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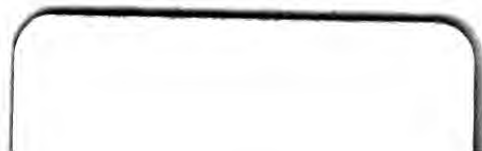
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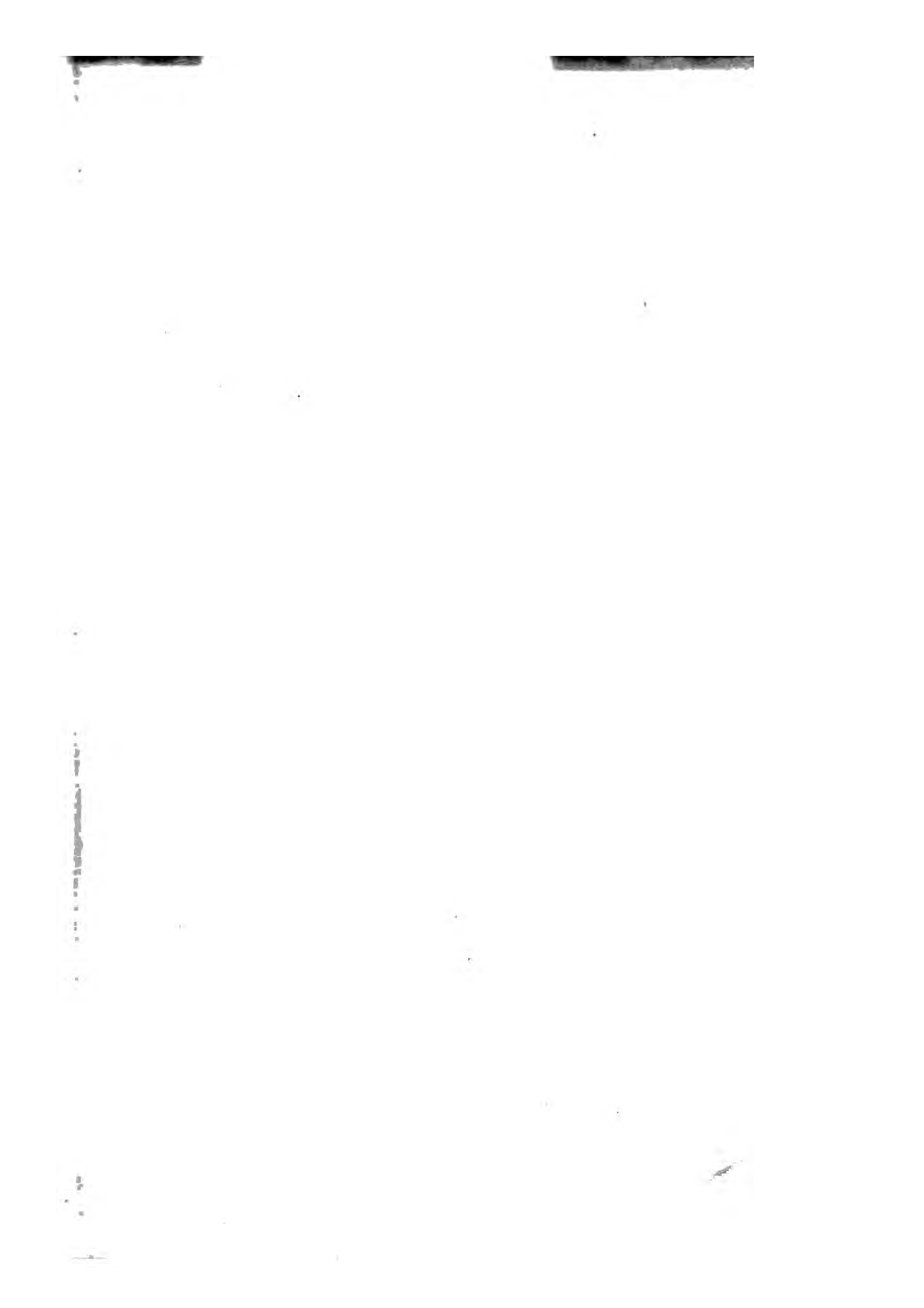
BY

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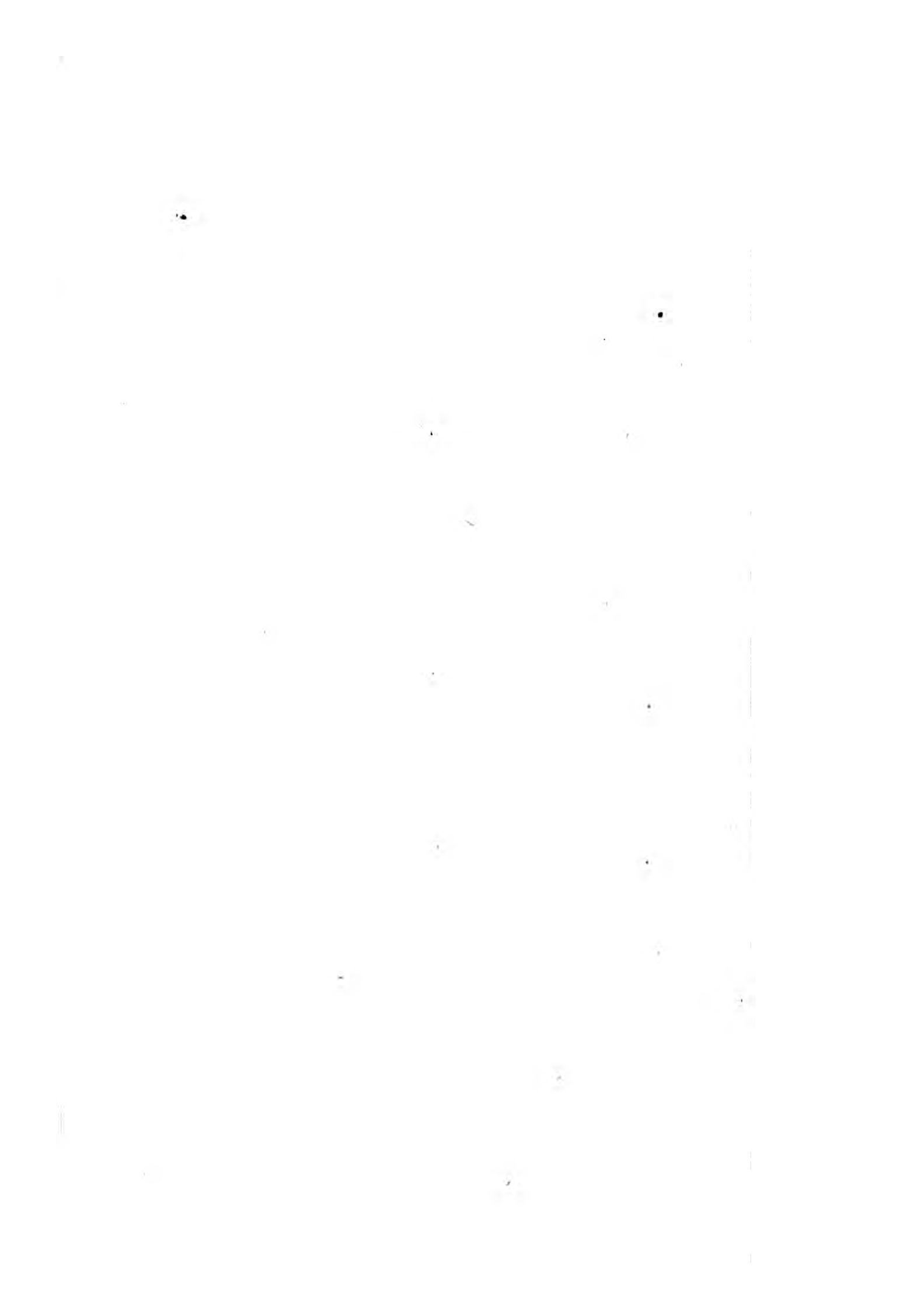












THE  
PRESENT STATE  
OF  
SICILY and MALTA,  
EXTRACTED FROM  
Mr. BRYDONE, Mr. SWINBURNE,  
AND OTHER  
MODERN TRAVELLERS.



L O N D O N.

PRINTED FOR G. KEARSLEY, AT JOHNSON'S HEAD,  
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M D C C L X X V I I I.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Work was originally compiled by a Person of distinguished Abilities, for the Use of some Young People, and contains all that is interesting in Mr. Brydone's Tour, and Mr. Swinburne's Travels ; the very curious Observations of Sir W. Hamilton, on the Earthquake at Messina ; the Substance of Vertot's Knights of Malta, &c. The Publisher flatters himself that it will be found not only one of the most Entertaining Books for Young Persons, but a complete Guide to the curious Traveller who intends to visit those Regions, so remarkable for all the Wonders of Art and Nature.

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C H A P I.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY, GOVERNMENT, LANGUAGE, COMMERCE, &c. OF SICILY.

**T**HE island of Sicily is situated in the Mediterranean sea, adjoining to the Southern extremity of Italy, and extends from latitude 36 25, to latitude 38 25, and from longitude 12 50, to longitude 16 5, East from London. Its form is triangular; its greatest length is 210, its breadth 133, and its circumference 600 miles.

Sicily is divided into three great provinces, the largest of which is called Val Demoni (probably from the infernal beings who were supposed to people Mount Etna); the second Val di Mazzara, which is named from a city in this district; and the third, Val di Noto, so called from its principal towns. This island, which is annexed to the kingdom of Naples,

is governed by a viceroy, in whose absence the Archbishop of Palermo is sole regent. The general assembly of parliament is composed of 66 Ecclesiastics of various ranks, which form the *Bracchio Ecclesiastico*; two hundred and twenty nine nobles form the military; and the *Demaniale* consists of forty-three representatives of free towns. Out of each *bracchio* four deputies are chosen to conduct public business. But the viceroy, the prince of Butera, and the prætor of Palermo are always the three first. There are several noblemen who have no seat in this national assembly.

It is not easy to ascertain, nor indeed is it of great importance to know by whom Sicily was first inhabited. At a very early period the Greeks, allured by its convenient harbours, seized upon the maritime parts of the island, and drove the ancient possessors into the mountainous parts of the country. In this situation they remained for some time in an uncivilized state, but at length they incorporated with the invaders, and, by degrees, their name, race, and character became undistinguishably blended with that of their conquerors. The government of the Greek settlements was at first aristocratical, but this soon gave place to tyranny, which in its turn was expelled by democracy. Phalaris of Agrigentum, who reigned 600 years before Christ, was one of the earliest destroyers of liberty; his example proved contagious, a legion of tyrants sprang up, and not a commonwealth

wealth in the island escaped the lash of a cruel and insolent usurper.

But the Sicilian Greeks did not long enjoy the sweets of this delightful situation without molestation. About 500 years before the christian æra, large bodies of forces from Carthage invaded the island and reduced all the Western parts of it to their subjection.

Under Marcellus, Sicily was vanquished by the all-conquering power of Rome, and became a province to that celebrated empire. From being a country famous for the scene of great and martial achievements, it from this period turned its attention to the not less honourable, though less splendid exertions of industry. Its agriculture was a rich source of wealth to the inhabitants, and those riches drew upon them the dreadful and insupportable evil of needy and rapacious governors. In the 7th century its tranquillity was disturbed by the invasions of the Saracens, who in the 9th century completely conquered it, chose Palermo for their capital, and ruled the country about two hundred years; but in 1072 the victorious arms of the Normans prevailed over these fierce invaders, the Saracens after a struggle of ten years were compelled to relinquish this valuable prize, and the valiant Roger of Hauteville assumed the reins of government, and the title of Great Earl of Sicily.

This prince, illustrious for his wisdom, his virtues, and his success, continued the seat of government at Palermo, but modelled its constitution anew, and

fixed it upon a solid basis, the form of which is still retained. After several vicissitudes, Sicily submitted to the claims of Charles of Anjou; but roused to fury by the contempt with which they were treated by this severe and insolent prince, the inhabitants rose to arms, slew his rapacious minions, and in 1232 offered the crown to Peter King of Arragon. On a defect of issue in the house of Arragon, it descended into that of Castile. At the peace of Utrecht Sicily was ceded to Victor, Duke of Savoy, but relinquished by him to the Emperor Charles the VIth. in exchange for Sardinia. The Spaniards however attempted to recover it, and in 1734 the infant Don Carlos drove out the Germans, and was crowned king of the two Sicilies, at Palermo. When he succeeded to the possession of the Spanish crown he transferred the Sicilian diadem to his son Ferdinand the third king of Sicily, and fourth of Naples.

The oldest language spoken in this island, of which any remains are left, is the Phœnician, which exists on numberless coins of all metals, and in some inscriptions. The Greek was introduced by two sets of colonists; in one the Doric dialect prevailed, in the other the Attic. The Grecian language continued without mixture till Augustus sent eight bodies of Roman citizens to form colonies in various parts of Sicily, which gradually introduced Latin into common use, and corrupted the Greek. Under the government of the Saracens, the Greek idiom very rapidly declined, and the Arabic was introduced into  
histories

histories, inscriptions, and coins. Since the invasion of the Normans, a variety of masters have introduced a variety of languages, and that dialect, the Roman, German, Italian, Spanish, and some remains of the ancient tongue, have imperceptibly coalesced in composing the present vernacular idiom.

The commerce of Sicily is almost entirely of a passive nature, arising from the necessity of disposing of its superfluous products in exchange for those of foreign countries, which habit and luxury have rendered necessary for the support, cloathing, or convenience of its inhabitants. It receives most of its imports through the medium of a consignment to Naples. The numerous rich articles produced in Sicily are so necessary to the convenience of other nations, that its profits and prosperity would be unbounded, were it not for a multitude of vicious arrangements, and pernicious shackles with which its commerce is harrassed and wasted away. The proportions and modes of collecting observed in the management of the customs are extremely uncertain and various, and agree in nothing but the absurd method of charging goods according to their supposed value, not by a regular rate. More than half a century ago the commercial inhabitants of Messina, convinced of the inconveniences attending the vague and perplexed system of the Sicilian customs, applied to government for leave to establish better regulations, and obtained their request. But except in that port, it is a



## 6 COMMERCE OF SICILY.

rule to charge the duty upon merchandize, according to the estimate of a broker, and the current prices; so that the duties vary continually.

Almost all the necessaries, and most of the luxuries of life are produced in the utmost abundance upon this fertile and delightful island. Corn, silk, wine, oil, fish, and fruit, are exported from Sicily in astonishing quantities. A quantity of silk, equal in value to 187,500*l.* is annually exported from Palermo and Messina. But the principal source of the treasures of Sicily is derived from the corn trade. Here when the crops of other nations fail, this ever productive granary offers her abundant supplies for the support of the distressed inhabitants of other countries.



## C H A P II.

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF CALABRIA. — RAVAGES OF THE DREADFUL EARTHQUAKES OF 1783. — WONDERFUL EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THE SHOCKS. — DISTRESS OF THE INHABITANTS. — JOURNEY THROUGH CALABRIA TO SICILY FATIGUING AND DANGEROUS. — ADVANTAGE OF PURSUING THE ROUTE BY SEA. — BAY OF NAPLES, AND THE ADJACENT COUNTRY.

**T**HE celebrated Faro of Messina, which divides Sicily from Italy, is so narrow as to afford the strongest reasons for conjecturing that its opposite shores were once united, but have been torn asunder by some of those violent natural convulsions which so frequently diversify that ever varying scene. But though the distance between these neighbouring shores is so inconsiderable as to present the traveller with a strong incitement to pursue his route to Sicily through Calabria, and to cross the strait, which between the promontories of Pelorus in Sicily, and the Coda de Volpe in Calabria appears to be scarcely one mile, yet the fatigue and danger of the journey would probably greatly exceed the inconveniencies of a voyage.

The country of Calabria, which was formerly part of the celebrated territories of Great Greece, has been destined to experience all the caprices of art and nature, and to be by turns one of the most desirable, and one of the most dreadful situations in the world. Its delightful lands, which were once adorned with all the magnificence of Grecian architecture, and all the elegance of Grecian taste, lost during the reign of Gothic barbarity every trace of their former splendour. Nor have the improvements of the Calabrians, since the revival of arts, borne any proportion with those of other nations which groaned under the shackles of barbarism. The greater part of them have languished in ignorance and sloth. The natural fertility of their soil has prevented the necessity of hard labour, and they have been content to receive the bounties of nature in their usual course, without attempting to increase them by any improvements of art.

But the evils attendant upon the rude and uncivilized state of Calabria, however important in their effects, are of small apparent magnitude when compared with the calamities which have lately afflicted this unhappy country. In the month of February 1783, an instantaneous and violent earthquake involved a considerable part of Calabria in sudden and inevitable ruin. This was but the commencement of a succession of earthquakes, which beginning from the city of Amantea on the coast of the Tyrrene sea, proceeded along the westward coast to Cape Spartivento,

vento, and up the eastern, as far as the Cape d'Alice, and in the whole extent of its progress did not leave a town or village undestroyed. The ravages of this most formidable calamity extended to the Sicilian coast, and in both these unhappy countries destroyed innumerable possessions, and deprived more than 40,000 persons of their lives.

During two years repeated shocks continued to agitate the affrighted minds of the inhabitants of Calabria and Sicily, but the principal mischiefs arose in the months of February and March in the first year. For several months the earth continued in an unceasing tremor, which at certain intervals increased to violent shocks, some of which were beyond description dreadful. These shocks were sometimes horizontal, whirling like a vortex; and sometimes by pulsations or beating from the bottom upwards, and were at times so violent that the heads of the largest trees almost touched the ground on either side. The rains, during a great part of the time, were continual and violent, often accompanied with lightning, and furious gusts of wind. All that part of Calabria which lay between the 38th and 39th degrees assumed a new appearance. Houses, churches, towns, cities and villages were buried in one promiscuous ruin. Mountains were detached from their foundations, and carried to a considerable distance.\* Rivers disap-

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peared

\* Sir William Hamilton, whose ardent and laudable spirit of enquiry occasioned his visiting Calabria and Sicily during this calamitous  
calamitous

peared from their beds, and again returned and overflowed the adjacent country.† Streams of water suddenly gushed out of the ground, and sprang to a considerable height. Large pieces of the surface of the plain several acres in extent, were carried 500 feet from their former situation down into the bed of the river, and left standing at nearly the distance of a mile, surrounded by large plantations of olives and mulberry trees, and corn growing as well upon them as upon the ground from which they were separated. Amidst these scenes of devastation, the escapes of some of the unhappy sufferers is extremely wonderful. Some of the inhabitants of houses which were  
 thrown

calamitous season, accounts for the removal of a mountain of about 250 feet in height, and about 400 feet in diameter at its basis, from the different nature of its inferior and superior soil. The under part being more solid and compact, was more strongly acted upon by the violent motion of the earth, and the volcanic exhalations, which drove it to the distance of some hundred yards from its original site, where it lay in confused blocks, after having left the superior stratum, which, with its trees and vineyards, was carried in another direction to the distance of four miles.

† The same ingenious gentleman accounts for this phenomenon by supposing the first impulse of the earthquake to have come from the bottom upwards, which raising the surface of the ground, the rivers which are not deep must naturally disappear; but the earth returning again with violence to its former level, the rivers must as naturally return and overflow their banks; at the same time the boggy grounds being suddenly depressed, would force out the water which lay hid under their surface.



thrown to a considerable distance were dug out from their ruins unhurt. But these instances were few, and those who were so fortunate as to preserve their lives in such situations, were content to purchase existence at the expence of broken limbs and the most dreadful contusions.

During this calamitous scene, it is impossible to conceive the horrors and wretchedness of the unhappy inhabitants. The jaws of death were opened to swallow them up; ruin had seized all their possessions, and those dear connections to which they might have looked for consolation in their sorrows, were for ever buried in the merciless abyss. All was ruin and desolation. Every countenance indicated the extremity of affliction and despair; and the whole country formed a wide scene of undescrivable horror.

The traces of this calamity will long be seen, and its effects will long be felt among the unhappy Calabrese. Were the population and industry of this country in any proportion to the fertility of the soil, which produces corn, wine, oil, and every other vegetable production, in the most luxurious abundance, it might again recover from its present wretched and impoverished state. But almost every object in Calabria marks the fatal effects of a want of civilization, and an inattention to those improvements which materially conduce to the happiness of society. The roads, which are wretched in themselves, are rendered still more formidable from the daring and resolute banditti by which they are infested;

feſted; and the inconveniences heightened by the total want of comfortable inns. Nor do the views of this deſolated country compenſate for the fatigue and danger of tra- verſing its once flouriſhing fields. From a ſtate of poliſhed refinement, it has long been converted into an almoſt uncultivated wilderneſs. Gloomy and extenſive foreſts occupy thoſe ſituations which were once enlivened by “the buſy hum of men;” and the ſoft and elegant manners of the ancient inhabitants are ſtrongly contraſted by the ruſticity, wildneſs, and ferocity of the preſent rude poſſeſſors.

The voyage from Italy to Sicily, offers on the contrary every enchanting object which can amuſe the ſight, or gratify the taſte of the claſſical traveller. On leaving Naples, the eye is preſented with one of the fineſt proſpects in the world. The bay, which is of a circular figure, is in moſt places upwards of 20 miles acroſs, ſo that including all its breaks and inequalities, its circumference muſt be conſiderably more than 60 miles. All the treaſures of art and nature unite to enrich, adorn, and diverſify this delightful ſcene. Modern grandeur uſurps the place of ancient magnificence. Mountains and iſlands once celebrated for their fertility, are converted into barren waſtes, and barren waſtes into fertile fields and luxurious vineyards. Mountains are funk into plains, and plains ſwelled into mountains. Lakes abſorbed by volcanos, and extinguished volcanos turned into lakes. This delightful bay is  
ſhut

shut out from the Mediterranean by the island of Capre, 30 miles distant from Naples, celebrated as the abode of Augustus, and is bounded on every side by the most magnificent productions of nature and of art. The classic fields of Baia, Cuma, and Puzzoli, with all the variety of scenery that formed both the Tartarus and Elysium of the ancients; the Campi Phlegrii where Jupiter vanquished the rebellious giants; the picturesque city of Puzzoli; the beautiful promontory of Pauphilippe; and the great and opulent city of Naples, adorn and beautify this enchanting region. While the lofty and terrible Vesuvius presents itself in the back ground of the piece, discharging torrents of fire and smoke, and forming a broad unbroken track in the air, to the utmost verge of the horizon.





## C H A P. III.

LIPARI ISLANDS.—STROMBOLI.—ACCOUNT OF ITS ERUPTIONS.—CONSTRUCTION OF THIS VOLCANO.—SOURCE OF THE EARTHQUAKES WHICH DESOLATED CALABRIA.—BEAUTIFUL COAST OF SICILY.—ROCK AND TOWN OF SCYLLA.—DISPUTE BETWEEN THE PRINCE OF SCYLLA AND HIS SUBJECTS.—FATAL CATASTROPHE.

**O**N a nearer approach towards the Sicilian shores, the Lipari islands, the whole of which are probably the produce of subterraneous fires, present themselves, and form a very picturesque view. A groupe of several islands emitting volumes of smoke in the bosom of the mighty ocean, whose immense mass of waters is insufficient to check the progress of this all conquering element. The island of Lipari, from which all the rest of this range of rocks take their name, is by much the largest and most fertile. In the time of Aristotle it appears to have been considered by sailors as a light-house, as its fires were never extinguished; but during several ages it has not exhibited any marks of subterraneous fire. The fabled caves of Eolus, and the gloomy forge of Vulcan have been placed by poetical fiction in these celebrated isles. Here the grim Cyclops forged the celestial thunderbolt of Jupiter, and here the monarch

narch of the winds held the imprisoned storms in readiness to be poured upon the head of the devoted wretch who dared to offend against the majesty of the enraged celestials.

Stromboli, the most northern of the Lipari islands, is now considered as the great light-house of the Mediterranean sea. It rises to a considerable height, and it is agreed that in clear weather it is discoverable at the distance of 25 leagues, and that at night, its flames are to be seen much farther; so that its visible horizon cannot be less than 500 miles. This volcano appears to be very different in its nature from Vesuvius. The explosions of the latter succeed each other with some degree of regularity, and have no great variety of duration. The light also which proceeds from it, except when the lava has risen to the summit of the mountain, and continued without variety to illuminate the surrounding air, appears to be occasioned by the quantity of fiery stones thrown into the air, which as soon as these have fallen down seems to be extinguished till a fresh explosion occasions another illumination. But though the explosions of Stromboli sometimes resemble Vesuvius, the light evidently depends upon some other cause. A clear red flame sometimes issues from the crater, and continues to blaze uninterruptedly for nearly the space of half an hour, and the fire is of so different a colour from the explosions of stones, that it is evidently produced from a different cause, and probably owes its existence to some inflammable

flammable substance suddenly kindled up in the bowels of the mountain.

The construction of Stromboli differs materially from that of the generality of volcanic mountains. It is about ten miles in circumference, but is not of an exact conical form, nor is its inaccessible crater in the center of the mountain, but about 200 yards below the summit. The decline from the crater to the sea, is entirely composed of ashes and burnt matter, whose quantity is continually increasing by the unceasing effects of this ever burning fire, which seems to have collected its strength from all the adjoining volcanos for ages, and has continued proudly and uninterruptedly to emit a burning and ignited mass.

During the dreadful earthquakes of Calabria, the coasts of which are but about 50 miles from Stromboli, this mountain smoked less, and threw up a smaller quantity of inflamed matter than it had done for several years before. From very accurate observations made by Sir William Hamilton it appears, that those convulsions of the earth which desolated Calabria and the adjacent shores of Sicily, were occasioned by the operation of a volcano, situated either under the bottom of the sea between the island of Stromboli and the Calabrian coast, or towards the city of Oppida in Calabria. Taking either of these places for the center of this calamity, and marking a circle round it of 72 miles, he observed a gradation in the damage done to the buildings, and likewise in  
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the degree of mortality, in proportion as the countries were more or less distant from the supposed center of the evil. The exhalations of Stromboli, perhaps, found a vent in this new volcano, the commotion of which probably occasioned the earthquakes which destroyed so extensive a territory, though the volcano itself may for ages yet lie concealed.

The Lipari islands, which are mentioned by the ancients as seven in number, are now by successive volcanic eruptions, augmented to eleven. They are subject to the king of Naples, and produce a revenue to that monarch, which is not inconsiderable. Alum, sulphur, nitre and cinnabar are produced in great quantities in all the Lipari islands, and most sorts of fruits are to be met with here in great perfection. Some of their wines are likewise much esteemed; particularly the Malvasia, which is well known all over Europe.

The sea coast of Sicily presents one of the richest and most luxurious prospects imaginable. The sides of some of the mountains are highly cultivated; corn, wine, oil, rich corn-fields, fertile vineyards, and large plantations of olives and mulberry trees are all mixed together in great abundance, and the scene is diversified by the wild appearance of uncultured nature, which indeed occupies the most considerable part of this delightful and naturally fertile spot. At some distance from the entrance of the Straits which separate Calabria and Sicily, the current roars like the noise of some large impetuous river confined within

within narrow banks. This noise increases in proportion as the distance is diminished, and the water rises in several places to a considerable height, forming large eddies or whirlpools; though in every other part the sea is as smooth as glass. These eddies frequently prove fatal to vessels in these seas, which if they are so unfortunate as to be caught in them, are whirled about with great rapidity, and unable in the smallest degree to obey the helm. When the weather is calm, the danger is very small, but when the waves meet with this violent current, it makes a dreadful sea. The rock of Scylla is about a mile from the entrance of the Faro, and forms a small promontory which projects into the sea, and meets the whole force of the waters as they come out of the narrowest part of the straits. Many small rocks surround the base of this celebrated rock, which are probably the dogs that are described as continually howling round this voracious monster, and roaring for their prey; and the horror of the scene is heightened by numerous caverns, which tend greatly to increase the sound of the rushing waters. The summit of the rock, which is near 200 feet in height, is crowned by a kind of fort, and its south side is enlivened by the town of Scylla, which gives the title of prince to a Calabrese family.

