden and spacious terrace, besides a private balcony to every cell, complete so luxurious a residence that, if it were still open, many Americans, weary of the strenuous life, would be tempted to enter it to remain for the rest of their days. Underneath the convent is still another sub-story, too light and too airy to be called a cellar. The subterranean passages penetrate the soft, volcanic rock in every direction. Some of them go down to the sea, where they end in a covered grotto once used as a bath. Tradition has it that others go far underneath the town, perhaps connecting with another convent or church a quar-

ter of a mile away, to be used as a means of escape in time of danger.

The villa stands on what was originally part of the garden of San Giorgio. It has spacious halls with marble staircases, lofty rooms, terraces overlooking the sea, a well laid out garden with many rare roses in it. The price paid for the villa and its grounds was about \$22,000, and for the convent property about the same.

The honeycombed cliffs of Sorrento, full of grottos, are a most interesting sight. Many of the passages are made by the continual lapping of the sea on the soft rock of volcanic origin. Others are partly the result of man's labor, and have been hollowed out or bricked up, and are used as storehouses for boats and various fishing implements. Others connect with the dwellings above them in a most picturesque manner by steps and galleries cut in

the stone. Several of the hotels have used the cliffs as a partial support for their elevators. The tourist arriving by sea enters an hydraulic lift, which crawls up the face of the cliff some two hundred feet.

In the lower part of the rock on which Mr. Astor's villa stands is a grotto in which is said to have been a church. Carved in the solid rock is a tall entrance through which one now rows in a boat. The keel of the boat grounds in the shallow water, lapping the stones where, it is said, the high altar once stood. The water is beautifully clear, and the old church would make an ideal private bath. All Mr. Astor will have to do will be to cut a larger passage between the church and the Jesuit bath below the convent. He will then have an extraordinarily large private bath, and only one who has wrestled with the question of tubs in Italy can appreciate the luxury of such a state of things.

**FLIES LIKE A BIRD.**

*Successful Experiments with an  
 Aeroplane in California.*

San Francisco, May 27.—At Santa Clara College a public exhibition was given the other day of Professor John Montgomery's aeroplane, or new flying machine. Several thousand persons were present, including the faculty and students of the college. The inventor regarded the test as successful, as the aeroplane was made to sail against the wind and to circle about at the will of the operator. In fact, those who saw it describe its flight as more nearly like that of a bird than has been achieved by any other flying machine.

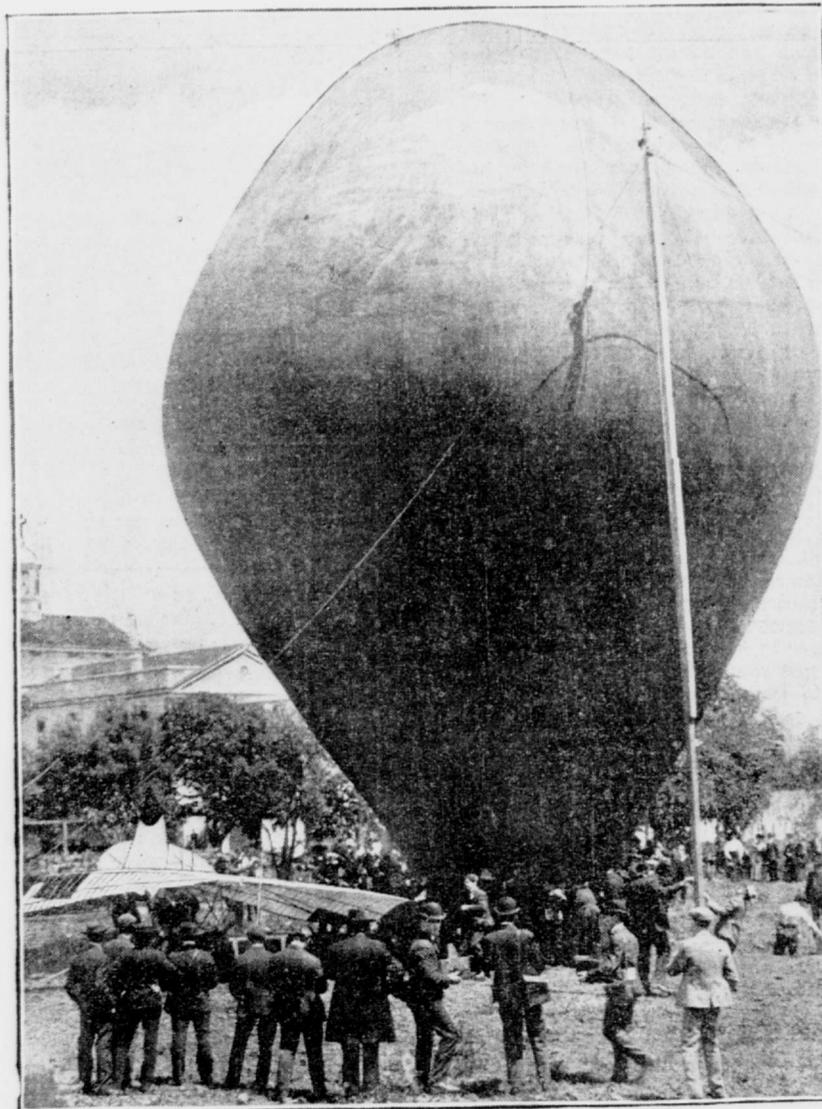
The aeroplane looks like a big butterfly. There are two double wings on each side, one set rigid and the other capable of being moved by the operator, who sits between them in a kind of saddle and regulates the wings by his feet, which rest in stirrups. The spread of the wings from tip to tip is twenty-two feet. The tail and rudder measure six feet across. The weight of the whole machine is forty-five pounds. By lowering or raising the tail with cords held in the operator's hands the course of the machine may be guided. The machine must be lifted to a considerable height before it can be used, and for this purpose an ordinary balloon is employed.

At Santa Clara John Maloney, an expert aeronaut, was in charge of the novel flying machine. After the aeroplane had been blessed by Father Kenna, Maloney prepared for the ascent, but before he was quite ready the guy rope broke and the huge balloon rose, taking the machine with it. When it reached a height of 2,000 feet Maloney cut the rope that held his machine to the balloon. For a moment it looked as though the aeroplane was about to drop gradually like a parachute, but Maloney quickly gained control of it and then began to soar upward. The motion of the aeroplane was much like that of a bird. It dipped and then sailed with the wings perfectly still, as an eagle or a hawk soars. Maloney circled about within a radius of 100 feet to show that he had complete control of his machine; then he swooped down, and suddenly elevating the tail shot upward again. It could be clearly seen that he guided the machine at will. After a few minutes he began to prepare for his descent, and to prove that he was really in control of the aeroplane he actually landed in a wheat field which Professor Montgomery had selected as the safest place for a descent. The aeroplane came down quietly, without any damage to itself or the aeronaut.

Maloney, who guided the aeroplane, said after his descent:

I circled several times in both directions, both rapidly and slowly, and twice I turned and rose upon the wind, ascending about twenty or thirty

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PROFESSOR JOHN MONTGOMERY'S NEW FLYING MACHINE.  
 The aeroplane is seen at the side of the big balloon, which is used to raise it high in air before the flight begins.

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