

In the spring of 1864, Yule took a spacious and delightful old villa, situated in the highest part of the Bagni di Lucca,⁵⁵ and commanding lovely views over the surrounding chestnut-clad hills and winding river.

Here he wrote much of what ultimately took form in *Cathay, and the Way Thither*. It was this summer, too, that Yule commenced his investigations among the Venetian archives, and also visited the province of Friuli in pursuit of materials for the history of one of his old travellers, the *Beato Odorico*. At Verona—then still Austrian—he had the amusing experience of being arrested for sketching too near the fortifications. However, his captors had all the usual Austrian *bonhomie* and courtesy, and Yule experienced no real inconvenience. He was much more disturbed when, a day or two later, the old mother of one of his Venetian acquaintances insisted on embracing him on account of his supposed likeness to Garibaldi!

As winter approached, a warmer climate became necessary for Mrs. Yule, and the family proceeded to Sicily, landing at Messina in October, 1864. From this point, Yule made a very interesting excursion to the then little known group of the Lipari Islands, in the company of that eminent geologist, the late Robert Mallet, F.R.S., a most agreeable companion.

On Martinmas Day, the Yules reached the beautiful capital of Sicily, Palermo, which, though they knew it not, was to be their home—a very happy one—for nearly eleven years.

During the ensuing winter and spring, Yule continued the preparation of *Cathay*, but his appetite for work not being satisfied by this, he, when in London in 1865, volunteered to make an Index to the third decade of the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, in exchange for a set of such volumes as he did not possess. That was long before any Index Society existed; but Yule had special and very strong views of his own as to what an Index should be, and he spared no labour to realise his ideal.⁵⁶ This proved a heavier task than he had anticipated, and he got very weary before the Index was completed.

⁵⁵ Villa Mansi, nearly opposite the old Ducal Palace. With its private chapel, it formed three sides of a small *place* or court.

⁵⁶ He also at all times spared no pains to enforce that ideal on other index-makers, who were not always grateful for his sound doctrine!