The late prince was accused of exercising the most wanton cruelty over his vassals, and of employing a band of miscreants not only against the property, but even



even the lives of his unhappy subjects. Exasperated by this conduct, they were at length provoked to an exertion extremely uncommon in a country where aristocratical dominion has still so firm a hold; they formed a committee, which went by sea to Naples to lay their grievances at the foot of the throne. Many were the obstacles which were encountered by these patriotic citizens in the prosecution of their attempt, but at length they obtained redress. They were not, however, long permitted to enjoy their recovered rights; in a short period they were made the dreadful sport of conflicting elements, and the oppressor, together with the oppressed, proved the same melancholy fate.

In the first shock of the earthquakes of 1783, part of a rock near Scylla was detached from its foundations and thrown with violence into the sea. Fearful that succeeding earthquakes might involve the rock and town of Scylla in a similar fate, its unhappy inhabitants with their prince took refuge in their boats, and retired to a small beach surrounded by rocks at the foot of the rock. But these unfortunate people found not the safety they sought. A second shock detached a mountain near Scylla, and much larger than Scylla itself, from its base, and precipitated it with such violence into the sea as to raise a most tremendous wave, which first broke upon the Punto del Faro in Sicily, and then instantly returning with a loud noise, dashed the unfortunate prince with 2473 of his subjects into the ocean.

## C H A P. IV.

MESSINA. — DEVASTATIONS OF THE EARTH-  
 QUAKE. — PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT THE  
 INTRODUCTION OF THE PLAGUE. — BEAUTI-  
 FUL HARBOUR. — WHIRLPOOL OF CHARYBDIS.  
 GALLEY SLAVES. — POLICE OF SICILY. — SU-  
 PERSTITION. — LETTER FROM THE VIRGIN  
 MARY. — CURIOUS PHÆNOMENON. ANECDOTE  
 OF COLAS.

**T**WELVE miles from the entrance of the straits stands the ancient city of Messina, which is about four miles distant from the opposite shore. Here the current, which is considerably encreased in width, is of consequence proportionably less rapid. The approach to Messina is extremely striking, and at one time exceeded in beauty though not in grandeur even that of Naples. But the ravages of the fatal earthquakes of 1783 were severely felt here, though in a much less degree than in the plain of Calabria. The elegant front of the Palazzata, a range of magnificent buildings in the form of a crescent, which extended for the space of an Italian mile, was in some parts totally ruined. The quay upon which these beautiful edifices were erected, and which formed a street about a hundred feet wide, and one of the most delightful walks in the world, was cracked in several places, and a part of it sunk above a foot below the level

level of the sea. In the lower parts of Messina, the greater part of the buildings were destroyed, and 700 of the unfortunate inhabitants were either carried off by the dreadful wave which came from the rock of Scylla, or buried in the ruins of their habitations.

Great precautions are made use of in order to prevent the introduction of the plague into Messina, which in the year 1743 was nearly annihilated by that destructive disorder. Upwards of 70,000 persons in that city and its districts are said to have lost their lives by the ravages of this merciless destroyer. As soon as a vessel casts anchor in the harbour of Messina, it is visited by officers who diligently examine the bill of health, and the omission of the name of any one person who is found on board, may expose the ship to a long and tedious quarantine, and perhaps the master to a still more serious punishment.

The harbour of Messina, though very difficult of access, is certainly one of the safest in the world after ships have once got in. It is formed by a small promontory or neck of land, which runs off from the east end of the city, and separates this beautiful basin from the rest of the straits. The form of this promontory is that of a reaping hook, the curvature of which forms the harbour, and is an admirable security from the winds; but the celebrated gulph of Charybdis, which is situated near its entry, frequently occasions such an intestine and irregular motion in the water, and causes the helm to lose so  
much



much of its power, that ships often encounter great difficulties before they attain this delightful and secure recess.

The gulph is probably formed in part by the promontory, which contracting the straits in this spot, must necessarily encrease the velocity of the current. This celebrated whirlpool is however most undoubtedly greatly diminished, and no longer presents the horrible aspect with which it is represented by the ancient poets, historians, and philosophers.

From the striking resemblance of the shape of this beautiful harbour, the Greeks gave it the name of Zancle or the Sickle, and attributed its form to the fabled sickle of Saturn, which fell upon this spot. But when it came into the possession of a colony which migrated from Messene, it changed its name to that of the city which they had left. The neck of land which forms the harbour of Messina is strongly fortified, and ornamented by a very handsome citadel, erected on that part which connects it with the main land. Four small forts which command the entrance into the harbour, defend the extreme point, which projects into the sea. Betwixt these is placed the Lazaretto, and a light-house to warn the approaching mariner of the proximity of the terrible Charybdis, and it is probable this light-house, and that on Cape Pelones, obtained this celebrated strait the appellation of the Faro of Messina, from the Greek word Pharai, by which similar edifices were distinguished.

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The great number of galleys and galliots in this beautiful harbour, add greatly to the picturesque appearance of the scene. Nine or ten men are chained to each oar, who sleep every night upon the bare benches, without the poor indulgence of the least additional covering. Their work, notwithstanding this harsh treatment, appears to be extremely laborious. They all rise at every stroke of the oar, and when they pull, they almost throw themselves on their backs, and seem to exert their utmost force. In their quarrels they have been frequently known to give one another the *coup de grace*; but no instance has occurred in which the unhappy sufferer has terminated his own miseries and labours, by a violent and premature death.

From the summit of a high hill at some distance from the city, the view is beautiful beyond all description. The straits appear like a large majestic river slowly flowing between two ridges of mountains, and expands by degrees from a narrow point, till it swells to the size of an ocean. Towns, villages, churches, rich corn fields, and vineyards adorn its delightful banks, and the prospect is terminated on each side by the tops of lofty mountains covered with wood. Fine shady walks adorn every side of this once beautiful city, some of which run along the sea shore, and are constantly fanned by cooling breezes from the straits, while the smell is regaled by delicious odours emitted from the sea salt, produced by the heat of the sun, which acquires a scent very similar

lar to that of violets. Several of the flowers which are cultivated in England with the greatest care, grow in wild profusion over the sides of the mountains, intermixed with the most beautiful flowering shrubs; and the fields covered with the richest white clover, together with a great variety of aromatic plants, shed all around a most delicious perfume.

All these advantages of situation, together with its freedom from the hurry and restraint of public amusements which are seldom known here, perhaps render Messina a place peculiarly calculated for the comfortable residence of that unfortunate class of valetudinarians who are compelled to migrate from their native plains in search of more genial climes. The winter season at Messina is in general greatly preferable to that of Naples. Heavy rain falls sometimes indeed for two or three weeks, but it seldom or never lasts longer; and even during this season there are generally some fair hours in the course of the day, when exercise may be obtained out of doors; for these delightful walks have the additional advantage of having a light gravelly soil, so that they are dry in a few minutes after the rain ceases. The houses at Messina are large; and most of the necessaries of life are both cheap and plentiful, particularly fish, which are accounted better there than in any other part of the Mediterranean. The *pesce spada*, or sword-fish is caught in great plenty in those seas, and when cut bears a perfect resemblance to flesh. It is a formidable animal, for its sword only, which is  
not

not unlike the Highland broad sword, is frequently several feet in length.

The police of Sicily is perhaps the most singular in the world. The banditti, who in any other country would have suffered the severe punishment due to their crimes, are in Sicily, not only publicly protected, but universally feared and respected. These wretches have taken possession of the Val Demoni in the Eastern part of the island, where it has been found impossible to extirpate them from their secret and subterraneous retreats; and this circumstance, together with their desperate valour, and vindictive spirit, has induced the Prince of Villa Franca, from a motive of policy, to declare himself their protector and patron. Those of them who chuse to forsake their woody and mountainous asylum, either for a longer or shorter time, meet with encouragement and security in his service;\* where they enjoy the most unbounded confidence, which they have never been known to violate. They are the guides and protectors of travellers; and such are their high notions of what they call their point of honour, that, however defective they are with regard to society in general, they ever maintain the most unshaken fidelity, wherever they have once professed it. Whoever reposes confidence in them, may be secure of not finding it in the smallest instance abused; but on the contrary may wrap himself up in the certainty that his person will be protected from insult or injury, and his property

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from

\* This fact Mr. Brydone seems to give on good authority, but it is questioned by Mr. Swinburne.

from imposition or depredation by these faithful and resolute adherents; all of whom are known to the other banditti of the island, who, from the same principle of honour, respect not only the persons of their own worthy fraternity but those whom they escort. The generality of travellers hire a couple of these guards to accompany them in their journeys, and by this means traverse with safety the most dangerous situations in the island. Those of this desperate set who place themselves in the service of the Prince of Villa Franca, are invested with his livery, yellow and green, with silver lace, and wear a badge of their order; which, if not very honourable, entitles them at least to so much fear and respect, that the magistrates have been often obliged not only to protect, but even to pay them court in order to be secure against their revengeful disposition, which impels them to chastise with death, whoever has given them just cause of provocation.

The mixture of vice and virtue observable in this ferocious fraternity is very remarkable. While they commit with impunity every crime which disgraces humanity, their point of honour is observed in the minutest instances, and the promise of one of these banditti would be performed with as exact a punctuality as the bond of any other man. They frequently borrow money from the country people, who dare not refuse their requests; but if they promise to return it, they will rather fulfil their engagement at the expence of the life and property of some unfortunate



fortunate passenger, than fail in the honourable performance of what they have undertaken. Those of them who have entered into the service of society and attend as guards to travellers, carry arms, which they make ready for action, and place in a posture ready either for attack or defence, in all suspicious or dangerous places. They tax the landlord's bills according to their own pleasure, and such is the authority with which either they are invested, or which they assume, that they threaten, and would perhaps execute instant death upon the hardy wretch who should dare to attempt an imposition upon the travellers under their protection.

Superstition, whose numerous adherents pervade every country and every clime, has many votaries in this island, which seems formed by nature for her abode, and which the inventive genius both of ancient and modern fable has delighted to people with supernatural beings. Religious ceremonies are celebrated with great magnificence in Sicily, and the utmost invention is employed, and no expence spared to do honour to their favourite saints, and to delight their devout adorers. The feast of the Vara, at Messina, is a very superb and solemn religious ceremony. On this occasion a moveable machine which represents a part of heaven is brought out; in the center of which is the principal figure which represents the blessed virgin, and a little above her three others to denote the persons in the sacred Trinity. A number of wheels of a very curious construction are placed around these,

each of which contains a legion of angels, placed according to their different degrees of precedency in the celestial choir, who are represented by a number of beautiful little children, glittering in gold and silver robes, and decorated with wings of painted feathers fixed to their shoulders. This machine, which is of an immense size, moves through the streets with great pomp and solemnity. The motion of the machine moves the angelic wheels, and the different hosts of seraphim, cherubim, and powers sing repeated hallelujahs to the Virgin during the whole of this extraordinary procession.

Excepting the harbour of Messina there are few things deserving of much notice in that city. Some of the churches indeed are handsome, and there are a few tolerable paintings. The cathedral is Gothic, enriched with Saracenic Mosaics on the altar and shrines; the front of the high altar is particularly splendid. In the treasury of this church is preserved a letter from the Virgin Mary to the citizens of Messina, upon which they build their pretensions to pre-eminence over the whole island, and to the virtues and patronage of which they ascribe every prosperous event. The occasion of their receiving this high honour arose from St. Paul's visiting Messina (a circumstance not generally known) when the Messinians prevailed upon him to return to Jerusalem with an embassy of four persons sent by the city to the Virgin. Their excellencies were graciously received by her, and returned with a letter written with her  
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own hand in the Hebrew tongue, which St. Paul translated into Greek. By the eruption of the Saracens, this invaluable treasure was lost, and utterly forgotten, till the year 1467, when Constantine Lascaris found a copy of it, and turning it into Latin, made it known to the citizens, and then to all the catholic world. Its authenticity is now so well established at Messina, that Regna the historian candidly acknowledges, that whoever was to confess even a doubt on the subject in that city would be treated as an atheist.

One phenomenon highly deserving the attention of the curious and scientific traveller occurs here. About the dawning of the day, and during the heat of summer, after the sea and air have been agitated by winds, and a perfect calm succeeds, an infinite variety of singular forms make their appearance in that part of the heavens which is over the Straits. Some of these seem entirely at rest, whilst others move about with the utmost velocity. The eye of fancy descries amongst these aerial forms the representation of castles and palaces; the wild scenery of uncultivated nature, and all the elegant improvements of art; and at pleasure peoples this enchanting region with giants and pigmies, beautiful princesses or sportive nymphs. But this elegant creation quickly recedes. In proportion as the light increases these forms assume a still more aerial appearance, and before the rising of the sun, entirely disappear.



Various hypothesis have been invented to account for a spectacle so striking and peculiar. The Italian philosophers are inclined to ascribe it to some uncommon refraction, or reflexion of the rays from the water of the straits, which at such times is whirled about in a variety of eddies and vortexes, and must, according to their opinion, consequently make a variety of appearances on any medium where it is reflected. The lower class of people impute it to supernatural agency, and freely ascribe it to the operation of the Devil. Neither of these solutions will in all probability satisfy the mind of a real philosopher. It is perhaps something of the nature of the Aurora Borealis; and, like many of the great phenomena of nature, depends upon electrical causes. That subtle fluid in this volcanic land is probably produced in much greater quantities than in any other; and the air, strongly impregnated with this matter, and confined between two ridges of mountains, while it is exceedingly agitated from below by the violence of the current, and the impetuous whirl of the waters, may probably produce a variety of uncommon appearances.

The art of diving to a considerable depth, and of continuing for some minutes under the water, is practised with great dexterity both on the Italian and Sicilian shores. One Colas, a native of Messina, afforded perhaps the most extraordinary instance of the perfection to which this art may be carried that was ever exhibited. Credulity ever delights to add  
fancied

fancied wonders to what is really surprising, and Colas, who perhaps performed such extraordinary exploits as had never before been exhibited, has been recorded as having lived for some days at the bottom of the sea ; as having caught fish in that element merely by his own agility ; and as having walked across the Straits at the bottom of the sea. Whatever were his excellencies, such however was his reputation, that he was honoured by a visit from the monarch, who came purposely to be a spectator of his extraordinary powers. But the amusements of royalty have not always been favourable to the interests of humanity ; his majesty, after having been long entertained with the wonderful exploits of Colas, had the cruelty to propose his diving near the gulph of Charybdis, and to tempt him the more, threw a large golden cup into the water, which was to be his prize if he could bring it up. Twice did the eager Colas dive into the sea, and astonish all the spectators by the time he remained under water. The third attempt terminated his hopes and his life, which was sacrificed to the caprice of the unfeeling monarch.

## C H A P. V.

BEAUTIFUL ROAD TO TAORMINA. — BADNESS OF THE SICILIAN INNS. — CITY OF TAORMINA. — ITS THEATRE. — NAUMACHISA. — FIRST REGION OF ETNA. — TORRENT OF BOILING WATER. — CELEBRATED CHESNUT TREE. — COLD RIVER. — PRODIGIOUS STREAM OF LAVA. — PROGRESS OF VEGETATION. — DIFFERENT PORTIONS OF TIME NECESSARY FOR THE FORMATION OF SOIL UPON A BASIS OF LAVA, ACCORDING TO THE MORE OR LESS COMPACT NATURE OF THAT SUBSTANCE.

**T**HE road between Messina and Taormina is strikingly romantic and beautiful. It extends along the eastern coast of Sicily, and commands a view of Calabria and the south part of the Straits, which is covered with xebecs, galleys, and a number of fishing boats. On the right hand the view is confined by mountains whose lofty summits are crowned by several considerable towns and villages, which, with their churches and steeples, make a very picturesque appearance. A great variety of sweet and beautiful flowers and flowering shrubs adorn the sides of the road, and many of the inclosures of this delightful country are fenced with hedges of the Indian fig, or prickly pear. At some distance on the right, lie the  
mountains

mountains which were formerly called the Nebrodes, and the mountain of Neptune, which is the highest of that chain, and celebrated for a gulph or crater on its summit, which emits so cold and violent a wind, that it is difficult to approach it. This mountain, which is now called Monte Scuderio, is said to be so high as to afford from its summit a view of the Adriatic sea. The river Nisso, so celebrated for the gold found in its channel, takes its rise in this volcanic mountain. The remains of its ancient gold mines are still visible near the source of this river, but no attempts are now made to explore their treasures.

Nothing can be more execrable than the generality of the Sicilian inns ; but if the accommodations be poor, it must however be allowed that the provisions are remarkably cheap. Indeed the guards take great care to prevent impositions upon the travellers under their charge, or at least suffer no one to exact an unreasonable price but themselves. They have an ounce (or eleven shillings) a day for their own attendance, though they can think an innkeeper sufficiently paid for the dinners of eleven men, and of ten mules and horses, with a less sum than half a guinea.

The city of Taormina stands upon a high and steep mountain, and the road up to it is extremely rugged. It still retains striking marks of its ancient magnificence, though from a celebrated city it is now reduced to an insignificant borough. Its theatre, which is accounted the largest in the world, though

so much broken as not to be easily measured, is still sufficiently entire to astonish the mind by its vastness, and to give a very tolerable idea of the Roman Theatre. It is hardly conceivable how any single voice could extend through the prodigious number of people this building is calculated to contain. The seats are placed opposite to Mount Etna, which makes a very striking appearance from this place.

Other remains of ancient magnificence adorn this formerly celebrated city. A part of one of the walls of the Naumachia is still standing, but so far from complete, that there is no possibility of determining its ancient dimensions. This is supposed to have been a large square inclosed with strong walls, and capable of being occasionally filled with water, which was supplied by four reservoirs. Here were exhibited the representation of sea fights, and the performance of naval exercises. The aspiring youth whose bosom burned for glory, here initiated himself in the knowledge of warlike achievements, and the gallant veteran here instructed him by his example and advice, to deserve and to obtain the glorious wreaths of victory.

About half a mile beyond Giardini, a village which stands at the foot of the mountain of Taormina, begins the first region of Etna. This spot is marked by the statue of a saint, which is erected here in commemoration of his having prevented the lava from ascending the mountain of Taormina, and destroying the adjacent country. The ascent of Etna is so steep  
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and difficult on this side of the mountain, that it is impossible to attain its summit ; but the whole of this venerable volcano is such a world of wonders, that there is no part of it which does not afford ample entertainment to a speculative mind. Several craters of a considerable size, are apparent in various parts of the first region of Etna, and stones of a large size lie scattered around these remains of former eruptions, which are at so vast a distance from the principal crater.

The Alcantara, one of the most considerable rivers in Sicily, takes its rise on the north side of Etna, and is generally considered as marking the boundary of the mountain, during a course of about 60 miles, though as its route has been stopped in various places by volcanic eruptions, the skirts of Etna extend still further. In crossing this river in the way to Piedmonte, the road lies over a bridge built entirely of lava, and near to this the bed of the river is continued for a considerable way through one of the most ancient and remarkable lavas that have issued from the mountain. The current of the river, which is very rapid, has in several places worn down the solid lava to the depth of 50 or 60 feet, and this lava is said in its course, inclusive of all its windings, to have run not less than 40 miles. It issued from a mountain on the north side of Etna, ran along some vallies towards the east, and after interrupting the Alcantara in several places, at length arrived at the sea not far from the mouth of that river.

## 36 TORRENT OF BOILING WATER.

The road between Giardini and the village of Piedmonte, is about ten miles, and extremely rough and difficult. An aqueduct which has been built at a great expence by the prince of Palagonia, to supply Piedmonte with water, runs for several miles near this road. Soon after leaving the aqueduct, the ascent becomes still more rapid, till the beginning of the second region of Etna, which is called *la Regione Sylvosa*, or the woody region by the natives, from the vast forest that here encompasses the mountain. A very extraordinary circumstance destroyed a part of this forest, in the year 1755. An immense torrent of boiling water issued during the time of an eruption from the great crater of the mountain, and in an instant poured down to its base, overwhelming and destroying whatever it met with in its course. The traces of this torrent are still visible. It has left a track about a mile and a half broad, which has now recovered some part of its former verdure and vegetation. This phenomenon, which has engaged the attention of several of the Sicilian literati, may perhaps be accounted for either from a stream of lava falling suddenly into one of the vallies of snow that occupy the higher regions of the mountain, and melting it down; or from the quantities of melted snow which are lodged in the vast reservoirs of the mountain, where it remains till the extreme heat bursts the sides of these caverns, and pours desolation wherever the stream directs its course. Several little mountains, each of which  
has

has a regular crater, appear to have been formed by a late eruption not far from this remarkable spot; near which there are some beautiful woods of cork, and ever-green oak, which appear to grow absolutely out of the lava, the soil having scarcely filled the crevices of that porous substance.

The distance between these little volcanos, and the celebrated chestnut tree, is about five or six miles, and the road lies through forests growing out of the lava, and in some places is almost impassable. This tree, which has been for ages one of the great wonders of Etna, is called *Il Castagno de Cento Cavalli*, or the chestnut tree of a hundred horse. Its appearance does not however justify the very extraordinary notice it has obtained, for it seems to be only five large trees growing very closely together. Several of the Sicilian writers agree however, that these trees are united in one stem, and one of them an ingenious ecclesiastic took the trouble, and was at the expence of employing peasants to dig round this extraordinary tree, and found all the stems terminated below the surface of the ground by one root. The opening in the middle is at present prodigious, and it is almost inconceivable how this vast space could ever be occupied by solid timber; within it are the ruins of a house built for the purpose of holding the fruit which it bears. From repeated actual measurements, this wonderful production of nature appeared to be 204 feet in circumference.



On the eastern side of Etna, which is bounded by the sea, rises the *fume freddo*, or celebrated cold river, which runs its short course with great rapidity, and about a mile from its source discharges itself into the sea. Its water, which rises at once out of the earth in a large stream, is remarkably clear, and so extremely cold, that it is reckoned dangerous to drink it. It never freezes, though it is said frequently to contract a degree of cold to the touch greater than that of ice. Cattle have often suffered from tasting this extraordinary spring, which was formerly celebrated for the sweetness and salubrity of those very waters which are now so strongly impregnated with vitriol, as to have a poisonous quality.

The road to Jaci Reale, lies over several beds of lava of considerable extent. The last of these is scarcely less than six or seven miles in breadth, and its depth appears to be very great. It burst from Etna when Syracuse was besieged by the Romans in the second Punic war. A detachment sent from Taormina to the relief of the besieged, was intercepted in its progress by this stream of lava, which having reached the sea before their arrival at the foot of the mountain, cut off their passage, and obliged them to return by a current at the back of Etna, upwards of 100 miles about.

From the black and barren appearance of lava, before any vegetation has arisen on its surface, it is hardly conceivable that it can ever become a rich and fertile soil, productive of nutrition, not only to  
plants

plants with which it is adorned in beautiful profusion, but even of immense and lofty trees. This wonderful property may perhaps be principally accounted for by its porous nature, which renders it peculiarly fit for receiving the dust carried about by the wind. At first this yields only a moss, which rotting, and by degrees increasing the soil, produces nourishment for a few meagre vegetables. These in their turn are likewise converted into manure, and the showers of ashes which issue from the mountain, greatly increase its progress. In some places a rich soil founded upon beds of lava, extends to the depth of more than five or six feet, sufficient to afford plentiful nutrition to trees of a prodigious size, whose roots, shooting into the crevices of the lava, become so fast that there are no instances of the winds tearing them up, though their vast branches are frequently broken by its force.

The portion of time necessary for the progressive formation of soil is very various and uncertain. The great torrent of lava near Jaci, though above 2000 years old, is still only covered with a thin layer of earth, which yields a very scanty vegetation, and is incapable of sustaining either corn, or vines. But we are not hence to infer, that all beds of lava require this length of time to fit them for becoming a proper basis for vegetable soil. Some lavas are smooth and solid, and consequently counteract the first principles of vegetation much longer than those which are of a more friable, and porous nature. Beds  
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of lava which present a rough surface, very soon receive, and retain, the showers of fertile ashes which frequently accompany volcanic eruptions, and afford an almost immediate receptacle for the seeds of vegetables which are scattered about by the winds; and the soil accumulates with surprizing rapidity. But the more consolidated lavas, whose substances are smooth and compact, naturally counteract the formation of soil. The ashes which easily go into porous lavas, are quickly dissipated from an even and solid surface, and vegetable substances blow over them without finding any place for shelter. In time, however, the most compact lavas may be covered with fertile earth. Dews, rains, and snow, deposit a rich sediment, and the soil, which insensibly accumulates by various other means, becomes fitted by degrees for the reception of plants and trees, and instead of the appearance of barrenness and desolation, exhibits the view of fertile fields and luxurious vineyards.

In a pit which was sunk near Jaci to a very considerable depth, the workmen pierced through seven distinct lavas one under the other, the surfaces of which were parallel, and most of them covered with a thick bed of rich earth. Several stratas of lava have, at various times, been discovered at so vast a distance below the surface, as to afford reasonable ground to conjecture that earthquakes have sunk their foundations, and buried them in the bosom of the earth. It is however probable that some lavas, thus  
situated,

## ERUPTIONS OF ETNA. 41

situated, may never have flowed upon the outside of the mountain. Every earthquake, occasioned by volcanos, is an effort of burning matter, and fiery steams, to extend the boundaries by which they are confined. If then the expansive force be so great that it cannot be confined within subterraneous caverns, an eruption above the surface must ensue; but when the incumbent pressure prevents this effect, the lava may flow laterally below the ground, and fill up all the cavities and fissures which lie in its direction.

Continual proofs of the repeated eruptions of Etna occur on every part of this surprizing coast. The city of Jaci, and indeed all the towns are founded upon immense rocks of lava, some of which are elevated to a very considerable height. When these burning torrents arrived at the sea, they became consolidated into rock, which, no longer yielding to the pressure of the liquid fire behind, the melted matter accumulating by degrees, formed a reservoir of fire, that again poured fresh torrents into the ocean, which in their turn became hardened into a solid mass. Here the adverse elements of water and fire have proudly contested for dominion. Sometimes the mighty ocean has resisted the assaults of its opponent, and bounded its impetuous progress. More frequently it has been compelled to retire from its banks, and to make way for its all conquering adversary. When in these contentions, the immense and fiery torrent precipitates its stream into the ocean,  
it

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it occasions a noise infinitely more tremendous than the loudest thunder. Clouds of salt vapours darken and desolate the fertile fields and vineyards. The finny inhabitants of the coast are destroyed, the colour of the sea changed, and the transparency of the waters lost during several months.



C H A P.

## C H A P. VI.

CATANIA. — GREAT ERUPTIONS OF ETNA. —  
 DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY BY AN EARTH-  
 QUAKE. — NEW BUILDINGS. — ANTIQUITIES.  
 BENEDICTINE CONVENT. — VILLA OF THE  
 PRINCE OF BISCARI.

CATANIA, which is esteemed the third city in Sicily, was one of the earliest acquisitions made by the Romans in that island, and was adorned by them with many magnificent edifices, and furnished with every convenience to supply the natural and artificial wants of life. But these buildings, calculated to resist for ages the attacks of the great destroyer Time, have fallen a sacrifice to the more powerful assaults of Etna, by whose eruptions the city has been repeatedly destroyed. It is now however reviving with great splendour, and when the buildings are compleated will be a very handsome city. It contains 30,000 inhabitants, is the seat of the only university in Sicily, and the see of a bishop whose considerable revenues are derived principally from the sale of the snow on Mount Etna. One small portion of this commodity lying on the North of the mountain, is said to produce for him, in these luxurious regions, where ice is esteemed one of the necessaries of life, no less an income than upwards of 1000l. a year.

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The situation of Catania, immediately at the foot of the great volcano, peculiarly exposes it to all the fury of its destructive eruptions ; yet, such is the attachment of the inhabitants to this favourite spot, that they persevere in rebuilding and beautifying their city, and continue to slumber on the bosom of danger, till they are roused by the ravages of their merciless destroyer. This surprizing inattention to safety must be ascribed, not only to an extreme affection for particular situations and to the effects of habit, which teach men to regard those dangers to which they have been long accustomed, with indifference or contempt, but to superstition, and a firm dependence upon the protection of a favourite Saint.

The venerable veil of the celebrated St. Agatha, who was barbarously murdered in the Decian persecution, is the sacred treasure of the fortunate Catanians ; who believe, that it is in itself not only a certain preservative from destruction, but, that it contains such miraculous power as to confer upon whatever comes in contact with it, a virtue sufficient to preserve the possessor from the devastations of earthquakes and volcanos. It must indeed be confessed that these invaluable amulets have sometimes proved inefficacious ; but their failure must be imputed, not to their want of virtue, but either to a defect of faith in the person, or to his having impiously offended this tutelary Saint.

Many striking remains of the great eruption in 1669 are still to be seen, and will long continue as  
memorials

memorials of that dreadful event which overwhelmed Catania, and all the adjacent country. Tremendous earthquakes shook the island, and loud subterraneous bellowings were heard in the mountain. During some weeks, the sun ceased to appear, and the day seemed changed into night. Borelli, who was a witness to these terrible phenomena, says, that at length a rent, twelve miles in length, was opened in the mountain, in some places of which, when they threw down stones, they could not hear them reach the bottom. Burning rocks sixty palms\* in length were thrown to the distance of a mile, and lesser stones were carried three miles. After the most violent struggles, and a shaking of the whole island, an immense torrent of lava gushed from the rent, and sprung up into the air to the height of 60 palms, whence it poured down the mountain, overwhelming every object in its way in one promiscuous ruin.

This destructive torrent, which burst from the side of Etna at a place called Ricini, rushed impetuously against the beautiful mountain of Montpelieri, and pierced into the ground to a considerable depth; then dividing, and surrounding the mountain, it united again on the South side, and poured desolation upon the adjacent country. The progress of the torrent was at first at the rate of seven miles a day, but it afterwards took four days to travel sixteen; wherever it directed its course, the whole appearance of nature was changed, several hills were formed in  
places

\* Near sixty feet.

## 46 DREADFUL ERUPTION.

places which were formerly valleys, and a large lake was so entirely filled up by the melted mass, as not to leave a vestige remaining. In its course it descended upon a vineyard, belonging to a convent of Jesuits, which was formed upon an ancient and probably a very thin layer of lava, with a number of caverns and crevices under it. The liquid mass entering into these excavations soon filled them up, and by degrees bore up the vineyard, which in a short time, to the great astonishment of the spectators, began to move away, and was carried by the torrent to a considerable distance. In 1770 some remains of this vineyard were still to be seen, but the greater part of it was entirely destroyed.

In vain did the terrified inhabitants of Catania recur for protection to the miraculous veil, or expect defence from the lofty walls of their city. After destroying several convents, churches, and villages, this fiery current directed its course to Catania, where it poured impetuously over the ramparts, which are near 60 feet in height, and covered up five of its bastions, with the intervening curtains. After laying waste a great part of this beautiful city, and entirely destroying several valuable remains of antiquity, its further progress was stopped by the ocean, over whose banks it poured its destructive current. In its course from the rent in the mountain, till its arrival in the sea, it is said to have totally destroyed the property of near 30,000 persons.

Still

## VIOLENT EARTHQUAKE. 47

Still however did the infatuated inhabitants of Catania adhere to the remains of their almost ruined city, nor did even the more dreadful calamity with which they were afterwards visited, abate their attachment. Twenty-four years after the fatal eruption of 1669, a violent earthquake, which extended along all the eastern coast, and destroyed in one hour more than sixty thousand persons, overthrew the remaining buildings of Catania, and buried a very considerable number of its inhabitants under the ruins of their houses and churches; but again the place was rebuilt, a new and elegant plan was adopted, and the city is now much handsomer than before. The principal streets are wide, straight, and well paved with lava. The cathedral, which was founded in the year 1094, has suffered so greatly from earthquakes that a very small part of the original structure remains. The other religious edifices are profusely ornamented, but in a bad taste.

But if the united effects of attachment to their native soil, of contempt for dangers to which they are habituated, and of confidence in the miraculous veil, have occasioned the wonderful adherence of the Catanians to this dangerous situation from which they have so severely suffered, it must however be confessed that they have sometimes derived advantages from the very evils which they have so much reason to dread. They were always in great want of a port, with which they were furnished by one of those capricious changes which nature so frequently

quently makes in this ever varying spot. A stream of lava running into the sea, formed a mole, which no expence could have furnished them with. This advantage however proved but temporary; there remained for some time a safe and commodious harbour, but by a subsequent eruption it was entirely filled up and demolished.

There are many remains of antiquity in the city of Catania, but most of them are in a very ruinous state. One of the most remarkable, which is an antique elephant of touchstone with an obelisk of Egyptian granat on his back, stands in the centre of the great square. There are likewise considerable remains of a theatre, a large bath almost entire, the ruins of the great aqueduct 18 miles long, and several temples, some of which are now converted into churches. The Benedictine convent of St. Nicholas which is amazingly extensive, vies in magnificence with a regal palace. It is however built in a bad stile, the principal front is overcharged with ornaments, and the decorations of the windows have a peculiarly disagreeable effect. The church belonging to this convent is a very noble fabric, and accounted the largest in Sicily, but the foundation which is upon the porous and brittle lava, has in some places given way, and the building still remains unfinished, from a doubt of the solidity of the basis. One of the finest organs in the world is erected in this celebrated church. The gardens belonging to the monastery are very striking and curious, and although they are  
formed



formed on the rugged and barren surface of the lava, have a variety and a neatness which are seldom to be met with. The walks are broad, and paved with flints, and the trees and hedges thrive exceedingly. The whole soil must have been brought from a great distance, as the surface of this lava is as hard and bare as a piece of iron.

These monks, who have an income of 15,000*l.* a year, which is esteemed an immense sum in this country, have collected together at a great expence, whatever can adorn and improve their retreat. One wing of the monastery is appropriated to a considerable museum of antiquity and natural history, which contains many valuable articles. It must however yield to the collection of the prince of Biscari, which is very rich and expensive, and is yearly augmented by the monuments of ancient splendour, which are dug out of the ruins of Camarino in the Val di Noto, by persons who are employed for that purpose, at his expence. If any thing can increase the delight of contemplating this magnificent museum, it must be the conduct of the accomplished nobleman to whom it belongs; whose great courtesy, affability, and extensive information, are deserving of the most laboured encomiums.

One of the greatest curiosities in the neighbourhood of Catania, is the villa erected by the prince of Biscari, upon the celebrated torrent of lava, which overwhelmed the city in the year 1669. Upon

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this



this black and impenetrable surface, he has laid the plan of a garden, built houses, planted trees in earth, which is carried there from other places, and what is still more extraordinary, has formed two large ponds of fresh water, supplied by springs that ouze through the lava.



## C H A P VII.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF ETNA. — SMALL MOUNTAINS UPON ITS SIDES. — VARIATION IN THE CLIMATE AT DIFFERENT HEIGHTS OF THE MOUNTAIN. — DESTRUCTION OF HYBLA. — FATE OF EMPEDOCLES. — VIEW OF THE RISING OF THE SUN FROM THE SUMMIT OF ETNA. — PRODUCE OF THE MOUNTAIN.

**E**TNA, which is the most striking object in Sicily, and indeed one of the most magnificent productions of nature, arises from an immense base, and mounts equally on all sides to its summit. The ascent on each side is computed at about 30 miles, and the circumference of its base, at 133; but as it has never been measured with any great degree of accuracy, its dimensions are but imperfectly known.

The whole mountain is divided into three distinct regions, called *La Regione Culta*, or *Piedmontese*, the fertile region; *La Regione Sylvosa*, or *Nemorosa*, the woody region; and *La Regione Deserta*, or *Scoperta*, the barren region. These differ as materially both in climate and production as the three zones of the earth, and perhaps with equal propriety might have been stiled the torrid, the temperate, and the frigid zone.

The first region of Etna surrounds the base of the mountain, and constitutes the most fertile country in the world on all sides of it, to the extent of fourteen or fifteen miles, where the woody region begins. It is composed almost entirely of lava, which, in time, becomes the most fertile of all soils, but the roads, which are entirely over old lavas, now converted into orchards, vineyards, and corn fields, are very execrable. The lavas, which form this region, arise from a number of beautiful little mountains, every where scattered over the immense declivities of Etna. These are all either of a conical or semispherical figure, and are in general covered with beautiful trees, and the most luxurious verdure. The formation of them is owing to the internal fires of Etna, which raging for a vent, at so vast a distance from the great crater that it cannot possibly be carried to the height of twelve or thirteen thousand feet, which is probably the height of the summit of Etna, must necessarily be discharged at some other orifice. After shaking the mountain, and its neighbourhood for some time, at length the fire bursts open its side, and this is called an eruption. At first it emits only a thick smoke and showers of ashes. These are followed by red hot stones, and rocks of a great size, which are thrown to an immense height in the air. These stones, together with the quantities of ashes discharged at the same time, form those mountains, which cover all the declivities of Etna. The size of them is in proportion to the duration of  
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the eruption. When it continues a considerable time, it sometimes forms an elevation of 1000 feet in perpendicular height, which at its base is seven or eight miles in circumference.

After the formation of the new mountain, the lava commonly bursts out from its lower side, and, sweeping every thing before it, is generally terminated by the sea. Sometimes it issues from the side of the mountain, without these attending circumstances, which is commonly the case with the eruptions of Vesuvius, in which the elevation being so much smaller the melted matter is carried up into the crater, where it is dislodged without forming any new mountain, but only adding to the height of the old one; till at length the lava, rising near the summit, bursts the side of the crater. But Etna being upon a much larger scale, one crater is not sufficient to give vent to such immense oceans of liquid fire.

At Nicolosi, which is only twelve miles up the mountain, the climate appears totally changed. When the heats at Catania are insupportable, and the harvest entirely over, the temperature of the air is moderate at Nicolosi, and in many places the corn quite green. Mr. Brydone, in travelling over Etna, was struck with the degree of wildness and ferocity which appeared in the inhabitants of the mountain, and which reminded him of an observation made by the Padre della Torre the historiographer of Mount Vesuvius, that, in places where the air is most impregnated with sulphur and hot exhalations, the peo-

ple are always most wicked and vicious. It was with great difficulty he could persuade the people of Nicolosi to suffer his guide to attend him in the prosecution of his researches. They were excessively troublesome, and extremely suspicious that his views were directed to the discovery of some hidden treasure, the only motive to which they could ascribe so fatiguing a journey. At length one of them recollected having heard many of their old people say that the English had a queen that had burnt in the mountain for many years past, and imputed the visits of several of that nation to their respect to their deceased sovereign. Upon enquiring who this queen was, they said her name was Anna, that she was wife to a king who had been a christian, but she had made him a heretic, and was condemned to burn for ever in Mount Etna. As this could only relate to the unfortunate Anne Bullen, Mr. Brydone asked if she was the victim alluded to, and whether her husband was not likewise condemned to the same punishment. "Certainly," said the man, "and all his heretic subjects too; and if you are of that number you need not be in such a hurry to get there, you will be sure of it at last."

The beautiful country of Hybla, in the neighbourhood of Nicolosi, after repeated vicissitudes, is now reduced to a melancholy monument of the fury of Etna; it was so much celebrated for its fertility, and particularly for its honey, that it was called Mel Passi, till it was overwhelmed by the lava of Etna,  
and

and became totally barren, when, by a kind of pun, it obtained the name of Mal Passi. On a second eruption, however, a fertile shower of ashes restored its pristine beauty, and its former appellation. But in the dreadful eruption of 1669 it was again reduced to the most deplorable sterility, since which it is once more known by the name which denotes its wretchedness. The eruption that first destroyed this beautiful country, issued from Montpelieri, which it then formed. It destroyed a great number of villages and palaces, and in particular two noble churches, which are extremely regretted on account of three statues, accounted, at that time, the most perfect in the island. They have attempted to recover them, but in vain, nor is it believed they ever can; for the churches were built of lava, which is supposed to melt as soon as it comes into contact with a torrent of new erupted matter. Massa, a Sicilian author of great credit, affirms, that in some eruptions of Etna, the lava has poured down with such a sudden impetuosity, that, in the course of a few hours, palaces, churches, and villages, have been entirely melted down, and the whole run off in fusion. It is however probable, that the impetuous force of the torrent, rather than its incorporating with the old mass, may in many of these instances have occasioned this devastation. Thus much at least is certain, that if the lava has had any considerable time to cool, this singular effect never happens.



The contrast between the different regions of Etna is extremely striking. On entering into the romantic forests of the Regione Sylvosa, a new creation seems to arise. The air, which before was hot and sultry, is cool and refreshing, and every breeze loaded with delicious perfumes from the aromatic plants, with which the whole ground is covered. Indeed every beauty, and every horror in nature, seems to be united on this wonderful mountain, and the most opposite and dissimilar objects are promiscuously blended together. Here we observe a gulph which threw out torrents of fire, now covered with the most luxurious verdure. Delicious fruits rising from what was but lately a black and barren rock. Delightful flowers covering the earth, the surface of which is but a few yards removed from lakes of liquid fire and brimstone. An immense gulph of fire for ever existing in the midst of snows which it has not the power to melt, and immense fields of snow and ice unceasingly surrounding this gulph of fire which they have not the power to extinguish.

The woody region of Etna ascends for about eight or nine miles, and forms a zone of the brightest green around the mountain. In this region, near the *Spelonca del Capriole*, or goats cavern, are two of the most beautiful mountains that adorn the sides of Etna. Their hollow craters are each of them considerably larger than that of Vesuvius. They are now filled with stately oaks, and covered with the richest soil to a great depth. A mountain at some distance,  
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which was formed by an eruption in 1766, was, in 1770, still on fire; nor was the lava by any means cold. This region of Etna, like the *Regione Culta*, is composed of lava; but this is now covered with so deep a layer of earth, that it is no where to be seen, except in the beds of the torrents, in many of which it is worn down by the water, to the depth of 50 or 60 feet, and in one of them considerably more. On approaching *La Regione Scoperta*, the trees begin to assume a wintry appearance, and every object indicates the proximity of barrenness and eternal frost.

On completely bidding adieu to the vegetable regions, an expanse of ice presents itself, which is sufficient to stagger the most determined resolution. Above these the high summit of the mountain rears its tremendous head, vomiting torrents of thick smoke. The difficulty of ascending this part of the mountain is greatly increased by the uncertainty of a secure footing; for the surface of the mountain being hot below, frequently melts the snow in particular spots, and forms pools of water where it is impossible to foresee the danger; sometimes, likewise, it happens that the surface of the water, as well as the snow, is covered with black ashes, which render it exceedingly deceitful. At first the ascent is not so steep, but it becomes so by degrees. In this region are the remains of an ancient structure called *Il Torre del Filosofo*, and supposed to have been built by Empedocles, a native of Agrigentum, who is said to have died 400 years before the christian era.

His vanity, perhaps, rather than his philosophy, led him to this elevated situation. Desirous of being regarded as a god, he is recorded to have thrown himself into the great gulph of Etna, in hopes that the people would imagine he had been taken up to heaven, and never supposing that his death would be discovered to mankind. But the treacherous mountain threw out his slippers, which were of brass, and announced to the world the fate of the pretended philosopher, who preferred an airy fame, which he was beyond the reach of enjoying, to the solid advantages of existence, and who was content to purchase the admiration of an ignorant multitude with the meanness of deceit, and the sacrifice of life.

The great crater of this mountain, is of an exact conical figure, excessively steep, and rises equally on all sides. It is composed solely of ashes, and other burnt matters, discharged from the mouth of the volcano, which is in its centre. The circumference of this cone cannot be less than ten miles. Its summit produces a view which is in the highest degree sublime and wonderful; a view to which perhaps no pen could do complete justice, but which has been depicted by Mr. Brydone, with a glow of fancy, a strength of colouring, and an elegance of discrimination, which is not exceeded, and is hardly equalled, by any description, either of ancient or modern times.

This gentleman left Catania on the 27th of May, 1770, and proceeding up the mountain arrived at  
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its summit in time to contemplate the scene which had been the principal object of his attempt, the rising of the sun from the top of Mount Etna. But, his own words can alone do justice to a scene, of the glory and magnificence of which he conceives no imagination has ever dared to form an idea.—“ There is not on the surface of this globe, any one point that unites so many awful and sublime objects. The immense elevation from the surface of the earth, drawn as it were to a single point, without any neighbouring mountain for the senses and imagination to rest upon, and recover from their astonishment in their way down to the world.—This point or pinnacle, raised on the brink of a bottomless gulph, as old as the world, often discharging rivers of fire, and throwing out burning rocks, to the height of several thousand feet, with a noise that shakes the whole island.— Add to this, the unbounded extent of the prospect, comprehending the greatest diversity and the most beautiful scenery in nature ; with the rising sun, advancing to the East, to illuminate the wondrous scene.

“ The whole atmosphere by degrees kindled up, and shewed dimly and faintly the boundless prospect around. Both sea and land looked dark and confused, as if only emerging from their original chaos ; and light and darkness seemed still undivided ; till the morning by degrees advancing, completed the separation. The stars are extinguished, and the shades disappear. The forests, which but now seemed

black and bottomless gulphs, whence no ray was reflected to shew their form or colours, appear a new creation rising to the sight; catching life and beauty from every increasing beam. The scene still enlarges, and the horizon seems to widen and expand itself on all sides; till the Sun, like the great Creator, appears in the East, and with his plastic ray completes the mighty scene.—All appears enchantment; and it is with difficulty we can believe we are still on earth. The senses, unaccustomed to the sublimity of such a scene, are bewildered and confounded: and it is not till after some time, that they are capable of separating and judging of the objects that compose it.—The body of the Sun is seen rising from the ocean, immense tracks both of sea and land intervening; the islands of Lipari, Pannari, Alicudi, Strombolo, and Volcano, with their smoking summits, appear under your feet; and you look down on the whole of Sicily as on a map; and can trace every river through all its windings, from its source to its mouth. The view is absolutely boundless on every side; nor is there any one object, within the circle of vision, to interrupt it; so that the sight is every where lost in the immensity: and it is probable, that it is only from the imperfection of our organs, that the coasts of Africa, and even of Greece, are not discovered, as they are certainly above the horizon. The circumference of the visible horizon on the top of Etna cannot be less than 2000 miles: At Malta, which is near 200 miles distant, they perceive



ceive all the eruptions from the second region; and that island is often discovered from about one half the elevation of the mountain; so that at the whole elevation, the horizon must extend to near double that distance, or 400 miles, which makes 800 for the diameter of the circle, and 2400 for the circumference. But this is by much too vast for our senses, not intended to grasp so boundless a scene. But the most beautiful part of the scene is certainly the mountain itself; the island of Sicily and the numerous islands lying round it. All these by a kind of magic in vision, not easily to be accounted for, seem as if they were brought close round the skirts of Etna; the distances appearing reduced to nothing.

“ The *Regione Deserta*, or the frigid zone of Etna, is the first object that calls the attention. It is marked out by a circle of snow and ice, which extends on all sides to the distance of about eight miles. In the center of this circle, the great crater of the mountain rears its burning head; and the regions of intense cold and of intense heat seem for ever to be united in the same point — On the north side of the snowy region, it is said that there are several small lakes which are never thawed; and that in many places, the snow, mixed with the ashes and salts of the mountain, is accumulated to a vast depth: It is indeed probable, that the quantity of salts contained in this mountain, is one great reason of the preservation of its snows. — The *Regione Deserta* is immediately succeeded by the *Sylvosa*, or the woody region;



gion ; which surrounds the mountain on all sides, and is certainly one of the most delightful spots on earth. This presents a remarkable contrast with the desert region. It is not smooth and even, like the greatest part of the latter ; but it is finely variegated by an infinite number of those beautiful little mountains that have been formed by the different eruptions of Etna.

“ The circumference of this zone or great circle on Etna is not less than 70 or 80 miles. It is every where succeeded by the vineyards, orchards, and corn-fields that compose the *Regione Culta*, or the fertile region. This last zone is much broader than the other, and extends on all sides to the foot of the mountain. It is likewise covered with a number of little conical and spherical mountains, and exhibits a wonderful variety of forms and colours, and makes a delightful contrast with the other two regions.

“ Cast your eyes a little farther and you embrace the whole island, and see all its cities, rivers and mountains, delineated in the great chart of Nature : All the adjacent islands, the whole coast of Italy, as far as your eye can reach ; for it is no where bounded, but every where lost in the space. On the sun's first rising, the shadow of the mountain extends across the whole island, and makes a large track visible even in the sea and in the air. By degrees this is shortened, and, in a little time, is confined only to the neighbourhood of Etna.”

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The present crater of this immense volcano is a circle of about three miles and a half in circumference, it goes shelving down on each side, and forms a regular hollow like a vast amphitheatre. From many places of this space issue volumes of sulphureous smoke, which, being much heavier than the circumambient air, instead of rising in it, as smoke generally does, immediately on its getting out of the crater, rolls down the side of the mountain like a torrent, till coming to that part of the atmosphere of the same specific gravity with itself, it shoots off horizontally, and forms a large track in the air, according to the direction of the wind. The crater is so hot, that it is very dangerous, if not impossible, to go down into it; besides, the smoke is very incommodious, and in many places, the surface is so soft, that there have been instances of people sinking down in it, and paying for their temerity with their lives. Near the centre of the crater is the great mouth of the volcano: that tremendous gulph so celebrated in all ages, looked upon as the terror and scourge both of this and another life. When we reflect on the immensity of its depth, the vast cells and caverns whence so many lavas have issued; the force of its internal fire, to raise up those lavas to so vast a height, to support it as it were in the air, and even force it over the very summit of the crater, with all the dreadful accompaniments; the boiling of the matter, the shaking of the mountain, the explosions of flaming rocks, &c. it must be allowed, that the  
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most enthusiastic imagination, in the midst of all its terrors, hardly ever formed an idea of a hell more tremendous.

The descriptions given by the old Sicilian writers, of the dimensions of the crater of Etna are very various, and yet probably all right. It appears from all their accounts that generally once in about a hundred years, the whole crater has fallen down into the bowels of the mountain, which, consequently, must at different times alter the appearance of Etna. In process of time a new crater appears peeping out of the mouth of the gulph, which, perpetually increasing by the matter thrown up, is by degrees raised to its ancient height, till at last becoming too heavy for its hollow foundations, it again gives way, and at once sinks down again into the mountain.

The trees, plants, flowers, and other delightful and valuable productions of Etna are almost innumerable. Its immense and inexhaustible forests, not only furnish fuel for the inhabitants of Sicily, but constitute a very considerable branch of commerce. Amongst the infinite multitude of its valuable and beautiful plants, are many which have been thought peculiar to other countries. The cinnamon, farfaparilla, saffrafs, rhubarb; and the palma Christi, from the seed of which the castor oil is extracted, grow both upon Etna and in other parts of Sicily in great abundance. The fruit of the *Regione Culta* is esteemed the finest in the island, particularly the figs,  
of

of which they have a great variety. The vast quantity of nitre contained in the ashes of Etna, probably contribute to increase the luxuriance of its vegetation; and the air too, strongly impregnated with it from the smoke of the volcano, must create a constant supply of this salt, which is esteemed the food of vegetables.

This very productive mountain furnishes snow and ice, not only to the whole island of Sicily, but likewise to Malta, and a great part of Italy, and forms a very important branch of commerce. Even the peasants regale themselves with ice during the heats of summer; and there is no entertainment given by the nobility, in which this article of luxury does not make a principal part. It is a common observation amongst the natives, that without the snows of Etna their island could not be inhabited, and that a famine of snow would be more grievous than a famine either of corn or wine. There are many natural caverns about the mountain where the air is so extremely cold that it is impossible to support it for any time. These the peasants make use of as reservoirs for the snow, and so excellently fitted are they for the purpose, that these ice-houses preserve it hard frozen during the hottest summers.

## C H A P. VIII.

VIEW OF ETNA FROM THE SEA.—NEIGHBOURHOOD OF LEONTINI.—CITY OF AUGUSTA.—DESOLATIONS THERE.—SYRACUSE.—ITS ANCIENT FORM.—FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA.—BOILING SPRING.—CHURCH OF ST. JOHN.—MONASTERY OF THE CAPUCHINS.—WALLS OF SYRACUSE.—EAR OF DIONYSIUS.—HARBOURS.—CLIMATE.

**T**HE view of Mount Etna from the sea is more complete and satisfactory than any where on the island. In the voyage between Catania and Syracuse, which are distant about fifty miles, this striking object appears to great advantage, and exhibits a view which is uncommonly sublime.—Here the eye takes in a greater portion of the circle, and observes with more distinctness how it rises equally on all sides from its immense base.—Here it can at once trace the progress of vegetation from its utmost luxuriance, to where it is checked by the two extremes of heat and cold.—The different regions of the mountain are distinctly marked out by their different colours and productions.—Every climate, and every season, is at once exposed to the delighted eye.—Summer and autumn, spring and winter succeed to each other in these enchanting regions, which are terminated



terminated by the fathomless abodes of unextinguishable fire.

In travelling by land from Catania to Syracuse, the road for a very considerable way lies over beds of lava which have issued from the bowels of Etna. In the neighbourhood of Leontini a spacious plain extends towards the inland country, and also along the shore, full of ponds and marshes, which abound with an infinite variety of wild fowl, and afford excellent amusement for the keenest sportsman. Through this extensive plain flows the Giaretta, one of the largest rivers in Sicily, and celebrated by the poets under the name of Simoetas. This river takes its rise on the North side of Etna, and surrounding the Western skirts of the mountain falls into the sea, near the ruins of the ancient Morgantio. It was navigable in the time of the Romans, and is mentioned by an old Sicilian author as the only one in the island that was so. Large quantities of fine amber, which are electrical in a high degree, are found near the mouth of the river, and are manufactured into beads, pendants, and crosses, and sold at a considerable price to the numerous votaries of superstition.

The city of Leontini is one of the most ancient in the island, and is supposed to have been the habitation of the Lestrigons. Here the superabundance of the Sicilian produce was shipped for foreign parts, and Leontini was the great emporium of trade. Commerce is indeed still carried on from this place, and large quantities of fine fish are annually salted and  
exported



## 68 COLUMN OF MARCELLUS.

exported hence, but its ancient splendour and merchandize have greatly declined.

Augusta, which is some miles distant from the fertile and celebrated plains of Leontini, was built by Frederic the second, near the ruins of the ancient Greek city Megara, and is beautifully situated upon a small peninsula, which is joined to Sicily on the North side by a long causeway. Both the city and fortifications are considerable, and from the last enumeration the inhabitants amount to 9205 persons. The order of Malta, which possesses large estates near Leontini, have established magazines at Augusta for victualling their ships. This gives some appearance of animation to the place, which was dreadfully desolated by the fatal earthquake of 1693, which destroyed more than a third of the inhabitants, and levelled the greatest part of the buildings with the ground. The water ports were split to their foundation; and the light house precipitated headlong into the sea.

A large column called L'Agulia, or the Needle, is situated between Augusta and Syracuse, which is supposed to have been created by Marcellus in commemoration of his victory over that celebrated city. Two attempts have been made to break into the die of the pedestal, in hopes of discovering hidden treasure; as these however proved ineffectual, it is probable that the whole of this ancient mountain is a solid piece of masonry. On a hill to the West, stands the

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the town Melelli, a place where the sugar cane is still cultivated.

At the distance of eighteen miles from Augusta, stand the remains of the mighty city of Syracuse, the glory, magnificence, and illustrious deeds of which, both in arts and arms, have inflamed the heroic, and animated the coldest breast. But alas! the trophies of victory, and the monuments of genius are now no more. Syracuse, the most opulent and mighty of all the Grecian cities, the haughty contender against the forces of Carthage and of Rome, the repulser of fleets of two thousand sail, and of armies of two hundred thousand men, is now almost levelled with the dust. Syracuse, the glory of Sicily, the abode of such a number of gallant veterans as were the terror of the world, is now reduced to, comparatively, a few inhabitants, whose insignificant domains form a striking contrast to the elegance and splendour of the ancient possessors of that celebrated city.

The ancient city of Syracuse was of a triangular form, and consisted of five parts or towns. Ortygia; Acradina, that faced the sea; Tycha joined to Acradina on the East; Neapolis, which lay along the side of the great port; and, at the eastern extremity, Epipolæ, an uninhabited tract inclosed within the city walls. Some lofty rocks, crowned with ramparts, formed a strong defence all around, except in Neapolis, where the walls crossed the low grounds. The circuit was computed at 180 stadia, or 22 English miles and four furlongs, and this account is confirmed  
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by the actual measurement of the very accurate and diligent Mr. Swinburne.

Ortygia, which is of an oblong shape about two miles in circumference, was anciently an island, and inhabited by the ancient possessors of Sicily, before the bold invasions of the Greeks. When population increased to such a degree, that this island was incapable of containing the inhabitants, the narrow arm of the sea, which divided it from the main land was filled up, and a peninsula formed. Territory was added to territory, to accommodate the numberless and increasing inhabitants of Syracuse, whose splendid edifices adorned every part of this magnificent and extensive city, whose immense riches were proverbial in the ancient world, and whose achievements will long be remembered with admiration and regret. At last, subdued by the victorious arms of all conquering Rome, Syracuse was wrested from the hands of its ancient possessors, and the city became the prey of the spoiler. It was however restored to the citizens by Augustus; but they were confined to the islands of Ortygia, and the adjoining parts of Acradina, and the most magnificent city in the world was left to become the habitation of birds of ill-omen, and beasts of prey. Under the Saracens, it still suffered further devastation, and the mighty Syracuse dwindled into Ortygia alone. In the earthquake of 1693, this city experienced fresh devastation, and one fourth of the inhabitants perished under the ruins of their own houses.

Ortygia,

## FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA. 71

Ortygia, which comprehends the modern city of Syracuse, though by much the smallest division of the ancient city, contains about eighteen thousand inhabitants. It is strongly fortified towards the land; and the garrison the best appointed in the kingdom; but is very weak towards the sea, however, the shelves render it dangerous to debark on that side. The present king of Spain has at a prodigious expence, cut through the neck of land that united Ortygia to Sicily, and has restored the island to its original state.

Near the quay of Syracuse flows the celebrated fountain of Arethusa, which rises at once out of the earth to the size of a river. But its pure and limpid waters are now converted into a thick and unpleasent stream, the fish have deserted its bed, and the nymph, whose charms have inspired the pens and fancies of ancient and modern poets, no longer pleases but in their songs. Poetical fictions have in many instances composed a part of the faith of the vulgar, and this has many adherents amongst the lower ranks of people, many of whom believe that this is the identical river Arethusa, which sinks under ground near Olympia in Greece, and continuing its course for some hundred miles below the ocean, rises again in this spot. At a small distance from the fountain of Arethusa, is a large spring of water that boils up into the sea, which is called by some Alpheus, who according to the poetical creed, pursued his charming and favourite nymph below the sea, all the way to Sicily.

Sicily. This spring has, however, in all probability but lately come into existence, for it is unnoticed by the ancient poets, who have celebrated the fountain of Arethusa. It sometimes boils up so strongly, that after piercing the salt water, it is said to be taken up little affected by it.

Acradina extends over two considerable levels, the first, low and even with Ortygia; the second elevated to the same height with Tycha. This was once the most crowded and best built part of Syracuse, but scarcely a vestige of its former magnificence remains. In the low ground stands the church of St. John, one of the oldest christian churches in Sicily; it covers the entrance into large catacombs where the ancient Syracusans interred their dead, and which is supposed to have been the place where the primitive disciples assembled in the perilous seasons of persecution. The vaults are formed into streets, cut through one continued stratum of soft stone, and cross each other in several directions. At stated distances are large circular rooms lined with stucco, and pierced at the top for the admission of light and air. On each side of the walls are recesses cut in the rock, and in the floor of these cavities coffins of all sizes have been hollowed out, some of which contained skeletons with a piece of money in their mouths.

The monastery of the Capuchins, in Acradina is adorned with very curious and extensive gardens, which afford a variety of wild and romantic scenes,  
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and by their produce, yield a considerable income to the fraternity. These gardens are in some measure subterraneous, being contained in the areas of immense excavations, made by cutting stone for the ancient city. The traveller is conducted by a slope to these extraordinary grottos, where the view is, on all sides, confined by shaggy walls, near a hundred feet in height, the rugged appearance of which forms the most striking contrast with the infinite variety of fruit, flowers, lofty trees, and aromatic shrubs, all of which grow in this sheltered spot, in the most luxuriant profusion.

The vaults belonging to the convent have the property of drying the bodies of the dead in a very short space of time, after which they are dressed in religious habits, and placed as statues in niches on each side of the subterraneous alleys.

The outermost wall of Tycha is visible, without interruption, for some miles. This was erected by the elder Dionysius, who likewise added Epipolae to Syracuse, and enclosed it with walls, in the erection of which he employed such a number of labourers, carriages, and cattle, and gave such bounties to the active and laborious artizans, that in twenty days he completed a wall of large hewn stone, near four miles in length.

The principal remains of antiquity are a theatre, an amphitheatre, many sepulchres, the Latomie, the catacombs, the celebrated ear of Dionysius, and

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some remains of ancient temples. The theatre, which is situated in Neapolis, and is still so entire as to have many of its gradini, or seats, remaining, presents to the view a very picturesque and romantic object. The white steps are half concealed by bushes of various kinds, some tall poplars wave their reclining heads over the ruin, and the waters in full cascades roll impetuously along from rock to rock. The amphitheatre is in the form of a very eccentric ellipse, and very little of it now remains.

One of the most extraordinary spots in Syracuse is the large Latomie in the skirts of Neapolis. This celebrated place, which was as at first formed by being a quarry whence stone was extracted for building the city, consists of a very spacious area, which is surrounded by a wall of rock of great height, so artfully cut as to cause the upper part to project very visibly out of the perpendicular line, and by that means to defeat every attempt to climb up. In the center of this dreary inclosure, whose dismal caverns contained the miserable victims of caprice and tyranny, are the remains of a guard house, and rings are cut out of the angles of the walls, where, in all probability, the more obnoxious criminals were fastened; but the excavation, which the most strongly attracts attention, is the celebrated ear of Dionysius. This cavern, which is cut out of the solid rock, is 18 feet wide, and 53 in height, and penetrates into the heart of the hill in the form of a capital

pital S ; the sides are chiseled very smooth, and the whole cavern so contrived, that every sound made in it, was collected and united in one point, which was called the tympanum. Exactly opposite to this the tyrant had made a small aperture, which communicated with a little apartment, where he used to conceal himself, and applying his ear to the hole, hear distinctly every word that was uttered in the cavern below. From the hearing place having been too much opened and altered, it is said to have lost its virtue ; but this is not easy to ascertain, from the difficulty of getting to the chamber of Dionysius, which is almost inaccessible. Those who have made the experiment were let down by ropes from the top of the rock. The echo at the mouth of the grotto is very loud ; the tearing of a piece of paper occasions as much noise as a smart blow with a cudgel upon a board, and a gun made a report like thunder, that vibrated for some seconds.

Very few of the ancient temples of Syracuse are now distinguishable. The Temple of Minerva in Ortygia, is converted into the cathedral, and dedicated to our Lady of the Pillar, but little of the original structure remains. Two mutilated columns of the celebrated temple of Olympian Jove, which was enriched by Gelo with the magnificent spoils of the Carthaginians, are still standing, but at a considerable distance from each other. It is difficult to conceive what can have become of the mighty

mass of materials which composed this once extensive and magnificent city. In some places every vestige of its ever having been inhabited, is totally annihilated, and every where the marks of its former splendour are astonishingly few.

Syracuse has two harbours, the largest of which, on the South West side of Ortygia is reckoned six miles round, and was esteemed one of the best in the Mediterranean. It was called Marmoreo on account of its being encircled with buildings of marble, and the entrance into this harbour was so strongly fortified, that the Roman fleets could not penetrate into it. The small port is situated on the North East of Ortygia, and is likewise recorded to have been highly ornamented. Near this port the spot is shewn where once stood the habitation of Archimedes, and the tower whence he is said to have set fire to the Roman galleys by his burning glasses. But alas! the best founded fame is but evanescent, and the possibility of this exploit, which has conferred so much honour upon the philosopher, is at most but problematical. It is indeed very difficult to conceive a burning glass, or a concave speculum, with a focus of such an immense length as this must have required.

There is an old remark made on the climate of Syracuse by the ancients, which has not been controverted by their descendants, that at no season the sun has ever been invisible there during a whole day.

## CLIMATE OF SYRACUSE. 77

day. It is indeed a remarkably fine climate for a winter's residence, and except, during a few days, when the Easterly winds are prevalent, affords, to the inhabitants of more northern regions, all the feelings, and appearances of spring. Its pleasantness, and salubrity, however, terminate with the commencement of summer, at which season the marshes at the head of the port, exhale vapours that infect the air, and endanger the lives of the inhabitants.



## C H A P. IX.

ISLAND OF CAPO PASSERO. — FREQUENT INVASIONS UPON THE COAST OF SICILY. — FORT, A PLACE OF EXILE. — APPEARANCES OF VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS. — ROYAL CITY OF CALATAGERONE. — ROAD TOWARDS THE SOUTHERN COAST. — TERRANOVA. — FIUME SALSO. — ALICATI. — TOWN AND BEAUTIFUL VALE OF PALMA. — LARGE BEDS OF SULPHUR.

**C**APO Passero, which, with a favourable wind, is but at the distance of a few hours sail from Syracuse, is the remotest and most southerly point of Sicily. It is not a peninsula, though generally represented as such, but a wretched, barren island, about a mile in circumference, with a fort and small garrison to protect the neighbouring country from the incursions of the Barbary corsairs, who are often very troublesome on this side of the island.

The terror inspired by these barbarians has occasioned great alterations all along the southern coast. Most of the inhabitants have been driven to seek security in towns, or to retire further from the banks of the sea, in order to secure their property from these rapacious invaders, and their own persons, and those of their families, from the danger of being carried

carried captive into foreign climes. But it is not alone from the ferocious Africans, that the Sicilians on this part of the coast have to apprehend danger; their crafty neighbours, the Turks, omit few opportunities of invading those parts which lie most exposed to their depredations.

The little island and fort of Capo Passero are separated from the rest of Sicily by a strait, which is about half a mile in breadth. The fort is made use of as a place of exile for delinquents in the army; and officers of distinguished families have been compelled to spend here, in a wretched retirement, a part of those hours which they would much rather have dedicated to riot and licentiousness. The people in this part of the country are associates fitted for so excellent a garrison. They are little better than savages, and so much addicted to plunder, that it is not very safe for a stranger to entrust himself in their hands.

Large quantities of pumice stone are found on the coast, and several considerable pieces of lava. At some distance from Capo Passero lies a sulphureous lake, the vapour of which is so strong as to affect the smell at the distance of a mile, and the water boils up with violence in several places, though the heat at the banks of the lake is very inconsiderable. All these appearances favour the opinion that this part of the island, as well as that in the neighbourhood of Etna, has, in former



## 80 ROMANTIC SITUATION.

mer ages been subject to eruptions of fire. They have however, probably been very inconsiderable, for there is no conical mountain observable in the vicinity of these marks of erupted matter.

The face of the country, about Capo Passero, is extremely barren, and to a considerable distance produces neither corn nor wine. The marsh, which lies exceedingly low, and extends along the coast, is, however, surrounded with a variety of fine ever-greens and flowering shrubs, and the rocks are entirely covered with large quantities of the finest capers.

Calatagerone, a royal city, which is situated about twenty miles from the southern coast of Sicily, contains near seventeen thousand inhabitants, who subsist chiefly by agriculture, and a manufactory of earthen ware. Its situation is very picturesque. It stands on the summit of a lofty insulated hill, surrounded with thick groves of cypresses, and commands a very extensive and beautiful view. The road to it, though paved, is so very steep, difficult, and dangerous, that no carriage can travel it. Many of the inhabitants however possess handsome equipages, in which they parade daily on the summit of the hill, and though, residing among the inland mountains, are characterized for their elegance, and esteemed the politest people in Sicily. Their valour and steady attachment to Roger, Earl of Sicily, was rewarded  
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by liberal grants, which render this corporation one of the richest in Sicily. The city does not, however, bear any striking marks of opulence, either in the cultivation of any of the arts, or the magnificence of the buildings.

The road from Calatagerone, towards the southern coast of Sicily, lies through a fine track of vineyards, and a very rich and well cultivated country. The high country, near Terranova, is almost an entire sandy forest of cork trees, in whose recesses wild honey is found in great abundance. The inhabitants do not, however, derive this delicious production from this source alone, for most of them have hives near their houses, from which, in a country where the sweetest flowers grow in the most luxurious profusion, they obtain honey in large quantities, and of the most delightful flavour. In the center of this country was situated the celebrated Hybla, the productions of which have long been celebrated in classic song. There are three towns of that name in the island, distinguished by the epithets of the Great, (near Mount Etna), the Lesser, (near Augusta,) and the Little, (by Ragusa).

Terranova is a large borough, belonging to the Duke of Monteleone, and is very agreeably situated on a bank near the sea. Several remains of antiquity, which are to be seen both in the town and environs, prove it to be the seat of an ancient

city, and many antiquaries have been of the opinion, that the celebrated Rhodian colony, which was the parent of several other colonies established along the southern coast, was situated here. Indeed there appears much clearer proofs of its existence at Terranova, than at Alicati, which contests with it the honour of being the site of the once famous city of Gela. But nothing can be more uncertain than the situations of the most extensive cities upon this variable island, where large districts have at once sunk deep into the bowels of the earth, or been overwhelmed with deep and fiery torrents.

Corn is the principal produce of the environs of Terranova, and is exported from that town in considerable quantities. Fruits of various kinds grow here likewise very plentifully, but the place produces no olives, so that oil is a scarce and dear commodity. The water, which is in such small quantities, as not always to be sufficient for the demands of the inhabitants, is besides brackish.— This quality is perhaps one cause of the prevalence of the itch amongst the lower ranks of people at Terranova, and this disposition is increased by the spirituous quality of their wine; their usual food, which is salt meat; and their inactive lives. Cutaneous disorders are not however peculiar to the inhabitants of Terranova. They are extremely common in many other parts of the island, and bear the gentle appellation of *ffocaccia a heat*. In Syracuse, this disorder

disorder prevails much amongst the lower ranks, and doubtless is both there, and in other places, to be in a great degree ascribed to the nastiness of the inhabitants.

The broken cliffs that extend towards the West, from Terranova, are composed of greenish marle, full of sulphur; and some of them are solid rocks of gypsum. A large quantity of kali, or salt wort, grows on these marley grounds, and a vast deal of barilla is burnt in the neighbourhood, and exported to other countries. The Val di Noto terminates at the Fiume Salso, which derives its name from the brackish taste of its waters. This river rises almost in the center of the island, and discharges itself into the Mediterranean sea, dividing, as far as its course extends, the Val di Noto from the Val di Mazzara. The eastern bank commands a delightful view of the adjacent town of Alicati stretching down the opposite hill in an elegant sweep, and terminated by lofty castles, and a continued chain of hills.

The town of Alicati is small, and a great part of it in a very ruinous state. The town walls are much decayed, and the fortrefs in want of considerable repair to render it strong. It contains ten thousand inhabitants, and has great connections with the island of Malta, in the corn trade. At the distance of several miles from Alicati, stands the small, but delightfully situated town of Palma,

which belongs to the prince of Lampedusa. It possesses, in a very high degree, every requisite for rural elegance. The vale, in which the town is built, is enriched by a variety of the most delightful vegetable productions. The manor house, which is spacious and handsome, stands on a rock that proudly towers above an extensive plain, divided into corn fields by rows of almond trees; some smaller inclosures surround clumps of fruit trees, which are ever-green; and vines, that run from the trees, form arbours delightfully contrived to exclude the fervid rays of the summer's sun. This charming vale is closed on the East by a high country, which is cultivated to the very summit, and on the West by a wood of fruit trees, that covers the hills, at whose feet a limpid stream runs meandering to the sea. The back ground is formed by a mountain planted to its very summit with beautiful olive trees, and in front the mighty ocean sometimes presents the charming view of various vessels gliding along its unruffled surface, and at others, the magnificent appearance of its proud waves swelling to the size of mountains, and again subsiding into smoothness and placidity.

The atrocious villainy of the generality of the Palinese, who are so much distinguished for their depravity, that it is said there is not a jail in the island which does not contain a native of Palma, is  
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## MAKING OF SULPHUR. 85

a considerable alloy to the pleasures of this delightful situation, which possesses a great number of advantages. The wines of this country are very excellent, and, together with its other rich and delightful productions, are exported from the town of Palma. But it is not alone in Palma that the votaries of Bacchus may find ample gratification, the whole coast affords that article in the greatest perfection, and furnishes in abundance, most of the necessaries of animal life.

On each side of the road, from the charming valley of Palma, the hills abound in sulphur, which is extracted from them by grooves driven very deep into them; the mineral is by this means brought up in small lumps, which are green, and deposited in large troughs lined with plaister. When they are heated by fire to a sufficient degree, the brimstone separates from the more solid parts of the mass, and exudes through holes in the bottom, into wooden bowls placed under the troughs to receive it.

CHAP.



## C H A P. X.

ANCIENT CITY OF AGRIGENTUM.—PEOPLED BY THE GREEKS.—RISES TO GREAT CONSIDERATION.—ITS LIBERTY DESTROYED BY PHALARIS.—STORY OF THE BRAZEN BULL.—UNCOMMON INSTANCE OF FRIENDSHIP.—AGRIGENTUM DESTROYED BY THE CARTHAGINIANS.—REVIVAL OF THE CITY.—AGAIN DESTROYED.—DELIGHTFUL SITUATION OF THE ANCIENT CITY.—APPEARANCE OF GIRGENTI.—COUNTRY ADJACENT.—METHOD OF PRESERVING CORN.—FAMOUS SALT FOUND IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.—ROAD TO GIRGENTI.—CATHEDRAL.—BEAUTIFUL ANCIENT SARCOPHAGUS.

**A**GRIGENTUM, one of the most celebrated cities in the island, and renowned for its extent, its splendor, and its various revolutions, was the second in rank amongst the Grecian cities in Sicily, and even sometimes proudly vied with the mighty Syracuse. Its ancient inhabitants suffered the same fate with their neighbours in different parts of Sicily, and were compelled by the victorious Greeks, to resign to them the possession of  
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their city. Six hundred years before the christian era, the people of Gala sent out a colony, which landed upon that part of the island, drove the possessors into the more interior parts of the country, and converted their abode into a fortress to guard the magnificent city, which they erected on the hillocks below. This city they called Acragas, from the name of a neighbouring stream, and from this the Romans formed their word Agrigentum.

The advantageous situation of this new commonwealth, together with the happy effects of a free government, and an active commercial spirit, exalted it to a degree of power and riches which was unknown to the other Greek settlements, except Syracuse. Its liberty and happiness were however but of short duration; for the inhuman Phalaris attacked, and destroyed both at a very early period.

The influence of power is the same in all ages, and every country; and even amongst this people, who had so lately been compelled to put on the yoke of bondage, there were many by whom it appeared to be worn with ease, and some who were mean and base enough to flatter the tyrant by ingenious inventions for torturing his enemies.— Among these abject slaves, the name of Perillo, a goldsmith, holds a distinguished rank. This man, desirous of paying court to Phalaris, invented a brazen bull of admirable workmanship, which  
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was hollow within, and so constructed, that the voice of a person shut up in it sounded like the bellowing of a real bull. He presented this to the tyrant, and at the same time informed him of the admirable effect which would be produced from inclosing a few of his enemies in the brazen bull, and making a fire under it. But this inhuman proposal was at first rejected, even by the tyrant himself, who, instead of amusing himself with the torments of his enemies, compelled Perillo to enter the cavity, and to suffer the torture he had so ingeniously contrived for others. At the taking of Agrigentum this bull was carried to Carthage, but was restored again by Scipio, after the destruction of that city.

The innate principles of equity and compassion are seldom totally extinguished in the most ferocious breasts, and this act of retribution was not the only instance that even the mind of Phalaris was sometimes alive to sentiments of justice, and to admiration of great and heroic deeds. Two friends, Melanippus and Cariton, incensed at the usurpation of the tyrant, conspired his death, and agreed to brave together every danger in order to rid society of so detestable a monster. Sensible however of the hazardous nature of this enterprise, the gallant Cariton secretly resolved to preserve his friend, and to expose his own life only, in the attempt to poignard the tyrant. He seized  
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the time which appeared best suited for this purpose, but his attempt was unsuccessful; he was seized by the guards and immediately put to the torture, to make him discover his accomplices; but the soul of Cariton was superior to pain, and he resolutely refused to make any discovery. His situation in the mean time was made known to his friend, who, inspired by the same generous feelings which had actuated Cariton, in the transports of friendship ran to the tyrant, assured him that he only was the guilty person, that Cariton had merely acted at his instigation, and that he alone ought to be placed on the rack. This instance of generous affection, and heroic ardour, melted even the breast of Phalaris, and he pardoned them both. But the virtues of this tyrant were too transient to prevent for any length of time his daring violations of humanity and justice. The lives of his subjects were continually sacrificed to his cruelty and caprice, and the brazen bull, whose barbarous inventor was so exemplarily punished, soon became the frequent instrument of torture and death to the enemies of Phalaris. At length his crimes met with the common fate of tyrants, and he fell during the commission of an atrocious exertion of power. Zeno the philosopher being at the court of Phalaris, had advised the tyrant to resign his authority, and to retire to a private life. These persuasions were, however, not only angrily

grily rejected, but the sage was suspected by Phalaris of being in a conspiracy with his subjects, and was ordered by the tyrant to be put to the torture in the presence of the citizens of Agrigentum. But Zeno did not quietly submit to this atrocious decree; when the people were assembled to be the sad spectators of his death, and this new outrage against justice and humanity, he reproached them in severe terms for their pusillanimity, in submitting to the yoke of the tyrant, and incited them to resistance. The citizens immediately ran to arms, the guards were speedily defeated, and the inhuman Phalaris soon stoned to death by his people.

After the death of the tyrant, the Agrigentines enjoyed their liberty during one hundred and fifty years, at the expiration of which Thero usurped the sovereign authority. The virtues of this prince secured his power from opposition; but, soon after his decease, the Agrigentines once more abolished tyranny, and restored a democratical form of government. For some time after this, they were, at different times, engaged in encounters with the ancient inhabitants of the island, or with their neighbours the Syracusans. Some advantages obtained over them by the latter, made them willingly accede to an alliance with the Athenians, who were meditating an attack upon Syracuse. But they soon found that their fortunes and liberties must



must be sacrificed for this protection, upon which they disclaimed the alliance, and were reconciled to their neighbours of Syracuse. The union of these States was however fatal to the Agrigentines, who by this means incurred the vengeance of the Carthaginians, by whom their armies were routed, their city taken, their race almost extirpated, and the magnificent Agrigentum buried in ruins.

Fifty years after this event, Timoleon, after triumphing over the Carthaginians, and restoring liberty to Sicily, collected the descendants of the Agrigentines, and sent them to re-establish the dwellings of their ancestors. In a short time the city rose from its ashes with renewed vigour, and endeavoured to assume supremacy over all the Sicilian republics. But this effort was not successful. During the first Punic war it became the headquarters of the Carthaginians, and was besieged by the Roman consuls, who took it by storm, after a blockade of eight months. In the contests between these rival states it frequently changed masters, and on every change suffered the most cruel outrages. After this period, very little mention of it occurs in history, nor is the precise time of the destruction of the old city, or the building of the new one, at all known. The feeble remains of its population, which had survived so many calamities, were at length driven out of its walls by the  
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the Saracens, and obliged to lock themselves up for safety amongst the bleak and inaccessible rocks of the present city.

The situation of the ancient city of Agrigentum was adapted in an admirable manner for the comforts and conveniencies of a large confederated body. Here its inhabitants, who were inferior in numbers only to those of Syracuse, and computed at eight hundred thousand persons, were provided with every requisite for defence, pleasure and comfort. A natural wall, formed by abrupt rocks, presented a strong barrier against every assailant; three sides of the city were sheltered by pleasant hills, without impeding the circulation of air; before them a broad plain, watered by the charming Acragas, gave admission to the breezes from the sea, and to a noble prospect of that awful element; and the port or emporium lay in view at the mouth of the river.

Girgenti is situated upon an eminence, just above the ancient city of Agrigentum, the greater part of which occupied the subjacent vale. It makes a noble appearance from the sea, whence, as it is built on the summit and declivity of one of the highest hills on the southern coast, it appears to very considerable advantage. The slope is covered with buildings, which appear like terraces, and the castles, and cathedral, proudly towering above the adjacent buildings, form a striking termination

mination to the view. But these appearances of elegance are extremely fallacious; the houses are mean, and the streets dirty, crooked, and narrow. This city is still so considerable as to contain about fifteen thousand inhabitants, and carries on a very extensive trade in the exportation of grain. Its harbour, for which it is more indebted to the efforts of art than of nature, is situated at the distance of four miles from the city, which is elevated about eleven hundred feet above the level of the sea.

The whole country round Girgenti is extremely beautiful, and produces wine and oil in great abundance; and the fertile fields and orchards abound in an almost infinite variety of the most exquisite fruits. But the most abundant product, and that from which it derives the greatest advantage, is corn, which the ground in this part of the country, yields in the greatest profusion. The method of preserving the grain is not by exposure to the open air, but by the most careful endeavours to exclude it entirely. For this end they scoop out large excavations in the rocks, which are made very spacious at the bottom, and gradually narrowed to the top, where they pour in the grain after it has been previously dried; and after pressing it down, carefully cover up the aperture, so as entirely to exclude the air or the rain.

About four or five miles from Girgenti is found  
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the celebrated salt, which is dug out of the bowels of the earth. This salt possesses the remarkable property of melting in the fire, but of cracking and splitting in the water. Fazzello, a Sicilian author, confirms this account of several of the ancient naturalists, respecting the extraordinary properties of this salt; and adds, from their authority, that the natives of Sicily formerly possessed mines of it, so pure and solid, that the sculptors and statuaries preferred it to marble.

The road to Girgenti is on each side bordered by a row of exceedingly large American Aloes, which, at the season when they are in flower, must make a very beautiful appearance. In the happy climate of Sicily, this noble plant is said, at the latest, to blow every sixth year, but in general every fifth. The flower stems are commonly between twenty and thirty feet in height, and are, from the top to the bottom, covered with flowers, which regularly taper, and form a beautiful pyramid, the base, or pedestal of which, is the fine spreading leaves of the plant. The whole substance of the plant being carried into the stem, and the flowers, as soon as the blow is completed the leaves begin to fade away, and a numerous offspring of young plants are produced round the root of the old one; these are flipped off, and formed into new plantations, either for hedges, or for avenues to country houses.

Girgenti

Girgenti possesses few remarkable buildings, or monuments of art. The great church, or cathedral, is an inelegant building, in which the Norman and Grecian styles are very injudiciously blended. This church is celebrated for a remarkable echo, which is so strong, that if one person is placed behind the great altar, and another at the nave, in the most distant part of the cathedral, they may hold a conversation together in the lowest whispers, notwithstanding the line of communication is broken by the aisles, and by a number of projecting pieces of ornamental architecture. The baptismal font is a noble piece of antiquity; a fine sarcophagus faced with very beautiful basso relievo's executed in the most masterly style. It is of white marble, and the decorations represent the hunting of a wild boar. The first part is the preparation for the hunt, and exhibits twelve men, each armed with a lance, and a short hanger, of a very singular form, and accompanied by horses, and dogs; while a little aged female holds the principal figure, as if she wished to detain him at home. The second piece represents the chase, and a wild boar, who keeps at bay several dogs and huntsmen. The third exhibits the death of the chief, who is thrown from his chariot. And on the fourth, a matron is exhibited sitting in a melancholy posture, surrounded by her female attendants, who endeavour to sooth her grief by  
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the found of various instruments. A few other antiquities belong to the great church, which is almost the only place in Girgenti that contains any monuments of ancient splendor.



## C H A P X I.

RUINS OF AGRIGENTUM.—ANCIENT TEMPLES OF JUNO, CONCORD, JUPITER, &c. — TOMB OF THERO. — WALLS OF THE CITY. — SEPULCHRES. — CHARACTER OF THE AGRIGENTINES, AND OF THEIR DESCENDANTS.

**T**HE ruins of the ancient city of Agrigentum lie about a short mile from the modern one, and like the ruins of Syracuse, are in general converted into corn-fields, vineyards, and orchards; but the remains of the temples are much more conspicuous than in that city. At the south east angle of the ancient city, are the remains of an ancient temple, said to be dedicated to the wife of Jove. It was raised upon a lofty base of regular stone work, in the center of which was contrived a gallery, either for apartments or store-houses. On the west front a grand flight of steps leads up to the vestibule; the front consisted of six fluted Doric columns, and the flanks of eleven plain ones;

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but



## 98 CELEBRATED PICTURE.

but few of them are now left standing. The situation of this elegant temple, on a gently swelling eminence, rising out of a grove of fruit trees, and terminating in a bold elevation; its mutilated but majestic columns; and its scattered or tottering ruins, present a very striking object to the view.

One of the most celebrated pictures of antiquity, the master piece of the immortal Zeuxis, once ornamented this elegant temple. Determined to form a model of human perfection, the artist prevailed upon several of the finest women in Agrigentum to submit their charms to his inspection, out of which he composed the picture of the Goddess. At the siege of Agrigentum, by the Carthaginians, many of the citizens took refuge in the temple of Juno; but when they found the gates attacked by the enemy, they set fire to the building; and with many celebrated treasures of ancient art, amongst which the picture of Zeuxis held the most distinguished rank, perished in the flames.

The Temple of Concord is in a high degree of preservation: it is built in the simple Doric style, and all its columns, entablatures and walls are still entire; indeed, only part of the roof is wanting. Its preservation must be attributed to the care of the christians, who have half covered

## PICTURESQUE VIEW. 99

vered the nave, and converted it into a church, consecrated to St. Gregory. This majestic edifice, stands in the most striking point of view imaginable, on the brink of a precipice, which formed the defence of the city along the whole southern exposure; from every part of the country the temple of Concord appears the most conspicuous part of a beautiful picture.

The Temple of Hercules, which was celebrated for containing the famous statue of that hero, which the infamous Verres attempted to wrest from the inhabitants, is now a vast heap of ruins. It appears to have been of a larger size than either the temples of Juno or of Concord; as some of its broken columns are seven feet in diameter. One of the best paintings of Zeuxis decorated this ancient building, upon which the artist is said to have set so high a value, that he never could be prevailed upon to put a price upon it, but presented it to Agrigentum, to be placed in the temple of Hercules. Its story was indeed peculiarly calculated for entitling it to a place in this mansion. Hercules was represented in his cradle, killing the two serpents, and Alcmena and Amphytrion, having just entered the apartment, were depicted with every mark of astonishment and terror.

The ruins of the mighty temple of the Olympian Jupiter are situated at a small distance from those of the temple of Hercules. This was the largest temple in the whole island, but is so completely destroyed, that it is scarcely possible to discover its dimensions or original form. Its gigantic remains are called *il tempio de giganti*, or the giant's temple, by the common people; who cannot easily conceive how such enormous masses could ever have been united in one fabric, by the hand of man. This prodigious edifice, the magnificent decorations of which were suited to its extent, fell a prey to the ravages of war before it was quite finished; and the Agrigentines were ever afterwards reduced to a state of such poverty and subjection, that they never were able to complete this superb monument of the taste and opulence of their ancestors. Diodorus represents this magnificent temple as three hundred and seventy Greek feet in length, sixty in breadth, and its height two hundred and twenty, exclusive of the foundations or basement story; and the extent and solidity of its vaults as very wonderful. This account cannot, however, be easily ascertained, not only from the very ruinous state of the edifice, but from its being constructed upon principles very different from those of the other Sicilian temples.

ples. It is said to have stood till the year 1100. Its mighty fragments now lie scattered on the brow and side of a gentle declivity, and are so prodigious, and the account left of this fabrick so pompous and surprizing, that its dimensions have frequently been compared with those of St. Peter, at Rome, though in fact that building is immensely more extensive than this celebrated temple,

Part of two columns, and two pilasters, are nearly all that remain of the temple of Esculapius, which contained the celebrated statue of Apollo. It was deprived of this beautiful ornament by the Carthaginians, at the same time that the temple of Juno was burnt. The conquerors bore off this invaluable prize to their own capital, where it long continued the greatest ornament of Carthage, but was restored by Scipio at the final demolition of that city.—What was its subsequent fate it is not possible to ascertain. Some of the Sicilians, zealous for the honour of their country, allege that it was carried to Rome, where it still remains, the wonder of all ages, under the name of the Apollo of Belvedere; but the grounds for this belief are extremely uncertain and suspicious.

These are not the only temples, the remains of which are still visible at Agrigentum. Almost

## 102 TEMPLE OF CERES.

One half of the Temple of Venus still remains ; and the gloomy Vulcan, and the twin sons of Jove received in this city the adorations of their respective votaries. Very little of the temple dedicated to the grim husband of the beautiful Venus is now to be seen ; that of Castor and Pollux has a few fragments of columns which peep among the surrounding vines, but its lower parts are completely covered by vegetation. This temple stands on the verge of the celebrated fish-pond of Agrigentum, which was cut in the solid rock to the depth of thirty feet, and supplied with water from the neighbouring hills. It not only furnished great quantities of the finest fish for the public entertainments of the luxurious Agrigentines, but by its great depth prevented the city from being surprized by the enemy on that side. But the streams and reservoirs that supplied its waters are choaked up, or diverted into other channels, and this magnificent basin is now converted into a garden.

The foundations of the Temple of Ceres and Proserpine, serve at this time as a basis for a christian church, and bishop Blaize has succeeded to the honours of the favourite deity of Sicily. The most celebrated temple of the Goddess was in the center of the island, on the summit of a high hill called Enna, which is represented



presented by Cicero as one of the most fertile and beautiful spots in the world. From these enchanting fields the beautiful Proserpine was brutally carried away. Here her mother Ceres received the adorations of her devout worshippers, who crowded her temple from every part of the heathen world, and made Enna the great object of their pious pilgrimages. Little or nothing of this superb edifice now remains at Castro Giovanni, the seat of the ancient Enna, nor are the remains of the Temple of the Goddess at Agrigentum much more conspicuous.

The tomb of the valiant, the just, and the virtuous Thero is situated in a very solitary spot, surrounded by aged olive trees, which cast a wild irregular shade over the ruins. This edifice, whose lower story is thirteen feet in diameter, rather inclines to the pyramidal shape; but as the cornice is fallen, it is not possible to ascertain what was the termination of the building. A great part of this ancient monument still remains, which notwithstanding some confusion in the ornaments and proportions, has great elegance in its form and stile. The monument of Tero, one of the first tyrants of Sicily, though above two thousand years old, is still almost entire, and answers the description given of it by Polybius, who mentions this sepulchre as being situated



ated near the temple of Hercules, and as being struck with lightning in his time.

The ancient walls of Agrigentum, are mostly cut out of the rock, which contains vast rows of sepulchres, wherever the stone admitted of excavations, either by the hand of nature or art. Some of its masses are hewn into the shape of coffins, and others perforated in small square holes, which served as receptacles for urns. In these interstices, the bodies of the deceased, or the urns containing their ashes, were deposited not only in lateral rows, but the receptacles were in some places hewn out one above another to a surprizing height.

The mighty ruins of Agrigentum, and the ground on which they stand, are composed of a concretion of sea shells run together, and cemented by a kind of sand or gravel. This stone is white before it has been exposed to the air, but in the temples, and other ruins, it is become of a deep reddish brown, and is as hard, and perhaps even more durable than marble. It is from this circumstance, as well as from its having suffered less from natural concussions, that Agrigentum affords so much more ample an entertainment to the curiosity of an antiquarian, than the still more celebrated city of Syracuse, whose magnificent edifices were  
constructed

constructed of a more soft and friable stone. Many other remains of antiquity occur in this celebrated city; but amongst its mighty mass of magnificent ruins, there is not the smallest vestige of any which appears likely to have been erected for shews or dramatic exhibitions. This is the more extraordinary, among a people celebrated for their attachment to spectacles and dramatic performances; and the edifices generally erected for these purposes, were peculiarly constructed for resisting the attacks of time.

The magnificent taste of the Agrigentines has scarcely been exceeded by Asiatic splendor. Diodorus relates, that the great vessels for holding water were commonly of silver, and that the litters and carriages, were principally made of ivory, and richly adorned. The same author likewise mentions one of the citizens returning victoriously from the Olympic games, and entering the city, attended by three hundred chariots, each drawn by four white horses, richly caparisoned. Luxury was, at least, as leading a characteristic of the Agrigentines, as a taste for shew and magnificence; nor do the descendants of this celebrated people appear, in this respect, at all inferior to their ancestors. Their tables vie in luxurious refinement with those of the most

zealous disciples of Epicurus, and every invention is exhausted to give a more poignant relish to their numerous dishes, and to stimulate the palled appetite. By a particular management, they cause the livers of their fowls to grow to a large size, and at the same time to acquire so high and rich a flavour, that it makes an excellent dish. This luxury is however procured by means so cruel to the poor tortured animal, that the man who knows it, and can desire to procure this delicacy by the painful and lingering death of an unhappy animal, must be destitute of the common principles of humanity. Hospitality likewise is a leading trait in the character of the modern, as well as of the ancient inhabitants of Agrigentum.

## C H A P. XII.

TOWN OF SICULIANA.—RIVER PLATANI.—  
 RIBERA.—BANDITTI.—POWER OF THE  
 SICILIAN BARONS.—RUINS OF TRIOCALA.  
 —CALATABELLOTA.—CHARACTER OF  
 THE INHABITANTS.—SCIACCIA.—MINE-  
 RAL WATERS.—SULPHUREOUS CAVERNS.

**O**N the western road from Girgenti, and at a small distance from that city, stands the little town of Siculiana, which belongs to the prince of La Catholica. Its situation is remarkably pleasant, on two hills, which are united by a long street. The vale beneath it is delightfully ornamented with plantations of the richest fruits, and the hills command a very extensive prospect of the sea. This town is remarkable for not containing a single convent within its precincts, which is ascribed, either to the dangers of a visit from the Mahometans, or to the recent foundation of the town. In the midst of a spacious plain at some distance from Siculiana, stands La Catholica, the principal town of the district, which confers the title of prince upon a Sicilian family.

family. Through the middle of this plain flow the waters of the ancient Halycus, the boundary between the Grecian and Carthaginian possessions, now called the river Platani. Near its mouth was situated the city of Heraclea Minoa, which was so entirely destroyed by the Saracens, that scarcely a vestige of its former grandeur remains. The road from the plain, through which the river Platani winds its course, extends over a hilly country abounding with a multitude of valuable medical plants. On a small hill, whose declivities are covered with vines, stands the spacious village of Ribera, which contains near four thousand inhabitants. The greater part of the dwelling-houses make but a mean appearance; those of the more opulent inhabitants being elevated only to the height of one story, and those of the poor being seldom raised above the ground floor. But if this stile of building be defective in elegance, the want is compensated by its being a preservative from some of the tremendous effects of those terrible earthquakes which so frequently convulse this otherwise happy country.

Some years ago this part of the island was infested by a large band of daring outlaws, who laid the whole country under contribution, and perpetrated the most horrid barbarities upon all  
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those unfortunate wretches, who, after having incurred their displeasure, had the misfortune to fall into their hands. The most vigilant measures were, for some time, taken to extirpate them, but in vain ; at length they were apprehended by the spirited exertions of the prince of Butera, in whose territory they had made their retreat, and who, by his baronial power, sentenced them to death, and inflicted upon them the most rigorous punishments that could be devised.

This authority of the barons, each of whom has the power of life and death in his own domains, is an evil of very enormous magnitude, and of which the lower orders of the people universally complain. To the despotic government of this order, they are however, perhaps, indebted for their freedom from the spiritual bondage of the Inquisition, which the court of Spain has never been able to establish in Sicily. Domestic tyrants have always been remarked as the most vigorous opposers of public authority, and the barons of Sicily, accustomed to the exercise of despotism themselves, determined to avoid all subordination to a power which would soon become much greater than their own. For this end they made choice of the most infallible means, and every inquisitor, who dared to ar-  
raign



raign the conduct or sentiments of the nobility, was secretly assassinated and dispatched. The haughty spirit of the Sicilian barons is extremely disagreeable to the Court of Spain, which suggests every measure that may tend to mortify their pride, and subdue their arrogance.

About ten miles from Ribera are the remains of the once almost invincible city of Triocala, the ruins of which are still discernible, and out of the foundations of which large quantities of medals are annually dug. This ancient city was the celebrated retreat of the two famous fugitives, who, in the 649th year of Rome, emancipated the slaves from their bondage, and fixed the head quarters of their republic at Triocala, which they defended during four years, against the most vigorous attacks of their masters. Their insurrection, and its apparent consequences, became so important a concern, that the consul Aquilius marched against them with his army, and terminated the war, by the total destruction of the insurgents. Triocala is further celebrated for being both the cradle and the grave of the power of the Saracens in Sicily. This city was the first place of importance which they obtained, and under its walls they received a total defeat from Earl Roger, and were compelled to submit to the Norman conquerors.

## DREARY SITUATION. 111

It is probable that the town of Calatavellota, which is situated about a mile above Triocala, was founded by the Saracens, who esteemed it a still more impregnable fortress than the ancient city. Elevated on the summit of a lofty mountain, which it is difficult to ascend, the inhabitants of Calatavellota appear to be almost entirely secluded from the rest of mankind, and to depend upon their own little circle for all the comforts and conveniences of life. They are however represented as a nest of banditti, who descend from the summit of the mountain for prey, and who consider all the disadvantages of their uncomfortable and dreary situation, as amply compensated by the security of their strong, and almost inaccessible retreat. This town has frequently afforded refuge to the weaker party in the civil wars of Sicily, and is now accused of concealing numerous villains, whose daring violations of good order ought long since to have met with condign punishment.

After crossing the river Verdura, the road between the sea and mount San Calogera lies over a hilly and open track. At some distance, on the coast, stands the ancient city of Sciacca, which is mentioned in history as belonging to the Carthaginians, during the wars between the Greeks and that state. It is situated upon a steep  
rock

rock hanging over the sea, and excavated in every direction into prodigious magazines, where the corn of the neighbouring territories is deposited for exportation. There is no harbour, but a small bay formed by a wooden pier, where lighters lie to load the corn, which they carry out about a mile, to ships which lie at anchor.

Sciaccia is defended by ancient walls, and the old castle of Luna, celebrated for the abode of one of those two powerful families whose dreadful feuds, and implacable enmity, involved Sciaccia in tumults, and plunged it in blood during successive generations. The town is irregularly, but substantially built, and is said to contain thirteen thousand inhabitants. Excepting some pictures in the churches, which are very excellent, the city does not contain any very striking productions of art.

When Mr. Swinburne travelled through Sicily he was introduced at Sciaccia to a self-taught philosopher, whose scientific knowledge was very extensive and extraordinary. This gentleman, whose name was Bentevenga, was educated to the profession of the law, which he practised; but this dry and severe study did not prevent his application to more entertaining speculations, nor did his want of regular instruction hinder his  
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making very surprizing attainments. Without any assistance but a few books and prints, he taught himself the principles of optics; by his perseverance and natural sagacity, made microscopes and telescopes in astonishing perfection, and turned a lens of very small diameter, with which he detected the error of Padre de la Torre, who supposes the globules of blood to be perforated.

Several hot mineral springs are situated in the neighbourhood of Sciaccia, one of which is strongly impregnated with sulphur, and hot enough to boil an egg. This is used in cutaneous and scorbutic cases, and is conducted into two courts, where men and women bathe separately. Another, called the Aqua Santa, is luke warm, insipid to the palate, and a very powerful purgative. There is one spring which is quite cold, and peculiarly esteemed for its efficacy in removing disorders of the eyes. A very cold salt water is said to be found upon digging near this place to the depth of two feet. In flowing towards the sea these waters leave a thick and lapidous sediment, which, in a very short time is converted into a stone sufficiently hard to bear the chisel, and to be used for all the purposes of architecture. Fragments of the aqueducts, pipes, and buildings, are found behind

## 114 SINGULAR CAVERNS.

hind the wells, which were made by the ancients for the service of the baths.

The caverns, under the bare and rocky cliffs of the mountain of St. Calogero, which rises to the east of the city, are much frequented during the summer, by numbers of sick people, who seek in the hot exhalations of the mountain, a relief from their pain. On first entering the caves, the air seems almost suffocating, but as a profuse perspiration is excited, by degrees it becomes more bearable. On the summit of this rude and craggy rock stands the hermitage dedicated to St. Calogero, to whose powerful intercession all the good effects of these natural vapour stoves are gratefully and piously attributed.

## C H A P XIII.

MEMFRICI. — RIVER BELICI. — RUINS OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF SELINUS. — CASTEL VETRANA. — CELEBRATED FOR ITS WINES. — ASTONISHING FERTILITY OF SICILY. — REGULATIONS FROM GOVERNMENT RESPECTING THE CORN TRADE. — OPPRESSION OF THE LOWER RANKS OF PEOPLE. — SALEMI. — BEAUTIFUL RUINS OF SEGESTA.

**M**EMFRICI, which is twelve miles distant from Sciaccia, is a small town belonging to the Duke of Monteleone, which contains 2700 inhabitants. Between this and the river Belici, the road lies through forests of cork tree, and a hilly country, which abounds in corn. The high banks of this pleasant river, which is one of the most considerable in the island, are richly crowned with a plantation of elms, willows, and tamarisks; the extensive vales on each side are well laid out in corn fields and pastures, crowded with horses and horned cattle; and great plenty of partridges and water fowl spring up at every step. On the west side of the river Madiuni,



diuni, which is at some distance from the Belici, are situated the remains of the ancient Selinus, which derived its name from the large quantities of parsley (felinum) that grow in its vicinity. During several centuries, Selinus was a flourishing state, but it was taken by Hannibal, a Carthaginian general, in the 359th year of Rome, and nearly destroyed by the African army. Under the government of the Romans, it remained a monument of desolation, and of the ravages of war, but at length it again revived and resumed its rank amongst the Sicilian cities, till the invasion of the Normans, by whom it was once more destroyed. The ruins are situated upon several hills, through which flow the waters of the river Madiuni. At some distance, these venerable remains resemble a large town with a crowd of steeples; they lie in several stupendous heaps, and many columns still stand erect. Several remains of ancient temples are visible amongst the ruins, the noble columns of some of which are very large, and have evidently belonged to buildings of very considerable magnificence and extent. The most northerly of these elegant edifices greatly exceeded the others in dimensions and majesty, and now composes one of the most gigantic and sublime ruins that can be conceived.

Castel

Castel Vetrano, which lies north of the ancient Selinus, is a large borough, containing twelve thousand inhabitants; and as well as Memfrici, belongs to the Duke of Monteleone. The streets are spacious, and very neatly disposed, and the houses are handsome edifices built with stone. This place has long been celebrated for its wines, some of which are very excellent; but from bad management this trade is said to be in a declining state. Nothing can exceed the fertility of the adjacent country, where corn lands, pastures, and extensive orchards, yield in the richest profusion their luxurious produce. Corn, which grows plentifully in most parts of Sicily, is produced in the largest quantities along the southern coast.—Near the heights that form the point of division between the northern and southern parts of the Val de Mazzara, the soil is so astonishingly fertile, that the lands upon which wheat has been reaped in a preceding season, are sometimes covered with so luxuriant a crop from the seeds scattered in gathering, that it is difficult to distinguish them from the grounds where the grain is actually sown. Large quantities of rice, of an exceedingly good quality, are cultivated in various parts of the island.

The astonishing crops which the fertile fields  
of

## 118 IMPOLITIC DUTY.

of Sicily are calculated to produce, are however considerably impeded by the oppressions of the government, which imposes such exorbitant taxes upon the exportation of wheat, as almost amounts to a prohibition against sending it out of the country, to those who are not able to pay dearly for the privilege. The common mode of exporting this commodity is to bring the corn to certain granaries belonging to government, where it is safely deposited, without any fresh charge being laid upon the owner, who has a receipt given him for the quantity he brings into the granary, and the government incurs all the risks and expences which attend the deposit, and repays itself by the increase of measure which the corn acquires by lying in the granary, and by the exportation duty. The acknowledgment for the wheat received into the granary is negotiable for twelve months, during which time the vender may export any part, or the whole of his stock, as he pleases, on paying a duty of eighteen taris \* duty upon every salmat† of wheat. But the greatness of the duty is not the only impediment which the poorer Sicilians have to encounter in the exportation of grain. Government is charged with much partiality in the

\* About six shillings.

† Equal to twenty Winchester bushels.

the distribution of these licences, which are chiefly confined to the great and opulent, and exportation is almost reduced to a monopoly. This injudicious measure is however productive of the great evil of smuggling, and much corn is, by various devices, annually exported, without paying any duty at all.

The little town of Salemi (the ancient Halycia), is seen at a distance on the road to Calatafimi, situated in an elevated country, entirely destitute of wood. Both the present and ancient names of this place probably arose from the qualities of its water and soil, which are brackish. In an earthquake, not many years since, a part of the town was disjoined from the rest, and thrown, by the force of the shock, down an adjacent precipice. Calatafima, which is situated several miles north of Salemi, is a large but disagreeable town, containing about eight thousand inhabitants. Its castle, which now lies in ruins, is seated upon the summit of a hill, which commands a very extensive prospect. The adjacent country is chiefly laid out in corn lands, which are agreeably variegated by extensive orchards and vineyards. The ancient river Crimisus, once so much celebrated for its God, who under the shape of a dog became the favoured lover of the beautiful nymph Segesta,

Segesta, winds its course at the base of the mountain. But the Saints of the christian world have now inherited all the territories of the ancient divinities, and the river Crimisus is no longer known by its heathenish name, but by that of St. Bartolomeo.

At a place called Barbara, about two miles from Calatafima, are the remains of the ancient city of Segesta, which was founded by the Trojans. During the frequent commotions in Sicily, Segesta experienced many vicissitudes; sometimes its proud fanes and lofty towers were levelled with the ground; again they revived with accumulated splendour, but were finally destroyed in the general desolation which attended the conquests of the barbarian nations.

No situation could be chosen more judiciously than that of Segesta: it lay upon a ridge of hills gently sloping towards the north, whose pleasant and salubrious gales had free admision into the city, and high rocky eminences defended it on the southern and eastern sides, against the pestilential blasts from the burning deserts of Africa. At the foot of these eminences flowed two streams, whose deep and founding waters encircled this delightful city. The adjacent country afforded every production for the support and comfort of life, and it had  
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Cefars; and it is not very probable that the builders should entirely and scrupulously have followed the rules and proportions of their ancestors, without adopting any of the variations which had been introduced by more modern architects. The high preservation of this beautiful fabric is made still more remarkable, from its being the only building of the ancient Segesta, of which any thing more than the foundation remains. It is indeed astonishing what can have become of the vast heap of materials which must have composed that city; for the stone is of too compact a nature to be dissolved by the action of the weather and the air, and, independent of the prodigious labour requisite for removing it for the purposes of building in other places, there are no towns or edifices in its vicinity sufficient to have employed the mass of materials necessary for the construction of this ancient city.

## C H A P. XIV.

MOUNTAIN OF ST. JULIANO. — MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE OF VENUS.—VISITED BY ENEAS. — PORT OF TREPANI. — CORAL FISHERY. — INGENUITY OF THE INHABITANTS OF TREPANI. — TOWN OF ALCAMO. — LA FAVORATA. — MANNA ASH. —METHOD OF EXTRACTING THE SAP. —CARINA. — REMAINS OF HICCARA. — THE BIRTH PLACE OF LAIS.—VALE OF COLLI.

**T**O the west of Segesta, on the borders of the sea, stands the town of St. Juliano, the celebrated seat of the temple of Venus Erecina, the elegant columns of which exhibited all the beauties of architecture, and the walls of which were enriched with the most exquisite sculpture. Numerous cities were laid under tribute to support the magnificence and dignity of this celebrated temple, which was surrounded by a guard of two hundred soldiers, and attended by an innumerable multitude of sacred priests and devout priestesses. Here the pious Eneas, on his voyage from the

desolated Troy to his promised kingdom in Italy, descended upon the Sicilian shores, and in this celebrated fane he offered his costly oblations to his goddess's mother. Here he lost his father Anchises, and here the colony which he left, is said to have erected the city of Eryx, } contiguous to the temple of the Goddess. During many ages, this magnificent fabric was the unceasing object of veneration to the devout votaries both of Greece and of Rome. But alas ! not a vestige of its former splendour is now visible, and the only monuments of its existence on this spot are some medals, and a few inscriptions and engravings on marble, which have been found deeply concealed within the bosom of the ground.

At the foot of the mountain of St. Julian● was situated the famous port of Drepanum, which has now changed its name into that of Trepani. At this place is carried on the principal coral fishery in the island, which is managed by a very ingenious and simple contrivance. To the center of a large cross of wood is fixed a stone, sufficiently ponderous to carry the cross to the bottom of the water. Pieces of small net are tied to each limb of the cross, which is poised horizontally by a rope, and then let down into the sea. As soon as they feel it touch  
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the bottom, the rope is tied fast to the boat. They then row about over the beds of coral, and the great stone breaks the branches of the rocks, which are immediately entangled in the nets. The inhabitants of Trepani are celebrated, not only for their dexterity and success in the coral fishery, but also for many other ingenious and useful inventions. An artist of that place has discovered a method of making Cameos, which are so perfect an imitation of the ancient ones, that it is often extremely difficult to distinguish the modern imitation from the ancient model. These are frequently set in gold and worn as bracelets, and are in high estimation amongst the Sicilian ladies of quality.

On proceeding from Calatafimi towards the northern coast of Sicily, the road extends along a high arable country. At the distance of ten miles stands Alcamo, a considerable town belonging to the Duke of Ferrandino, who is also the proprietor of Calatafima. This town is situated on an eminence which commands a delightful prospect of a fine, open, cultivated country, and is charmingly sheltered by large woods of olive trees, which grow in great profusion in its vicinity. The number of inhabitants is computed at between eight and nine thousand, the streets are built in straight lines, but are uneven and dirty.

The principal church is a neat modern building, and is adorned with some beautiful paintings by Pietro Novello, a celebrated Sicilian artist, whose merit has obtained him the distinction of being termed the Raphael of Sicily .

Alcamo, derived its name from Adalcum, the Caliph's lieutenant, who in the year 827 conquered the island. On the heights of St. Bonifatio, at some distance from the town, he erected a strong fortress, as an asylum for his troops in any unfortunate turn of affairs. Some remains of the walls are still discoverable, but the fort was entirely destroyed by the command of Frederick of Suabia, who compelled the Saracens to desert their castles, and brought the christian inhabitants down to the foot of the rocks, where he built Alcamo for their reception.

The road from Alcamo towards the sea, lies through a hilly country which produces much corn, and a large quantity of beans. At the bottom of the deep bay of Castelamare, which is formed by the capes of Sferracavello and San Vito, a large vale extends several miles into the inland country, and displays a fine track of arable land, agreeably diversified by farm-houses, seated on the hills, and groves of olive and carobbean trees. On approaching to La Favorrata, the road lies over a high eminence, im-  
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pending over the sea, and hemmed in very close by a lofty mountain, the spacious sides of which are covered with thickets of mountain ash. The low lands abound in a rich variety of fruit.

Twenty-one miles from Alcamo, stands the little town of La Favorata, which is situated near the sea, and contains about two thousand inhabitants. The manor is divided between the prince of Carini, and the benedictine monks of St. Martin, a neighbouring abbey. The produce of the territory, which consists of oil, manna, and wine, are all sent to Palermo for sale. On the road round the bay of Carini, a long neck of rocky land crosses the road; this chain of mountains is terminated very near the shore, and the sides of them are planted thick with the manna ash, and the ground at the bottom covered with olive trees. Near this high land is situated the Isole della Femina, which was formerly made use of as a place of banishment for condemned criminals.

The manna tree, which grows in great abundance on the mountains which slope down towards the bay of Carini, is a species of ash, and forms a very considerable and lucrative branch of Sicilian commerce. — About the beginning of August, during the greatest heat, the natives of the island make an in-



incision in the bark of the tree near its root; whence proceeds a thick whitish liquor, which speedily consolidates by the heat of the sun, after which it is taken off the tree and carefully packed up. Every day during the season these incisions are renewed, but the tree is always wounded only on one side, the other being reserved for the ensuing summer.

Carini, which is beautifully situated in a fertile territory, is placed about a mile from the shore. It contains about four thousand inhabitants, and gives the title of prince to the family of Grua. Near this place are the remains of the ancient Hiccara, celebrated for being the birth place and residence of the beautiful Lais, whose charms and illustrious connections have long been famous in Grecian history. Here she lived when Nicias the Athenian General landed on his return from Italy, and was carried away amongst the other rich spoils which graced his conquest of Hiccara.

On approaching towards Palermo, which is distant from La Favorato about twenty-four miles, the road lies through the vale of Colli. This beautiful valley is thronged with elegant villas belonging to the nobility and opulent citizens of Palermo. It is laid out in corn and olive grounds, and in charming vineyards, and is diversified by  
tracks

tracks of pasture and heath, and large plots of Indian fig. In this vale, is situated the palace of the prince of Refuttana, which is esteemed the most magnificent edifice in the neighbourhood of Palermo.



## C H A P. XV.

ACCOUNT OF PAN-ORMUS, THE ANCIENT NAME OF PALERMO.—GREAT ANTIQUITY OF THE CITY.—PRETENDED TO BE FOUNDED BY THE CHALDEANS.—ETYMOLOGY OF PAN-ORMUS.—ITS HISTORY UNDER THE DOMINION OF THE PHENICIANS, ROMANS, SARACENS. &c.—SITUATION OF PALERMO. — STREETS. — BUILDINGS. — STATUES. — BEAUTIFUL GATES.—AMUSEMENTS OF THE MARINO. —CATHEDRAL. — MONUMENTS OF THE NORMAN KINGS.—ELEGANT TABERNACLE.—VESTMENTS, RELICTS, &c.—CHIESA DEL PALLAZZO.—CHURCHES OF PALERMO. — JESUITS CHURCH. — MUSEUM OF THAT FRATERNITY.—ANCIENT HARBOUR OF PALERMO.—MODERN HAVEN.

**T**HE origin of Palermo is involved in much doubt and obscurity, and has in turn been attributed to the Sicilian Aborigines, to the wanderers from Phœnicia, to Grecian emigrants, and to Carthaginian conquerors. It is esteemed

to have been the second city founded in the island, and its claims to antiquity have been extended to the most remote era. A Chaldean inscription, upon a block of white marble, found about six hundred years ago, seems to favour the opinion that it was founded by the Chaldeans, in the time of the first patriarchs, and these pretensions have been supported with some learning, but with what degree of probability it is, perhaps, not easy to ascertain. Several Chaldefe inscriptions have, at different times, been found in Palermo.

The ancient name of the city, which formerly bore the appellation of Pan-ormus, is another circumstance seized eagerly by the Sicilian antiquaries to demonstrate their claims to remote antiquity. It is said to be nearly similar in sound to the word, which both in the Chaldefe and Hebrew languages, signifies a paradise, or delicious garden; a description which so well agreed with Palermo, that the Greeks, who it is said, in their ancient language used the word Pan-ormus to signify a garden, when they obtained possession of the city, still continued its ancient name. Pan-ormus is said likewise to be an Arabic word, which signifies *this water*, a name so expressive of the situation of the city, which is surrounded with beautiful rivulets, that its

Saracenic conquerors likewise continued this appellation.

The regions of etymology are so extensive and fertile, that the industrious labourer, who chuses to cultivate them, finds a wide field for exertion, and sees flowers rise spontaneously under his feet, which he has the delight of adorning with every hue, and of disposing in every form which suits his own imagination. Not satisfied with the derivations which have been given by their etymological brethren, other antiquaries have ascribed the name of Pan-ormus to the size and conveniency of its harbours, one of which is recorded anciently to have extended into the very center of the city; and they ground this conjecture upon this name being in the Greek language, the word which signifies, all a port. The language of poetry, has, with respect to this celebrated city, been the language of truth, and Palermo has been, by various authors, embellished with the epithets of *Conca d'oro*, the golden shell. *Aurea Valle*, the golden vale; and *Hortus Sicilæ*, the garden of Sicily. Geographers have not been less generous than the poets, in adorning, with flattering epithets this delightful spot, and the name of Felix still distinguishes this part of the country in the maps of Sicily.

Whatever

Whatever may have been its origin, or however it may have obtained its name, thus much at least is certain, that when the frequent arrival of the Greek colonies made it unsafe for the Phœnicians to remain dispersed in small factories along the coasts, they assembled in large bodies, and Pan-ormus became one of their three principal stations. When the power of Carthage yielded to the more mighty arms of Rome, it became a part of that vast empire, and its citizens were the faithful subjects, and steady adherents of their new lords, in every vicissitude which afflicted that republic. Under the Saracens it was first made the metropolis of Sicily, and was continued as such during the Norman reign. While the Sicilian monarchs resided in the island, Palermo still enjoyed the privilege of being the seat of empire, which it continues to be under the administration of the viceroy.

Palermo, which is situated in a delicious country, and placed in a charming valley, is shaded to the south by high mountains, and laid open to the refreshing breezes of the north, and to the delightful prospect of the Mediterranean sea. It is built almost in a circular form, and surrounded with walls; many of the buildings are very elegant, and the plan of the city constructed with peculiar attention to the health and convenience.]

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of the inhabitants. Two spacious streets intersect each other in the center of the city, where they form a handsome square called the Ottangola, adorned with elegant buildings, and embellished by statues of the seasons. Above each of these is a figure of a Spanish monarch, and over them are placed the heads of several saints. These noble streets, decorated with beautiful statues, and fountains, and terminated by the four great gates of the city, are seen from the Ottangola to much advantage, more particularly at night, when the city is lighted up by reverberating lamps, which give it a very striking appearance. A great number of statues of kings and tutelary saints adorn every part of Palermo, but they are in general executed in a very bad stile, and placed in small courts and squares, upon pedestals of colossal proportion and tasteless form.

The extent of Palermo is not very considerable, its diameter being little more than a mile. The gates are very elegant pieces of architecture, richly adorned, particularly the *Porta Nova*, and *Porta Felice*, which terminate the great street called the *Cassaro*, that runs along the city from east to west. In general, the lesser streets run parallel to the greater ones, so that a walk of a very few minutes is certain to bring you, from any part of the city, to one of the principal streets.

streets. The smaller streets are, however, very inferior to the greater in point of elegance; most of them are narrow and crooked, and as they are wretchedly paved, are frequently very dirty. In wet weather moveable bridges are provided for crossing the kennels, which, from the large quantities of water that pour from the adjacent hills, are converted into broad and rapid currents.

The Porta Felice, which is greatly superior in elegance to the other gates of Palermo, terminates the street called *il Caffaro*, and opens to the Marino, a beautiful walk, which constitutes one of the greatest pleasures of the nobility of Palermo. Fanned by gentle breezes from the sea, and provided with every incentive to elegant pleasure, the Marino is the source of delight to all whose hearts are alive to enjoyment; and the still hour of partaking in this amusement is eagerly longed for by the gay, the happy, and the pleasure-loving inhabitants of this agreeable city.

An elegant temple, decorates the center of this beautiful quay, and in summer is made use of as an orchestra for music. During this season the concert does not begin till midnight, when the decreased heat, and agreeable gales, have restored the frequenters of the Marino to  
their

their powers of enjoyment. The concert lasts about two hours, during which the walk is crowded with carriages and people on foot, and every interruption to intrigue and pleasure, is excluded with studious care. No person, whatever his quality, is allowed to carry a light, all the flambeaux are extinguished at the Porta Felice, where the servants wait for the return of the carriages, and several of the ladies prevent the possibility of being known by putting on masques. This opportunity for intrigue does not however occasion any scandal to the parties who enjoy this delightful promenade, and the pleasures of the Marino are enjoyed by the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the most proud, and the least virtuous inhabitants of Palermo.

At the southern extremity of the Cassaro, is situated the cathedral of Palermo, which stands in a large square. This church is a venerable Gothic building, and of a large size, but defective in elegance. It is supported within by eighty columns of oriental granite, and divided into several elegant chapels, the most sumptuous of which is sacred to St. Rosalia, the great patroness of Palermo. The choir ends in a horseshoe arch, injudiciously decorated by Gagini, the best of the Sicilian sculptors, with statues and arabesques, executed in a taste entirely dissimilar

similar with the rest of of the building, though they would have produced a noble effect in any edifice, where they were more in unison with the other decorations.

In the eastern isle of the cathedral are the monuments of the Norman fovereigns of Sicily, some of which are of porphyry, under canopies of the same beautiful materials, on which are placed the names and arms of each prince, with an inscription, not remarkable for its truth, composed in the 16th century, by Roger Paruta, a canon of this cathedral. Some of these tombs are of very tolerable workmanship, though near seven hundred years old, but the columns which support the canopies do not appear to belong to any known order of architecture. At the foot of the altar are deposited the remains of the heroic and catholic Roger, the great conqueror of Sicily. The tabernacle, at the head of the isle, is an excellent collection of lapis lazuli, and the Sacristie enriched with many splendid vestments. There are some robes embroidered with Oriental pearls, which though near four hundred years old are in such good preservation, as to appear perfectly fresh and new.

But far more valuable than monuments, precious stones, or embroidered robes, are the all-powerful relics, which are the inestimable treasure

ture of the mother church of Palermo. Several bones of prodigious efficacy, among which are some of St. Peter, and the entire arm of St. John the Baptist, are deposited in the cathedral. But the greatest treasure is the relics of St. Rosalia, which are preserved in a large box of silver, curiously wrought, and enriched with many precious gems. These wonderful remains are an effectual remedy against every disaster, and have so often preserved the city from the ravages of earthquakes, plagues, and other calamities, that the inhabitants of Palermo hold them in the utmost veneration; some of these pious votaries have enriched her shrine with costly ornaments, amongst which is a cross composed of large brilliants, which was presented to the saint by the king of Spain.

The Chiesa del Pallazzo is entirely encrusted over with ancient mosaic, and the vaulted roof likewise is composed of the same materials. Indeed most of the churches in Palermo, which contains more than three hundred of these edifices, are adorned with rich gems, silver, and the finest marble; but the taste displayed in the architecture, does not correspond with the magnificent materials employed in the decorations. In several too, the ornaments are disposed in the worst taste imaginable, the walls within are lined with



with red or yellow marble, upon which ground are glued basso relievo figures of angels, beasts, and flowers, in white marble. The most magnificent church in Palermo, is that which lately belonged to the Jesuits; it would indeed be deemed a splendid edifice in any city in Italy. Its cupola is elegantly painted by Sicilian masters of acknowledged merit, and the painting is well executed, though there is some degree of affectation in the attitudes of the figures, and errors in the perspective.

These fathers, who added to the general disposition of monks to collect together whatever might render their retreats comfortable and pleasant, more real knowledge and good taste than is usually found in the other monastic orders, possessed in Palermo a very considerable museum of natural and artificial curiosities. Resolved not to be deprived of the valuable articles which they had taken so much pains to acquire, previous to their dissolution, which they had long foreseen, they stripped the gallery of every article of precious materials or excellent workmanship, which were secretly conveyed away. Several of their less valuable curiosities still remain, and a sufficient number of fossil, and mineral productions, to lay the foundations of a noble cabinet of natural history. Many antiquities,



antiquities, and several articles of natural history have been added to the collection left by the holy fathers.

Near the south gate of the city stands the palace of the viceroy, which is a very ancient edifice. This building is defective in elegance; fragments of Arabic construction are united to towers of Norman building, and every succeeding century has added to this immense and discordant mass. The halls are of a noble size, and well calculated for great assemblies; the courts of justice are held on the ground floor, and batteries of cannon defend the approach.

The capacious port of Palermo was formerly sufficiently deep to admit ships to the very walls of the city, but the impetuous torrents from the mountains, which have sometimes borne away in their progress every opposing object, or the sand thrown up by the sea, have almost entirely filled up this celebrated harbour. Fazzello speaks of an inundation, of which he was an eye witness, that came down from the mountains with such fury, as threatened the entire demolition of the city. It burst down the wall near the royal palace, bore away churches, houses and palaces to the number of two thousand, and drowned upwards of three thousand people. Fragments of such magnitude must have had a considerable  
effect

effect in filling up the harbour, and the materials which have produced this change have been continually added to by the sand brought down by the torrents, or thrown up by the sea. The old haven, which is entirely filled up, is now quite covered with buildings. The present harbour is very dangerously open to the swell and sea from the north east quarter, and even at the anchoring place ships are dangerously situated whenever the wind blows from the west, as it rushes with great impetuosity through the valley of Colli between the mountains.



## C H A P. XVII.

SPRIGHTLY APPEARANCE OF PALERMO.—  
 NUMBER OF INHABITANTS.—THEIR A-  
 GREEABLE MANNERS.—SICILIANS FOND  
 OF STUDY.—SICILIAN POETRY. — FEW  
 PROSE COMPOSITIONS.—ANIMATED GES-  
 TURES OF THE SICILIANS.—TITLES OF  
 THE NOBILITY.—GALLANTRY.—WHIM-  
 SICAL MARRIAGE CEREMONIES. — SICI-  
 LIAN LADIES. — TEMPERANCE OF THE  
 SICILIANS.

**T**HE gay and busy appearance of Palermo greatly exceeds that of any other Sicilian city, and every object marks the residence of a court, and the agreeable aspect of a sprightly metropolis. The apparent affluence of the inhabitants, the great number of people, and the regularity, the neatness, and the uniformity of the greater part of the streets and buildings, render it extremely striking to the traveller, who has passed through the other cities of the island, and who in his progress has beheld the numerous monuments of desolation which exist in a country sub-  
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jected to such various revolutions. Here nothing is to be seen but the lively and bustling scenes of social and active life, where business affords the means of luxury and pleasure, and where amusement waits to dissipate the cares and sorrows of mankind.

The number of inhabitants in Palermo greatly exceed those of any other city in Sicily. Messina, which is esteemed the second city in the island, now contains only about thirty thousand persons, but the people of Palermo are computed to be above one hundred and two thousand souls, exclusive of the various ecclesiastical orders and the numerous inhabitants of convents; and of the officers and servants belonging to the crown, the church, and the magistracy.

Frank and easy manners appear to be highly characteristic of the inhabitants of Palermo, whatever their rank; indeed frankness, and a politeness of behaviour, distinguish the greater number of the Sicilians, who, though so long under the dominion of Spain, do not appear to have contracted the grave and austere manners of that nation, nor to have adopted many of its customs. But the politeness of the Sicilians must not be compared with that of some of the more refined nations of the continent; it consists perhaps of more sincerity, though of less polish,  
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and is the reality of which the greater part of good breeding is only the appearance. What we call politeness indeed, is, in general, only the art of appearing humane, courteous, and affectionate, and the man who possesses these dispositions has the substance, which all the grimaces of the world are intended to represent, and of which they are in fact only the imperfect shadow.

The Sicilians are in general much fonder of study than their neighbours on the continent, and their education is considered as an object of much importance. In the *conversazioni* of Palermo, it is not unusual to hear several of the European languages spoken with great elegance and purity. English has for some years past constituted no immaterial part of the education of the Sicilian nobility, many of whom are very intimately acquainted with our moral and philosophical writers. Milton, Shakespeare, and all the most celebrated poetical English authors, are however more agreeable to them than the graver writers, for the taste for poetry is almost universal in Sicily. Almost every Sicilian is, at some period of his life, a poet; and the lover who spoke his passion in plain prose would stand but an indifferent chance for success, in a country, where, contrary to the common opinion,  
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the language of poetry, is the language of truth.

Several Sicilian poems have been printed in the national dialect, which is a compound of the various languages that at different times have been predominant in the island, and is not very favourable to the genius of poetry. The stile, turn, and pronunciation of these poems have however been considerably polished, and rendered much softer than the language used in common conversation. Prose compositions in the Sicilian dialect are much less common than poetical effusions, and few works of great excellence in either of these modes are likely to be transmitted to posterity, through the medium of the present jargon of Sicily. The graver Sicilian authors, either conscious of the dissonance and imperfection of their own language, or disliking the Tuscan foreign idiom, have conveyed their thoughts in Latin, and have suffered their native dialect to continue unaltered, though it was, perhaps, as susceptible of cultivation and improvement as that which was polished and perfected by the Academy de la Crusca. In conversation the Sicilians are uncommonly animated, and their action so peculiarly just and expressive, that it would not be difficult to conceive the subject of their discourse, from attending alone



to their manners and gesticulation. This custom they pretend to derive from the period of Syracusan tyranny, when the subjects of those dreadful destroyers of the liberties and happiness of mankind were restrained from free and open intercourse by penalties, tortures, and even death, and were compelled to disclose their sentiments in a more equivocal way. Forbidden to meet in parties lest any thing should be transacted contrary to the wishes, or inimical to the existence of the reigning tyrant, they were obliged to invent this kind of dumb shew for the communication of their thoughts ; and this method is said by the Sicilians to have been transmitted ever since from generation to generation.

The eldest sons of the Sicilian nobility are commonly distinguished by the title of count or marquis, and the younger children by the Spanish appellation of Don, or Donna, according to the difference of their sex. Few, however of the Spanish customs are retained in this island, and the small prevalence of the manners of that austere nation, is in nothing more observable than the unrestrained manner of conversing between the two sexes. Instead of being immured within the gloomy walls of a convent, the young ladies are in general educated in the houses of their parents, and mix there in society with the  
utmost

utmost freedom ; and in the *conversazioni* at Palermo, the young people freely retire together into parties, which are enlivened by some of those little games, so much enjoyed by the young in those countries, where the sexes are permitted to associate together without restraint. Nor do the little gallantries, which occasionally arise in these sprightly parties, at all alarm the vigilance and anxiety of the matrons. Indeed a spirit of gallantry prevails very generally in Sicily, and the establishment of Cicerone's is allowed of pretty nearly as much there as upon the Continent.

The Sicilian ladies in general marry very young, and are frequently mothers at fourteen or fifteen, and grandmothers at little more than thirty. The marriages of the nobility are celebrated with great magnificence, and every refinement of taste and luxury is exerted to grace the nuptial ceremony. A great number of superstitious inventions were formerly made use of on these occasions, and in the funeral rites of the Sicilians ; but the general prevalence of sound sense, and good taste, has banished these absurdities into the remoter parts of the island. There, in some places, honey, which is esteemed an emblem of union and love, is poured down the throats of the bride and bridegroom, and accom-

panied by the wish, that the connection, into which they have entered, may continue as sweet to their souls as the honey is to their taste. Handfuls of wheat are then thrown upon them till they reach their house, which custom is supposed to be efficacious in procuring them the blessing of a numerous progeny. In order to teach them patience and temperance, the young couple are excluded from the marriage feast; but at the close of the meal a bone is presented to the bridegroom by one of the nearest relations of the bride, who desires him to pick that bone, and at the same time informs him, that he has now got one to pick which is much harder, and more difficult to digest.

The time of parturition, which, in most of the countries of Europe is regarded by the ladies with the utmost anxiety and dread, is the period to which many of the Sicilian females look forward as the season of peculiar enjoyment and pleasure. They suffer much less than the generality of females during the time of delivery, and, in a few hours afterwards, are able to enjoy the society of their friends, and are freely visited by them during their convalescence, which generally lasts about eleven or twelve days. It is peculiarly happy for the ladies of Sicily that they enjoy this exemption from the curse of their  
first

first parent, for they are so abundantly prolific that some of them are recorded by different authors, as frequently producing more than forty children, and one has been held up to notice as the mother of forty-seven. To one who has had an opportunity of observing the beauty of the English ladies, that of the Sicilian women will not appear very striking; they have, however, in general, very beautiful hair, which they dress and adorn to very great advantage. In the streets they conceal themselves in long black viels, a custom which is not borrowed from the Spanish, but which is very ancient in Sicily. The Sicilian men are in general much handsomer than the ladies.

Notwithstanding the innumerable incentives to luxury which are produced in the island, the Sicilians are in general extremely frugal and temperate. Their principal luxury consists in their deserts and ices, which are the great delight of all ranks of people in the island. These are served up at the tables of the nobility in an almost infinite variety, and in the most exquisite taste.

## C H A P XVIII.

ENVIRONS OF PALERMO.—PALACES OF THE NOBILITY, &c. — BEAUTIFUL VILLA.—REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF A WHIMSICAL TASTE.—SUGAR MANUFACTORY.—CAPE AZAFRAN. — TUNNY FISHERY. — METHOD OF CATCHING THIS FISH. — CAPUCHIN CONVENT. — REMARKABLE CAVERNS AND SEPULCHRES.

**T**HE neighbourhood of Palermo, which may boast of its natural advantages with almost any city in Europe, is adorned with several beautiful monuments of the taste and magnificence of the Sicilian nobility and gentry. The principal mansions are in general situated either in the vale of Colli, which lies to the west of the city, or at La Bagaria, which stands to the east, and is about ten miles distant from Palermo. The road to the charming retreats of La Bagaria, lies along the bay, between large hedges of aloe and Indian fig, and the whole surface of the adjacent waste is profusely ornamented with delightful  
wild

wild plants. This beautiful hill, which gradually rises to a lofty eminence, is almost covered with villa's belonging to the Sicilian nobility, some of which are very striking and magnificent, and command an extensive and almost unlimited prospect not only over the spacious harbour of Palermo, but across the still more extensive bay of Termini, as far as to Cape de Orlando.

Amongst the magnificent edifices which decorate La Bagaria, the palace of the prince of Valguanera exceeds any of the rest in elegance and beauty. But the mansion which, during several years has excited the greatest share of attention and curiosity, is that of the prince of Palagonia, whose whimsical taste has peopled his palace with a crowd of monsters, more extravagant and chimerical, than the wildest and most capricious fancies have ever conceived to have existed in the regions of folly and enchantment.

The avenue to this Temple of Folly is crowded with an immense group of monsters, whose unnatural and discordant figures differ from any object that was ever produced by the hand of nature. Here the busts of the most ludicrous figures are adorned with strange, uncouth, and hieroglyphical representations. At some little distance from these are placed the heads of different animals, decorated with all the trappings



of modern dress and fashion, and amidst this curious assortment, a figure is sometimes interspersed which is compounded of several different animals, every part of which is the most incongruous that can be devised. This extraordinary avenue is terminated by a court which is disgraced by the same grotesque representations, the whole number of which does not amount to less than six hundred. The walls of the palace are adorned in the same whimsical stile, and the battlements lined with deep ranks of horrible monsters.

The inside of this mansion, which is called the villa of Palagonia, corresponds exactly with its exterior appearance, giants, pigmies, devils, angels, and whatever can be produced by the most fantastical imagination are crowded together into every part of this enchanted region, and in every part of the mansion some monstrous production arises to the view. Many of the apartments are very spacious and magnificent, the lofty ceilings of which are composed of mirrors, very nicely united, which produce the effect of a multiplying glass. The doors also are covered with looking glass, cut into a number of fantastical shapes, and intermixed with crystal ornaments, and glass of various colours. Pyramids and columns of china ware, composed of different

ferent pieces, and in which, cups, saucers, tea pots, and every other utensil, is placed upon each other, adorn all the chimney pieces, sideboards and windows. A profusion of fine marbles are exhibited in several of the rooms, and the windows are composed of fine pieces of coloured glass, collected with great care but disposed in a taste equally grotesque with the other decorations of this extraordinary and fantastical edifice. The same whimsical taste has extended even to the statues, which have descended from the ancestors of the present possessor, and some of which are said to be very excellent, but their perfections are scarcely discoverable under the bushy perriwigs, and modern dresses of the male figures, and the towering head dresses, and flowing garments of the females. Each figure is completely cloathed with a suit of marble, in which, neither shoes, stockings, ruffles, nor any other article of dress has been omitted, even to the adorning the skirts of the robes with a representation of costly lace. A period is now put to the continuance of these absurd vagaries; the relations of the owner have assumed the administration of his revenues, which have been considerably diminished by his attachment to these chimeras, and his zeal for fantastical productions.

La Bagaria was formerly celebrated for a sugar  
 H 5                      manufactory,

manufactory, but the making of this commodity has long been discontinued, both there, and in other parts of the island, which does not now produce such a number of canes as to make sugar in quantities sufficient to form an article of commerce, though a small quantity is still manufactured for home consumption. It is not, perhaps, easy to account why this almost necessary product should have been so much neglected in a country where the canes grow, with very little care, to a large size, and are very juicy; and where hurricanes and insects, the great banes to the production of this article, are very little to be apprehended. Some plantations of sugar are cultivated on the eastern coast of the Val di Noto, and the produce is of a good colour and quality, but the quantity which is manufactured is very inadequate to the demand for this article, which is imported into Sicily from foreign markets.

Near Cape Azafran, a beautiful promontory, which shuts in the gulf of Palermo on the eastern side, is a very productive tunny fishery, which is said, sometimes, to have produced a thousand large fishes at one draught. This fishery is a source not only of great profit, but of much amusement to the Sicilians, who frequently make large parties to attack the tunnies which are found upon the shores of this island in very considerable

able shoals. These fish enter the Mediterranean about the time of the vernal equinox, and repair to the warm seas of Greece to spawn, directing their course thither along the European shores; but as they return, they approach the coast of Africa. About the month of May they come back from the east, and abound on the coasts of Sicily, and in autumn, direct their course northward, and frequent the neighbourhood of Amalfi and Naples. One great peculiarity is observable in the form which this great collective body assumes in transporting itself from place to place. The fish form a triangular phalanx, which cuts the waters with its point, and presents an extensive base for the tides and currents to act against and impel forwards, and as they return from spawning, the young fry is carefully placed in the van of the squadron.

The method of catching the tunny is by the means of strong nets divided into several compartments, which are artfully placed in the passages of the rocks and islands frequented by these fish, and which after they are extended over a large portion of the sea, are fastened to the bottom by large anchors, and heavy weights. At the entrance of this machine, which is called a Tonnaro, an aperture is left open towards that part of the sea whence the fish are known to come. As soon as they have penetrated into the net, a

man, who is placed upon the summit of a rock, high above the sea, and who can discern from that elevation whatever passes under the waters, infinitely better than those who are nearer the surface, gives notice of their arrival, upon which the aperture is closed by a small piece of net work, which is immediately let down over the opening, so as to prevent the fish from escaping back. Great noises are then made by the fishermen upon the surface of the water, to alarm the fish, which advance hastily forwards into the interior recess of the Tonnaro, or as it is called *La Camera della Morte*, the chamber of death. When a sufficient number is thus collected, the fishermen, each armed with a kind of harpoon, attack and destroy the fish, which between the months of May and November are eaten fresh, but during the remainder of the year, are made use of salted. They are sliced and pickled down in barrels for exportation, and the quantity annually eaten in the island, and sent abroad to other countries, is so prodigious, as almost to exceed the possibility of calculation.

The burial place of the Capuchin convent, which is about a mile distant from Palermo, is very remarkable and curious. It consists of a very large subterraneous apartment, divided into spacious galleries, the walls on each side of which  
are



are excavated into a variety of niches, as if intended for the reception of statues. These niches are not, however, occupied by the creation of the sculptor, the remains of men fill these curious recesses, which contain above three hundred of the human race, who are placed in an upright position, and dressed in the very cloaths they usually wore when alive. By a certain preparation which is applied to them, the skin and muscles become completely hard and dry, and the body so perfectly fitted for resisting the attacks of time, that though several of this venerable assembly have been fixed in their niches during a period of nearly three centuries, yet none of them are reduced to skeletons. They are said to preserve during several years their natural appearance and features, though doubtless considerably altered by the hand of death.

These remarkable niches are not appropriated merely to the holy fathers of the adjoining monastery; several of the inhabitants of Palermo have deposited the bodies of their friends in these famous receptacles, which they have an opportunity of frequently visiting, and where they may long continue to enjoy an affecting, though silent intercourse with the dear relatives of whom they are deprived. Many persons make choice, during their lives, of the niche they wish to possess  
after



after death, and in order to save trouble to their survivors, make trial of it, to discover whether it will fit their bodies. Sometimes the living mingles in society with the remains of his deceased friends, and the miserable votary of superstition frequently stands for hours in one of these gloomy recesses, as an atonement for his manifold sins. The remains of many of the principal Sicilian nobles are also deposited in these subterraneous caves, inclosed in handsome trunks, some of which are very splendidly adorned, and the keys of them are kept by the nearest relation of the defunct. One peculiarity in these dreary inclosures is very remarkable, all the bodies which are deposited in them are of the male sex, for every woman, whether alive or dead, is prohibited by a severe interdiction, written over the gate, from ever entering within the precincts of the monastery.

## C H A P   XIX.

ENVIRONS OF PALERMO. — CITY OF MONTREALE. — ITS ORIGIN. — THE CATHEDRAL. — TOMBS. — ELEGANT ALTAR. — VIRTUOUS ARCHBISHOP. — BEAUTIFUL ROAD. — ADMIRABLE FOUNTAINS. — STATUES, &c. — VERY ANCIENT BUILDING. — DIFFERENT ALPHABETS OF THE SARACENS. — MONTE PELEGRINO. — CHARMING VIEW. — ANCIENT ENCAMPMENT. — HISTORY OF ST. ROSOLIA. — BEAUTIFUL STATUE.

**A**BOUT five miles from Palermo stands the little city of Montreale, charmingly situated upon an eminence which commands a most extensive and noble view. At the foot of the mountain is a large valley, delightfully planted with woods of olives and orange trees, which load the air with a thousand delicious perfumes. This vale is terminated by Palermo with its beautiful buildings, which is succeeded by a noble view of the sea. The views from Montreale on the other sides are bounded by a chain of lofty mountains, the  
bold

bold and abrupt cliffs of which, form a striking contrast to the soft and elegant scenery of the subjacent vale.

This agreeable city, which derives its origin from a convent of Benedictine monks, is clean and very neatly built, and contains about eight thousand inhabitants. Till very lately it was an archiepiscopal see, to which the sees of Catania and Syracuse were subjected as suffragans, and its revenues were very considerable. But a few years ago his Sicilian Majesty obtained permission from the Pope to unite it to the see of Palermo, and a large proportion of its revenue is now appropriated to the support of a naval armament, which is employed against the Mahometan cruizers.

The cathedral of Montreale is esteemed the second in Sicily, and inferior only to that of Palermo. It was built by William the Second, who enriched it by grants of crown lands, and exerted his influence over his nobles to enlarge its riches by their donations. This edifice, which is very extensive, is entirely encrusted with mosaic, at a prodigious expence, but it is built in the Gothic stile in an extremely bad taste, and has been very injudiciously whitewashed on the outside. Several porphyry and marble monuments of the first kings of Sicily are erected in  
this

this cathedral. Over the throne of the Archbishop is a portrait of the founder, William the Good, whose memory is held in great reverence by the Sicilians. The body of this monarch was deposited here in a tomb at the feet of his father, William the Bad, whose remains are interred in a monument of porphyry. In a sumptuous coffin in this church are deposited the bowels of St. Lewis the ninth, king of France, who, with several thousand of his subjects, was destroyed by the plague, in his camp before Tunis, in the year 1270. A very elegant altar of massive silver, wrought in a very exquisite taste, and ornamented with stories from scripture, was presented to the cathedral some years ago, by the Archbishop Testa, who added to the elegance and knowledge of a gentleman, the simplicity and virtue of a primitive christian. Frugal in every thing which concerned himself, he spared no expence in adorning his see, and in procuring every convenience for the use of the inhabitants. And at the same time that the good prelate denied himself the luxury of sleeping on a bed, his immense revenues were all spent in contributing to the comfort of his people, who almost adored him while living, and who now seldom speak of him without grateful tears, or pious blessings.

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One of the most striking effects of the zeal of the good Archbishop for the public good, is the beautiful road between Palermo and Montreale, which is a very noble work, and the more extraordinary, as it was effected at the sole expence of this virtuous prelate. An avenue of fine aged trees extends from Palermo to the foot of the mountain, where it joins this magnificent road, which is terminated by the gate of Montreale. This city, which is situated on the summit of a pretty high mountain, was formerly very difficult of access, but this difficulty has been removed by the generous prelate, who has caused the road to be carried in a winding direction, and omitted no pains or expence to render it convenient ; nor has he been content with merely procuring the convenience of an easy means of intercourse between Palermo and the principal city of his diocese, he has adorned the road with several elegant fountains, inscriptions and urns, and bordered it on each side with most beautiful shrubs, which, in their season, exhale the most delicious odours. The inscriptions are far from being of equal elegance and taste, but some of them are very beautiful. One of them declares that as nothing was wanting to complete this immortal work but the name of the munificent founder,

founder, the magistrates and community of Montreale have dedicated this fountain to their bounteous benefactor during his absence; and opposite to this is another, which is a votive offering upon the return of their excellent and beloved archbishop from a visitation. In one part of this beautiful road a fine stream of water gushes with great rapidity out of an adjoining rock, which is confined in an irregular basin, artfully formed by masses of rugged stone, whence it rushes into a capacious reservoir, the sides of which are adorned with a rich profusion of aquatic plants. The statue of a boy armed with a hatchet is placed upon the summit of the rock, who is represented as attentively watching a serpent, which is creeping towards the water, while another boy in apparent alarm, is clambering up with a stone in his hand, and a young female with every appearance of terror is endeavouring to conceal herself from the serpent behind the stump of a tree.

In the plain which lies between Montreale and Palermo, at some distance from the great road, is a very ancient building, the architecture of which is very remarkable. It is a square stone tower, three stories in height, of regular courses of masonry, and not at all decayed by age though  
it



it is said to have been built by the Saracens during their abode in Sicily, which carries back the epocha of its building as far as to the ninth or tenth century. The inside of this remarkable edifice is decorated with thin arches, and frosted cielings, hanging down in drops. A fine fountain plays in the hall, and in summer preserves a fine temperature of air. This mansion is called La Torre Zizza, and is said to have been erected by a certain Sultan for the intention of confining Zizza, his beautiful daughter. This story is, however, but the tale of the common people, and is, in all probability, entirely destitute of truth.

On each stone of the battlements of this edifice, is a letter which has never yet been explained, but it is probable that it belongs to some alphabet used by the Saracens. These capital letters were employed by the Arabians only in their public records, another alphabet was in use upon more common occasions. Before the seventh century that people wrote with various characters, but at length agreed to adopt one particular mode of writing called the Cufick, which prevailed during three hundred years; and as this building was probably erected soon after the conquest of Palermo by the Saracens, it is very likely that this inscription is written in the  
Cufick

Cufick characters, which are now only to be met with in the oldest Mahometan manuscripts. In the tenth century a new system of writing called Nikki was introduced, which, with some variation, still continues to be the general hand writing of the east.

To the west of Palermo, and at the distance of about a mile from its gates, stands the bold and abrupt eminence called Monte Pelegrino, which is celebrated for being the retreat of St. Rosolia, the peculiar patroness of the metropolis of Sicily. This mountain stands entirely detached, and is so extremely high, and so uncommonly steep, as to have been formerly esteemed inaccessible. Since the discovery of the Saint, the pious and grateful inhabitants of Palermo have, however, cut a road out of the solid rock, and over precipices that were almost perpendicular, to the sanctuary of the holy maiden, but the way is still very fatiguing, and the summit of the mountain not very easy of access. The expence incurred in making this road was defrayed by a tax upon meat, which was levied by the senate of Palermo.

But if the fatigue of ascending this eminence be very considerable, it must on the other hand be allowed that the view from its elevated cliff is an ample compensation for all the trouble incurred

curred in attaining it. In clear weather the view extends almost across the island, and takes in the lofty summit of Etna, proudly towering amidst the clouds; and several of the Lipari islands are discoverable, though at the distance of several leagues from the mountain. To the east and west the beautiful villa's and palaces of La Bagaria and Il Colle, and a rich and extensive country, make a very striking appearance, and near the foot of the mountain is the city of Palermo, with its charming and spacious bay.

During the first Punic war, Hamilcar Barcas fortified this strong and almost inaccessible eminence, and preserving a free communication with the sea, maintained for several years this important post against the victorious arms of Rome, though assailed by forty thousand of its brave and gallant veterans. The station, which was the more immediate object of the choice of this spirited commander, was an ancient castle situated near the middle of the mountain. Some vestiges still remain of this famous edifice, the origin of which is carried back to the most remote period of history.

But it is not the beautiful and extensive prospects from Mount Pelegrino, nor its having been the place of encampment for a celebrated Carthaginian general that has introduced this eminence

nence to the most distinguished attention. The most remarkable circumstance attending it, at least in the eyes of the good people of Palermo, is its having been the retreat of the celebrated St. Rosolia, whose virtues are admired, and whose patronage is continually implored, by every pious inhabitant of that city. This holy virgin, whose regard for the preservation of her chastity exposed her to the severest hardships, was the daughter of a Count called Sinibaldus. In order to preserve herself from the brutal attacks of the Saracens, whose power was then predominant in Sicily, the virtuous Rosolia retired to a solitary cave on Mount Quersquina, a mountain which is at a considerable distance. There she continued some time, but she was at length discovered by her inhuman pursuers, and secretly retired to the almost inaccessible summit of Monte Pelegrino, where she lived and died in such obscurity, that notwithstanding her wonderful sanctity and extraordinary virtue, the place of her retreat and decease continued unknown for about five hundred years, when her grotto, her history, and her body were all discovered at the same time.

At the mouth of the dark and dreary cavern which was formerly the residence of the saint, is erected a convent, the holy fathers of which watch with devout care the sacred relics of the  
 faint,

faint, and receive the pious oblations which are presented at her shrine. Within the grotto is a marble statue of the faint, of very exquisite workmanship, which is said to occupy the spot where the holy virgin breathed her last sigh, and to be placed in the very attitude in which her remains were discovered. It is the figure of a very beautiful young female, whose head is gently reclined upon her hand, and a crucifix stands at some distance before her. This statue is represented in an act of devotion, and the whole cast of the figure and turn of the countenance is admirably calculated to inspire the same feelings by which this excellent piece of sculpture appears to be animated. The robe with which it is adorned was the present of his Most Catholic Majesty, and is extremely magnificent, and enriched with several valuable jewels.

At about the distance of a mile from the Monte Pelegriano is a celebrated fountain called Il Mar Dolce, where there are still some remains of an ancient building, which appears to have been a naumachia. In a cavern near this ruin, tradition has recorded that a gigantic skeleton was discovered, which crumbled to dust when an attempt was made to remove it. But the feats of fairies, and the power of giants are accounts which

which are not peculiar to the popular belief of the Sicilians. At some distance from the fountain there are many springs of warm water, which rise within the sea to the depth of five or six feet.





## C H A P. XX.

PALERMO.—AVENUES TO THE CITY.—VIEW FROM THE SEA.—POWER OF THE PRÆTOR.—OFFICE OF THE PATRICIANS.—INSTITUTION OF THE PRESENT FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN SICILY. — BRACCHIO MILITARE.—BRACCHIO ECCLESIASTICO.—BRACCHIO DEMANIALE.—DESPOTISM.—POWER OF THE VICEROY.—HIS STATE AND MAGNIFICENCE.—SICILIANS FOND OF EQUIPAGES.—CARRIAGES FOR HIRE.

ON whatever side Palermo is approached by the traveller, the beauty and excellence of the situation cannot but strike him with peculiar pleasure. To this agreeable circumstance is added another, still more conducive to his comfort and enjoyment, namely the convenience of excellent roads near the city, which appear still more delightful when contrasted with those in some of the mountainous and interior parts of Sicily. Some of the avenues to this gay metropolis are delightfully planted with rows of the most delicious fruit trees, or with the large American  
 aloe,

aloe, and they extend over a track of country which abounds in every requisite for beauty, and every appearance of fertility. Shady woods, clear rivulets, lofty mountains, and pleasant valleys, ornamented with beautiful villas, adorn and diversify this very exquisite scene ; which is bounded by the great expanse of the mighty Mediterranean.

But the situation whence this agreeable city appears, perhaps, to the greatest advantage, is from the sea, where the view of it is very strikingly beautiful. The lofty spires and elegant buildings of Palermo extend to the very edge of the bay, and the rich and extensive plain in which the city is situated, is environed by lofty mountains, the proud summits of which appear to meet the skies. On the west of Palermo a thick grove extends along the beach to the port and lighthouse, where a thick forest of shipping conceals the base of the great and insulated Monte Pellegrino. To the east a succession of vineyards, orchards, and corn, or pasture lands, extend over a large track of country, till the view is closed by the lofty eminence of Cape Azafran, which terminates the beautiful bay of Palermo.

In the short sketch of Sicilian history, prefixed to this account of the island, a view was given of the form of government, which, though

brief, renders it unnecessary to enlarge much more upon that subject. The prætor, or mayor of Palermo, who is annually chosen, is an officer of high rank, and of such authority, that his power is esteemed inferior only to that of the viceroy. This officer, who is honoured with the old and respectable title of one of the chief magistrates of ancient Rome, is not chosen by the voice of the people, but is appointed by the king, or by the viceroy, and is in general a person not very likely to enlarge the liberties of the populace at the expence of the court. Six senators, who assume the venerable titles of patricians, are united with him in the management of the civil government of Palermo, and are likewise chosen by the crown. The prætor assumes much state, and is attended by a company of grenadiers, who form his body guard. His office is attended with peculiar dignity, from the circumstance of this magistrate being always considered as the head of the *Bracchio Demaniale*, one of the three great branches into which the parliament of Sicily is divided.

The present form of Sicilian government may be traced back to the middle of the eleventh century, when the valiant Roger fully completed his conquest of the island. This monarch divided Sicily into three parts, one of which he bestowed

bestowed upon his courageous soldiers, another he piously allotted to the church, and the third he appropriated to himself. Of these three *Bracchie* (arms) he composed his parliament, the form of which still remains. The *Bracchio Militare* is composed of a great part of the Sicilian barons, who are all obliged to perform military service. At the head of this division is the prince of Butera, who assumes the preheminance over this part of the parliamentary body by hereditary right. The *Bracchio Ecclesiastico* is presided over by the Archbishop of Palermo. The *Bracchio Demaniale* is formed by the election of forty three royal cities called *Demaniale*, each of which has a right to elect representatives, and every householder is allowed a vote in electing the members for his particular city. Out of each *Bracchio* four deputies are chosen for transacting public business, but the viceroy, the prince of Butera, and the prætor of Palermo, are always the three principal persons.

Were we to form an idea of the powers of this parliament from the several members of which it is composed, each of which may be supposed to watch sedulously in order to ward off any encroachments upon its particular body, we might imagine that liberty and equal laws existed in a

government thus constituted. The very contrary of this is, however, the case; the court, by assuming the appointment of every public office, has secured a set of creatures ever ready to yield the good of the public to private interest and ambition, and the parliament is reduced to an almost entire dependence upon the caprice, or will of a court, which cannot naturally be expected to be over zealous in relinquishing the authority it has once obtained.

The power of the viceroy is very extensive and absolute; he not only commands the military force of Sicily, but likewise presides in all civil tribunals with unbounded authority. His power in religious affairs is also very great, as he is invested with legantine powers, and enjoys the privilege of confirming all dignities, as well ecclesiastical as civil.

On the twenty first of December the viceroy always makes an annual visit to the jails of Palermo, where he has the full power of pardoning and liberating as many criminals as he pleases; and after hearing their crimes and accusations, of reducing or altering their sentences. Few instances of intemperate clemency have occurred in the exercise of this extraordinary power, and the viceroys are very cautious in  
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the use of this prerogative, and seldom absolve a criminal without mature deliberation. One of them, indeed, a choleric old soldier, was offended at some expressions which he thought tended to limit his authority in this instance; and to shew his power, commanded the prison doors to be thrown open, and all the miscreants they contained, to be set at liberty.

The annual solemnity of visiting the prisons is always performed with much pomp, and the great counsellor of the viceroy attends to assist his decisions, in any case which may appear intricate, or dubious. This officer, whose rank is very great, has free admission into all tribunals and courts of justice, that he may be the better enabled to furnish the viceroy with an exact account of their proceedings. In general this high office has been bestowed upon strangers, on the supposition that as they are unconnected by the ties of affinity, or particular friendship, their decisions will, in all probability, be more free from partiality or prejudice.

The viceroy generally assumes great state; when he goes to church, he receives the tribute of a cloud of incense, and with imperial grandeur, and great solemnity, puts on his hat. His body guards are very numerous, and make a



very handsome appearance, and on great occasions, his coachmen, postilions, and livery servants are adorned with large flowing wigs, without hats. His train of coaches is very great and superb. Indeed, the articles of luxury to which the Sicilians appear principally attached, are their equipages and horses; and this disposition has arisen to such excess, that the king of Sardinia, when he was in possession of the island, restricted the number of horses, or mules, which were to be allowed to every carriage, and this regulation still remains in force. The viceroy was permitted to drive within the city with six horses; the prætor, the archbishop, and the president of the parliament with four, but the rest of the nobility were limited to two. This rule is still observed within the city, but when the nobility go into the country there are none who drive with less than four, and every family of distinction is possessed of several carriages. Many equipages, indeed, in a family at all numerous, must, according to the mode of thinking at Palermo, be absolutely necessary, for walking is reckoned there in the highest degree ungentle, and a man or woman of fashion who should be seen on foot in the streets, would stand a chance of being shunned by all their friends and acquaintance

HIRED CARRIAGES. 177

quaintance as a disgrace to society. There are no hackney coaches in Palermo, but carriages are let out for hire, which in general can boast of very little elegance or convenience, and are always drawn by mules.



## C H A P. XXI.

RELIGIOUS TENETS OF THE SICILIANS.—  
 EMBRACED CHRISTIANITY AT AN EARLY  
 PERIOD.—ADHERE TO THE LATIN RI-  
 TUAL.—CHANGE THEIR OPINIONS.—  
 RETURN TO THEIR FORMER FAITH.—  
 RESTRAINTS UPON CLERICAL POWER.—  
 TRIBUNAL OF LA MONARCHIA.—GREEK  
 PRELATE.—RESPECTABLE BEHAVIOUR  
 OF THE HIGHER RANKS DURING THEIR  
 RELIGIOUS ORDINANCES.—ABOLITION  
 OF THE INQUISITION.

**T**HE Sicilians boast of being amongst the first converts to christianity, and carry their pretensions to this honour to the times of the apostles. They assert that St. Paul not only landed on the north east side of the island, but that he resided there some time, and received some extraordinary proofs of the zeal and attachment of the people. It must indeed be confessed, that this account does not receive any confirmation

confirmation from the testimony of scripture, but the truth of this tradition is strongly insisted upon by the natives, several of whom have taken up the pen, and written very gravely in defence of this story.

The greater part of the inhabitants of Sicily follow in all respects the ritual of the Romish church, and are to the full as superstitious in their ceremonial observances as their neighbours on the continent. As Sicily was subjected to the spiritual jurisdiction of the Roman pontiff, its churches naturally embraced the Latin liturgy at a very early period, and were the strenuous asserters of papal power. The purity of its ritual faith has not however remained entirely unfulfilled. During the ecclesiastical disputes in the tenth century, between the rival sees of Constantinople and of Rome, the Sicilian believers, whose ties to Rome were considerably broken by their subjection to the Mahometan yoke, were seduced from the allegiance they had formerly paid to that see, and most of the christian inhabitants of the island conformed to the Greek rites; but upon the conquest of Sicily, by the Normans the authority of the Roman Pontiff was restored. Roger, however, though equally averse to the Emperor, and to the ritual of the Greeks, from a motive of policy to conciliate

the members of that communion, allowed them the free use of their own liturgy, and indulged them likewise with a spiritual ruler, who assumed the title of Protopapa ; but the greater part of the Sicilians were allured by the example or incited by the numerous advantages which attend a conformity to the faith of the sovereign, to return to their obedience to their ancient masters.

The large allotment of one third of the island, which was given to the church by this monarch, free from all deductions, would, no doubt, form a considerable argument for conformity in the clerical order. They were furnished with an ample provision in the church, the possessions of which were entirely distinct from those of the other two divisions. In order to preserve undisturbed the division, which had been the favourite project of Roger, he endeavoured to guard against every encroachment which might be made on the separate properties by several well conceived laws. The increase of clerical power was checked by various regulations, and these restraints were strengthened by Pope Urban the Second, who, in the year 1098 appointed Roger and his descendants perpetual vicars of the apostolic see, and legates in the island.— This power, which was originally granted to the monarch, has since been exercised by a tribunal called

called La Monarchia, the decisions of which have been very little favourable to the extension of pontifical authority, and in consequence of this have drawn down the severest condemnations and anathema's from the successors of Urban. All ecclesiastical appeals are decided in this court, which is empowered to pronounce sentence in all causes relative to such persons as are exempted from the common jurisdictions, and subject to the Pope alone.

The power of the Protopapa is insensibly diminished into the mere shadow of authority; a prelate, however, with this title still exists, who makes a very sumptuous appearance, and performs many episcopal offices. He is nominated to this dignity by the pope, and is confirmed in his office by the archbishop of Messina. But this prelate, although invested with a Greek title, is a nominal conformist to the Latin ritual, and, together with the laity of his church, is compelled to a tacit assent to the doctrines of Rome concerning the disputed points, by being obliged to attend divine service in the cathedral of Messina on a particular day, and to join in certain parts of the service which are declaratory of the contested articles. With all this apparent conformity, it is however probable that both he; and they



they, strongly adhere to the prejudices of the Greek church.

There is, perhaps, no country in the world where superstition is more prevalent amongst the lower orders than in Sicily; nothing is too absurd to be believed by the common people, and few things too extravagant to be supported by several, even of the clergy. The people of fashion have, indeed, attained to more knowledge, and look down with derision and contempt upon the absurdities of the vulgar. They have not, however, yet deviated themselves into the opposite extreme, but attend the ordinances of their religion with great punctuality, and are remarkable upon these occasions for the seriousness and propriety of their behaviour.

The dreadful tribunal of the inquisition, that scourge of truth, and nurse of error, is now totally abolished in Sicily, by the consent of their Sicilian majesties. As the establishment of this execrable power had long been the ferocious object of the court of Spain, it is probable that policy, no less than humanity, might occasion its abolition. It never indeed existed in Sicily with the same rigour and severity which accompanied it in some other countries, and its exertions of authority met with severe re-  
buffs,

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buffs, and sure, though secret opposition from the haughty barons, who beheld with great dislike and jealousy a tribunal that asserted rights over their vassals, which they thought were only vested in themselves.



CHAP.

## C H A P. XXII.

FEAST OF ST. ROSOLIA.—TRIUMPHAL CAR.—  
 —DIVERSITY OF AMUSEMENTS.—ILLU-  
 MINATIONS OF THE GREAT CHURCH.—  
 RELIGIOUS PROCESSION.—SICILIAN  
 INNS.—BENEFIT OF RECOMMENDATORY  
 LETTERS.—SICILIAN BANDITTI.—AC-  
 COUNT OF THE SIROCC WIND.—PLEA-  
 SURES OF SICILY.

**O**NE of the most superb exhibitions to be seen in Europe, or perhaps even in the whole world, is annually performed at Palermo, in honour of St. Rosolia, who, though probably a person who never had an existence, is yet honoured at Palermo with a degree of respect at least equal to that which is paid to the Supreme Being. This feast, as it is termed, of the saint, continues for several days, and the preparations for it employ a considerable number of workmen during successive months. No expence is spared in the celebration of this august and  
 splendid

splendid festival, and persons of every rank and condition vie with each other in contributing to the honours which are paid to this celebrated saint.

Upon this occasion a triumphal car is erected of almost enormous magnitude, the base of which resembles a Roman Galley, but it swells as it advances in height, and the front assumes an oval shape, like an amphitheatre, with seats placed in the theatrical stile. This part of the prodigious machine is appropriated to the musicians, who compose a very large band, placed in successive rows. Over this orchestra, and a little behind it there is a large dome, supported by six Corinthian columns, and adorned with a number of saints and angels. On the summit of this dome is placed a gigantic silver statue of the saint, and the whole machine is decorated with the most elegant and magnificent ornaments. This prodigious car is drawn by more than fifty mules, all elegantly accoutred and mounted by postilions dressed in gold and silver stuffs, and adorned with large plumes of beautiful feathers. At about the space of every fifty or sixty yards, the fabric makes a stop, and the band immediately strike up and perform a piece of music in honour of the saint. All ranks and sexes attend  
in

in crowds the exhibition of this superb festival, and the whole city assumes an appearance of additional splendor and festivity.

But it is not alone during the procession of the triumphal car that every thing wears such a face of hilarity. Every creature in Palermo is interested in making this festival as splendid as possible, and invention is exhausted to supply a continuance and diversity of entertainments upon this occasion. The most elegant fire works are exhibited in different parts of the city, and on the sea, where they make, in the night, a very beautiful appearance. The contrasted elements, and the reflection which every piece makes in the water, are prodigiously splendid and striking. During some of the days of this feast, races are run along the great streets of the city; the contenders for victory are, sometimes boys, who are elegantly dressed, but who ride without either saddle or bridle, and the victor parades the street in triumph with his prize displayed before him. The whole city is illuminated in the most magnificent taste, and splendidly ornamented with statues, tapestry and artificial flowers, very elegantly disposed. Every evening one of the principal nobility makes an elegant entertainment, at which music, and every other gratification which can contribute

contribute to the pleasure and entertainment of the scene is plentifully provided.

One of the most splendid exhibitions during the celebration of this festival, is the illumination of the great church, which exceeds in magnificence even that of St. Peter's at Rome. The whole cathedral is ornamented with mirrors, which cover the walls, roof, pillars, and pilasters, and which are so artfully intermixed with artificial flowers, and other decorations, that the joinings are invisible. The effect produced by the prodigious glare of twenty thousand wax tapers, the light of which is reflected in various directions from every part of the church, is astonishing and superb in the highest degree. The altars, which are very numerous, are all ornamented in a style which is only inferior in elegance to the decorations of the great altar.

This magnificent spectacle closes by a procession, to the elegance of which all the convents, and religious fraternities not only contribute, but sedulously endeavour, by every exertion of taste and fancy to surpass each other. All the religious societies of Palermo, each dressed in the habits of their respective orders, parade the city, and at certain intervals large machines, constructed of wood and pasteboard, elegantly decorated,



decorated, and representing temples, tabernacles, and a variety of beautiful pieces of architecture, are carried in the procession. These temporary edifices, which are the productions of convents or nunneries, are frequently raised to the height of sixty feet, and are filled by representations of saints and angels, which are admirably painted and adorned. The procession closes with the relics of St. Rosalia, which are deposited in an elegant box, borne by some of the most distinguished citizens of Palermo, and is followed by the archbishop, who, in his way, graciously disperses his benediction to the surrounding multitude.

The inns throughout the whole of the island are extremely bad. It must, indeed, be allowed that whoever travels with recommendatory letters will, in general, find them sufficient to procure him not only necessary accommodations, but he will, in consequence of them, be frequently treated with a degree of attention and hospitality which will recall to his imagination the golden age. Such recommendations are indeed almost necessary in a country where the temporary accommodations for travellers are sometimes execrable, and where, even in the metropolis, such an inn as would be thought very indifferent in any part of England, is scarcely to be found.

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The accounts of the terrible exploits of the Sicilian banditti, who are in general represented as monsters of barbarity and cruelty, are in all probability greatly exaggerated, nor are their numbers near so considerable as they have been frequently thought. At least thus much is certain, that very many travellers have passed through the country without having had any reason to conceive themselves in actual danger. The evil most to be dreaded in traversing these regions is, perhaps, the Sirocc, or South wind, which it is imagined blows from the burning deserts of Africa, and is sometimes productive of dangerous consequences to those who are exposed to its fury. During the continuance of this wind all nature appears to languish, vegetation withers and dies, the beasts of the field droop, the animal spirits seem too much exhausted to admit of the least bodily exertion, and the spring and elasticity of the air appear to be lost. The heat exceeds that of the most fervid weather in Spain or Malta, and is felt with peculiar violence in the city and neighbourhood of Palermo.

The sensation occasioned by the Sirocc wind is very striking and wonderful. In a moment the air becomes heated to an excessive degree, and the whole atmosphere feels as if it were inflamed,

flamed, the pores of the body seem at once opened, and all the fibres relaxed. During its continuance the inhabitants of Palermo shut their doors and windows to exclude the air, and where there are no window shutters, wet blankets are hung on the inside of the window, and the servants are kept continually employed in sprinkling the apartments with water. No creature, whose necessities do not compel him to the exertion, is to be seen while this tremendous wind continues to blow, and the streets and avenues of the city appear to be nearly deserted.

The Sirocc generally continues so short a time in Sicily, that it seldom produces those complaints which are the consequence of the duration of its scorching heats in several parts of Italy, though its violence in those countries is much inferior to what is felt in this island. Here it seldom endures longer than thirty-six, or forty hours, a time not sufficient to heat the ground, or the walls of the houses in a very intense continued degree. It is commonly succeeded by the Tramontane, or North wind, which in a short time restores the exhausted powers of animal and vegetable life, and nature soon assumes her former appearance. The cause of the Sirocc wind has been frequently attempted to be explained,  
but

but the different hypotheses are perhaps more to be admired for their ingenuity and fancy, than for being very satisfactorily explained. The superior intenseness of this scorching wind at Palermo, may probably be accounted for from the situation of that city, which is almost surrounded by lofty mountains, the ravines and valleys of which are parched and almost burnt up in summer. The numberless springs of warm water must also greatly increase the heat of the air, and the practice of burning brush wood and heath on the neighbouring mountains, during the warm season, must undoubtedly tend to increase the heat of the wind in passing over the country of Sicily, though it had previously been disarmed of part of its violence by travelling over the sea which divides Sicily from Africa.

But with all the inconveniencies now mentioned, this country affords incitements to the lover of science, the investigator of nature, or the votary of pleasure, which abundantly compensate all his toils. Here the ruined fanes, or the fallen columns recal the mind to the remembrance of the unrivalled works of ancient art, and the great and arduous achievements of heroes, who, though long departed, will for ever live in the memory of posterity. Here nature acts upon the most comprehensive scale, and exhibits every great  
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and every minute beauty which the human heart can conceive. The mighty Etna, with all its world of wonders, which is an epitome of the whole earth, not only in its soil and climate, but in its various productions. The delightful scenes of rural and sequestered life. Society no less than solitude offers here her elegant delights. No jealous fancies impede the pleasures of the festive hour, the sexes meet without restraint, and probably with more innocence than could be effected by austerity and vigilance. Even the inferior ranks of people in the interior parts of the island appear to converse without those restraints which formerly were either customary, or have been so represented, and a stranger finds no difficulty in conversing with the wives and daughters of the inhabitants, without either danger, or the suspicion of harbouring any clandestine designs.

But it is in the gay city of Palermo that the lover of pleasure must meet with his most ample gratification. Here whatever can delight in the social and festive scenes of life presents itself in great abundance. The *conversazioni*, the *marino*, the opera, and various other amusements court his acceptance. All the Sicilians are passionately fond of music, which makes a part of most of their entertainments, and the opera at  
Palermo

Palermo is in general well conducted, and has been eminent for being the theatre on which some of the most distinguished musical characters have first exhibited their talents, and for having collected together, perhaps, some of the first vocal performers in Europe.





## C H A P XXV.

SITUATION OF THE ISLAND OF MALTA.—  
 VICISSITUDES IN ITS GOVERNMENT.—  
 GIVEN TO THE KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN OF  
 JERUSALEM.—CANAL OF MALTA.—SPA-  
 RONARA'S.—EXPERTNESS OF THE SAILORS.  
 — FORTIFICATIONS OF THE ISLAND.—  
 SOIL.— ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY.—  
 FRUITS.—CITY OF VALETTA.— EXCEL-  
 LENT HARBOURS.—BUILDINGS.—HOUSES  
 OF THE KNIGHTS.—GREAT CHURCH.

**T**HE island of Malta is the most southern part of Europe, and is situated between the island of Sicily and the African coast. The country which lies nearest to it on the east is the island of Candia; on the south, the coast of Africa; Sicily on the north, and the little isles of Pantalarea, Linosa, and Lampedusa on the west. If we may at all rely upon traditional accounts, Malta was anciently governed by an African prince named Battus. Thus much is, however, certain, that it fell into the hands of the  
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the Carthaginians, who left several monuments of their existence in this country; and even at the time when it was taken possession of by the knights of St. John, many inscriptions were discovered, which were written in the Punic tongue, and engraved on pieces of marble, and mutilated pillars. From the Carthaginians it passed into the hands of the Romans; who in their turn were deprived of it by the arms of the victorious Saracens, by whom Malta was added to their conquest of Sicily. With that island it was again conquered by the Normans, and continued for ages to share in the same vicissitudes, to submit to the same government, and to receive the same masters. In the reign of the Emperor Charles V. these islands were no longer subjected to the same laws. The knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who had been vanquished in the island of Rhodes, in the year 1530, obtained Tripoli, and the islands of Malta and Gozzo, from that prince, as an asylum for their order. Since this period, Malta has continued an independent state, which is governed by the grand master. An acknowledgement of its former subjection is however expected by the Sicilian monarch, and the tribute of a falcon is annually presented by the grand master, either to the court at Naples, or to the viceroy of Sicily. On every new succession he

is obliged likewise to take the oaths of allegiance to the new monarch, and to receive from his hands the investiture of the islands of Malta and Gozzo.

The sea which separates these islands from Sicily, is in reality a part of the Mediterranean, but it is usually distinguished by the name of the canal of Malta. This part of the sea is generally crossed in vessels called Sparonara's, which are employed in trafficking between Malta and the island of Sicily. In order to elude the pursuit of the African pirates, and of the other Barbarefque vessels which infest these seas, the Sparonara's are constructed with peculiar attention to swiftness; they are built in the form of a boat, and are in general very small, and so flat and narrow as to be quite unable to bear a high sea, which necessarily obliges them to keep as near the shore as possible. These vessels are managed by rowers, who, in general, do not sit, but stand opposite to the prow, and push their oars in the same manner as the Venetian Gondoliers. Great numbers of the Sparonara's are to be met with on the Southern coast of Sicily, where they unload their goods and take in a fresh cargo of corn or other commodities to return with to Malta. The passage between these two islands is regarded as one of the most stormy and dangerous

dangerous in the Mediterranean, yet the failors continually traverse it in their diminutive vessels with great apparent unconcern, and meet with very few accidents. Their safety must indeed be ascribed in a great measure to the management of their vessels, in which they are remarkably expert, and to their skill in the weather, which it is of the greatest importance to them to study, and with the approaching changes, of which they are said to be so well acquainted as to foretel them with great certainty.

The approach to Malta is very fine and striking, though the shore on the northern side of the island is rather rocky and low. The coast opposite to Tripoli is covered with high perpendicular rocks, which extend along the coast for several miles, and form a prodigiously strong natural rampart. This island abounds with fine natural harbours, which have been improved by art, and so excellently fortified as to render Malta almost impregnable. The celebrated masters of this island have not only exerted their ingenuity in cutting the rocks into fortifications, but they have likewise shaped them into artillery to defend these fortifications, and have hollowed them in several places into the form of immense mortars, which they are said to discharge against the vessels of an enemy with astonishing effect. These

are situated near the different creeks and landing places about the island, and the mouths of some of them are about six feet wide, and are said to throw about 10,000 pounds of cannon ball, or stones. The ditches, which are of a prodigious size, and extend several miles, are also cut out of the solid rock, which is admirably excavated, and exhibits proofs of a degree of perseverance, labour, and ingenuity, which has scarcely been equalled in any age or country.

As the island of Malta is composed of one continued rock of white freestone, and the soil upon it reaches seldom below three or four feet, and sometimes not more than five or six inches, it cannot be expected to produce a very luxuriant vegetation. The aspect of the country is indeed far from being pleasing, yet it produces a large quantity of fine fruits; corn in a sufficient quantity to subsist its inhabitants nearly half the year; and a great abundance of fine cotton.—The fruits which grow in the greatest profusion, and arrive at the greatest excellence, are the orange and fig, the former of which is perhaps superior to those which are produced in any other country. The excellence of the Maltese fruits may be in a great degree ascribed to the warm suns which shine upon the island, and the produce of the country is materially assisted by the  
copious

copious dews which fall during the spring and summer months, and to the moisture which the natives assert proceeds out of the rock, and which nourishes vegetation, and counteracts the effects of the too fervid heat of the climate. Every part of the island is cultivated with the most indefatigable industry, and such has been the desire of the inhabitants to improve the soil, that ships and boats have frequently been freighted with earth from the fertile fields of Sicily.

The inclosures in the island of Malta present a very barren aspect, from their being all constructed of stone, and many of them are small and necessarily irregular, from the great inequalities of the ground. These circumstances give the country an appearance which is by no means pleasant, though the dreariness of these stone inclosures is frequently contrasted with the beautiful prospect of fine groves of orange trees which continue to furnish their luscious produce in great abundance, from the month of November till the middle of June.

The cities of Valetta and Citta Vecchia are the only places in Malta which can properly be said to deserve that appellation, though there are some others which are distinguished by the name. The whole island is covered with country houses and villages, each of which has a very



handsome church, which is in general erected and adorned with peculiar elegance. The city of Valetta was built by the celebrated grand master by whose name it is called ; it is situated upon a peninsula, on the north east side of the island, between two of the finest ports in the world, which are defended by almost impregnable fortifications. That on the south east side of Malta is the largest, and runs about two miles into the heart of the island. Here the largest ships of war may ride in safety in the severest weather, guarded by the lofty grounds which surround this extensive basin, and by the strong fortifications which are erected on the summit of the rocks.

Though the interior part of this excellent haven is so large as to be divided into five distinct harbours, each of which is capable of containing an immense number of ships, the mouth of it is scarcely a quarter of a mile in breadth.— This entrance is commanded on each side by a strong castle, and by batteries which are able to destroy the largest ships that should attempt to force an entrance. Nor is this the only defence which the industry of the order has provided against their enemies ; besides these fortifications there is a quadruple battery, one upon the other, each of which is mounted with about eighty of their heaviest artillery, all which, together with  
other

other similar defences, render the harbour almost impregnable.

The smaller harbour, which is situated on the north side of the city of Valetta, is capable of containing a great number of shipping; it is however only used as a place for fishing, and for the performance of quarantine. In the center of this basin is a small island on which they have erected a castle and a lazaretto, and the whole is defended by very strong fortifications.

The city of Valetta lies upon a hill, which occasions great unevenness in the streets. These are all paved with free stone, which causes much dust, and from its whiteness is so injurious to the eyes, that the greatest part of the inhabitants are remarkably weak sighted. This town has a very agreeable appearance, and numbers of well dressed people are to be seen in the streets, who have all the appearance of health and affluence. As Valetta is the capital of the island, the best buildings in Malta are to be found in that city. The palace of the grand master is a handsome edifice, constructed with more attention to conveniency than magnificence. The palaces or hotels of the seven tongues are appropriated to these several divisions of the knights, who, at a very early period of the order were distinguished according to the different country or nation to

which they originally belonged, and to each of these divisions certain immunities and privileges in the course of time were annexed. In these hotels, the knights, serving brothers, and those who are placed under the care of the order, with an intention of entering into it at a future period, all reside, and have their respective tables. The superior of the hotel is supplied from the treasury of the order, either with a sum of money, or with corn or oil for the support of those who are under his care. This provision is however in general very inadequate to the plentiful stile of living which frequently prevails in these fraternities; but the deficiency is supplied out of the private purse of the superior, who, as he has a right to the first emolument which falls vacant in the division to which he belongs, is never known to refuse a post which is attended with so much trouble and expence, because he expects to indemnify himself by the possession of some rich commendery. This post belongs by right to the senior knight of the division, who, if his own revenues are insufficient to support his credit in this situation, has recourse to the assistance of his friends.

There is an excellent infirmary in the city of Valetta in which the best assistance is provided for the cure of the sick. The arsenal is likewise

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a very good building and abundantly furnished with every necessary weapon both for attack and defence. The great Church of St. John is a very noble structure, which is decorated with superb monuments composed of the finest marbles, porphyry and lapis lazuli. No expence has been spared in the decoration of these structures, which are sacred to the memory of the principal persons in the order. The pavement of this church has been constructed at a very great expence, and is esteemed particularly rich and beautiful.



## C H A P XXVI.

CITTA VECCHIA, THE ANCIENT MELITA.  
 — FORTIFICATIONS. — CATHEDRAL. —  
 CHURCH OF ST. PAUL. — MIRACULOUS  
 PRODUCTION. — CATACOMBS. — COM-  
 PLAINTS OF THE WANT OF WOOD AND  
 WATER IN MALTA.—MANUFACTURES.—  
 LANGUAGE.—ISLAND OF GOZZO. — GO-  
 VERNMENT OF THE ISLANDS.—POWER OF  
 THE GRAND MASTER. — HIS ELECTION,  
 REVENUES AND PRIVILEGES.—KNIGHTS  
 OF MALTA. — DUELLING. — MILITARY  
 AND NAVAL FORCES OF THE ISLANDS.

**C**ITTA Vechia, which is the second city  
 in Malta, was, at the time when the order of  
 St. John obtained possession of it, called Melita,  
 the ancient name of the whole island, of which  
 it was the capital. It was, however, a very  
 diminutive place, and very destitute of all those  
 conveniencies and elegancies to which the knights  
 of Rhodes had been so long accustomed; nor  
 was its situation such as at all suited the views  
 and

and apprehensions of the order, who therefore fixed themselves nearer the borders of the sea. Melita was nearly in the center of the island, and from its elevated situation, not only commanded a view of the whole, but even as it is said of the Barbary coast, and of Sicily, provided the weather be clear and favourable. But the situation of Il Borgo, near which the city of Valetta now stands, was so much better suited for the residence of a people who had constant reason to expect to be attacked, and who were so much interested in preventing their enemies from obtaining a footing on their little territory, that the grand master retired himself into the castle of St. Angelo, the only fort which was in the island, and settled the convent of the order in the neighbouring town of Il Borgo.

The old city, though no longer considered as the capital of Malta, and situated so far in the interior part of the country, is like most of the other places in the island, strongly fortified, and is governed by an officer, called the Hahem. The old palace of Citta Vecchia contains little to attract the attention of the traveller, but the cathedral is a handsome and very extensive edifice, richly adorned. This church, though more elegant, is not however so remarkable as that of St. Paul, which stands at a little distance from  
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the city, for though so small and inconsiderable in itself as not to deserve much attention, it is said to join the celebrated grotto in which the saint was imprisoned. This grotto produces by a kind of petrefaction from the water, a whitish stone, which, when reduced to powder, is said to be an infallible remedy for various diseases, and to have saved the lives of thousands. Not only the inhabitants of the island, but those of other countries have so great an opinion of its efficacy, that considerable quantities of it are annually exported to Sicily, Italy, the Levant, and even to the East Indies. In taste it strongly resembles Magnesia, of a very indifferent quality, and when taken produces a very copious sweat in about an hour. Its virtue extends even to the certain cure of bites which are received from the most venomous animals; but its excellence in this respect cannot easily be ascertained in Malta, as it produces none of these formidable creatures. This advantage also the Maltese derive from the saint, who, as they assert, when he shook the viper from his hand, eternally banished all animals of a venomous nature from the island. The grotto, together with a statue of St. Paul, which is placed in the midst of it, and another just by the church, which is said to stand on the very spot where the house was situated, in which  
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he was received after his shipwreck, are reported to possess extraordinary powers, and are regarded by the people with great reverence and veneration. The Maltese are indeed superstitious in a very considerable degree, and their church service is performed with peculiar parade and ceremony. Notwithstanding this they have carried their toleration so far as to permit the erection of a mosque for the Turks, some of whom find the rigours of slavery in some degree alleviated by the undisturbed profession of their own religion.

At some distance from Citta Vecchia are the celebrated Catacombs, which are said to extend fifteen miles under ground. This account is, however, in all probability much exaggerated, and perhaps from the circumstance of these extensive excavations branching out into so many directions as to be extremely intricate. Not very far from the catacombs is situated the Bosquetta, where the grand master of Malta has his country palace, but at which he seldom resides. This is the only place in the island where there is the appearance of wood, but this only amounts to a few scattered trees. The palace commands from the top a very extensive prospect, and is furnished in the ancient Gothick taste.

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The report of the commissioners, who, when the order thought of settling in Malta were employed to inspect the island, was, in many respects very unfavourable. They represented it as so destitute of wood that this article was sold by the pound, and the inhabitants compelled to make use of dried cow-dung, or vegetable matters dried in the sun, for the purpose of firing. Nor was their account of the water more promising; except a few springs in the remotest part of the island there was no such thing to be met with as spring water, and the inhabitants were reduced to the necessity of supplying that defect by means of cisterns. But what may not be effected by the united assistance of commerce, ingenuity, and industry? Malta is now supplied with wood from Sicily in great abundance, and at an easy expence, and the city of Valetta is furnished with water from the neighbourhood of Citta Vecchia, whence it is conveyed to that place by means of an aqueduct composed of some thousand arches, and distributed throughout the city, and into the piazza before the palace of the grand master.

The cotton produced in Malta is manufactured by the inhabitants into a great variety of articles, particularly stockings, which are greatly esteemed, and bear a very considerable price. Blankets  
and

and coverlids of a very excellent quality are made likewise in large quantities in Malta, and the contiguous island of Gozzo, whence they are exported to different parts of Europe.

The common people of Malta still continue the use of the Arabic language, but in all probability much perverted, and mixed with that of the different masters who have governed the island since the expulsion of the Saracens. The police is much better regulated than in the neighbouring countries, and robberies and assassinations are very uncommon. The inns too, in some parts of the island are excellent. The only vehicles used in this country for travelling, are coaches, drawn by one mule. There are, however, horses in the island, which, by their exertions, afford the inhabitants much amusement. Their races are indeed not much in the stile of those in England, for the riders are not accommodated with either saddle, bridle, whip, or spur, though the horses are said to run at full speed; but they are previously trained, and accustomed to the ground, which, as it is entirely over rock and pavement, is very difficult. Four times a year there are races also of mules and asses performed in a similar manner; the rider is furnished with an instrument resembling a shoemaker's

maker'sawl, to quicken, when necessary, the pace of his tardy steed.

The little island of Gozzo is separated from Malta by an arm of the sea, which is about four or five miles in breadth. Between these two islands, lies the small isle of Commina, which, like Malta and Gozzo, is subjected to the government of the grand master, and like them too is secured by various fortifications of the strongest kind. The coasts of all these little islands present an aspect in the highest degree craggy and barren, though Gozzo is supposed to be the ancient seat of the charming Calypso, the coasts of whose enchanting retreat charmed the eye of the wearied traveller, and invited him to the grotto of the goddess, where eternal verdure and perpetual spring, with all the charms of beauty and of pleasure arrested his steps, and gratified every delighted sense.

The government of these islands is vested in the order of the knights of Malta, which enjoys the authority of a sovereign, though the grand master, is, as we have already observed, obliged to make an annual offering as an acknowledgement of the former subjection of the islands. The form of government in the order was originally as it now is, that of an aristocracy. The supreme government was vested in the general chapter

chapter of the order, which consisted of the grand master, who, in case of a division had two votes, and of the principal persons in the community. This assembly was regularly convened every five years, and in cases of extraordinary exigence still oftener. They have, however, by degrees, been laid aside, and the business of the order managed by means less operose than collecting the members of this body from the different places where they were dispersed. The grand master presides in all the councils that compose the jurisdiction of the nation, and has great power in them, not only from the circumstance of his having two votes, but the influence which his authority to dispose of all lucrative offices and rich benefices gives him over the needy or avaricious members

In the election of the grand master, there was anciently the utmost care taken to prevent the very possibility of cabal and intrigue, by chusing successive sets of electors, each of whom made choice of others, and the whole were repeatedly changed, till at length sixteen met to ballot for the grand master, who, as he was appointed by lot, and after so many precautions, could neither be suspected of having recourse to artifice, nor to have been chosen by collusion. This regulation appears at present to be very materially altered ;  
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the grand master is now chosen by a committee of twenty one, which is nominated by the seven nations, three out of each nation. During the time of the election all is cabal and intrigue, and most of the knights are masked to prevent their particular attachments and connections from being known. This season of cabal does not however endure long, for the election is obliged to be made in three days after the death of the preceding grand master.

The revenues of the principality of these islands consist in the rights of the admiralty, at the rate of ten per cent upon all prizes, and comprehend the customs, imposts, lands of the demesne, duties on the alienation and purchase of land, fines and confiscations, and some other privileges. The revenues of the mastership arise from the sum of six thousand two hundred crowns, which are annually paid to the grand master out of the treasury, from his right of demanding a year's revenue from all the commenderies of courtesy, which he disposes of every five years in each priory, and from his possession of one commendery in every priory. Besides these privileges, the grand masters have frequently equipped vessels for fighting, which they sent out upon cruises, and received themselves, whatever profits have arisen from the prizes.

prizes. Few sovereign princes possess more power, or are more absolute than the grand master, who is addressed by the title of your Eminence, or your Serene Highness.

The knights and commanders of the order of Malta have all much the appearance of gentlemen, and men of the world. This indeed might be expected from its being composed of persons who are descended from some of the first families in Europe, for high birth is a necessary requisite for obtaining the title of knight. An attention to the rules of politeness is, perhaps still more to be expected from the allowance of duelling, which, agreeable to the romantic principles of chivalry is still permitted in Malta. Some restrictions have been laid upon it, which, certainly in a country where a military spirit is not predominant, would, in a considerable degree effect its abolition. The combatants are obliged to decide their dispute in one particular street of the city, and are compelled, under very severe penalties, to sheath their sword, if requested to do so, by a *woman*, a *knight*, or a *priest*.

The land force of Malta is in proportion to the number of men in the island able to carry arms. About five hundred regulars belong to the ships of war, and one hundred and fifty compose the guard of the grand master. Malta and  
Gozzo,

Gozzo, together contain about 150,000 inhabitants, which, as the men are uncommonly robust and hardy, is a number sufficient to form a very formidable body of troops. The sea force in the year 1770, consisted of four galleys, three galliots, four ships of sixty guns, and a frigate of thirty-six, besides a considerable number of quick sailing little vessels. These ships and galleys, as well as all the fortifications of the islands, are well supplied with the most excellent artillery.



## C H A P. XXVII.

INSTITUTION OF THE ORDER OF KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN AT JERUSALEM. — PRODIGIOUS INCREASE OF THE ORDER.—AUGMENTATION OF ITS REVENUES.—BECOMES A MILITARY ASSOCIATION. — DIVIDED INTO SEVEN LANGUAGES.—DRIVEN FROM JERUSALEM. — SETTLE IN RHODES AND CHANGE THEIR TITLE. — EXPELLED THENCE. — SETTLE IN MALTA, AND AGAIN ASSUME ANOTHER NAME.

**D**URING the period in which Malta and Gozzo have been subjected to the jurisdiction of the Knights of St. John at Jerusalem, these islands have, by the valorous exertions of this respectable order, obtained more celebrity than in the whole period of their ancient existence. These courageous champions have for ages been the scourge of the Turks, and the terror of the other infidel powers, and even when confined to action within the narrow limits of these little islands. they have attracted the attention of the whole

whole christian world to their spirited exertions, and exhibited a race of heroes, such as have never been met with in some of the most widely extended empires.

The order of the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, which at first was merely a charitable society, then a military association, and at last a sovereign state, traces back its origin to the middle of the eleventh century, when some merchants of Amalfi, piously desirous that the devout pilgrims from various parts of the christian world should have access to the sepulchre of their Saviour, obtained permission from the Egyptian Caliph, who at that time possessed Jerusalem, to erect a house there for the reception of the Latin pilgrims. Invested with powers for that purpose, they soon built a chapel, which was dedicated to St. Mary ad Latinos, in order to distinguish it from those churches which belonged to the Greeks, whose ritual was extremely different, and who, on that account, had treated the Latin christians with great rancour and contumely. Two houses of entertainment, for the reception of pilgrims of both sexes, were at first erected near this chapel, where service was performed by some Benedictine monks. These pious fathers, devoted to the interests of religion and charity, received with holy hospitality, all those  
 who

who visited the sacred sepulchre ; carefully attended them when sick ; and liberally supplied their wants out of the alms which were collected for them in Italy, by the charitable merchants of Amalfi.

An institution which had for its object the good of religion, without any respect to personal enjoyment or interest, rose daily in the esteem of all ranks in the christian world, and great numbers of pilgrims, devoting themselves to the service of mankind, remained in Palestine, and incorporated themselves into this pious society, which, without the distinction of Latin, or of Greek, of sex, of age, or of country, hospitably received all who desired admission within its walls. Even the Mahometan found in this fraternity, that his claims as a man would be attended with the most important services, though his religious faith was the object of horror and detestation. Daily did the house of St. John increase in reputation and esteem, several very important donations were given in different parts of Europe to increase its funds, and upon the conquest of Jerusalem, Godfrey of Boulogne, who was invested with the government of the christians in those parts, augmented the riches of these hospitallers by some very extensive grants, which were imitated by the other noblemen who

L had



had joined in the crusade. The fraternity and sisterhood of St. John assumed a regular habit, and continued, under the christian kings of Jerusalem, to practise those virtues by which they were first distinguished: nor were their cares confined to the safety and accommodation of the christians, who were already at Jerusalem; a considerable part of their revenues were appropriated to the erection of familiar institutions in the principal maritime provinces of Europe, where the pilgrims were received and entertained; and directed to the means of providing every requisite necessary for their embarkation.

Though the christians had obtained, by their victories, possession of the capital of Palestine, and of some other cities, yet the greatest part of the country still remained in the hands of the infidels, who assassinated great numbers of those who resorted to the holy sepulchre, and sometimes fell in large bodies upon the christian towns which were not fortified, and put the inhabitants to the sword. In order to check these alarming outrages, the superior of the hospitallers proposed the extraordinary scheme of taking a certain portion of the monks of St. John, who were distinguished by birth, and had formerly served in the holy wars, to bear arms against these infidels, at the same time that they were to continue  
their

their former charitable offices in the society. To this proposal the patriarch of Jerusalem agreed, Godfrey joyfully acceded to the wishes of his old associates in the field, and the monks were transported with a scheme which animated the latent spark of glory, without wholly drawing them from the employments to which they had dedicated their days, and in pursuit of which they united the peaceable virtues of a christian with the spirit and enthusiasm of a soldier, engaged in the most glorious cause.

Upon the first institution of this military order, which arose early in the 12th century, those who were appointed to bear arms were but one of three classes, into which the superior of the convent had divided the order. The second class consisted of the priests and chaplains, who, besides their customary attendance upon the church, or the sick and poor, were obliged to serve by turns as chaplains in the camp. Those of the third class were such as were neither distinguished by birth, nor had become ecclesiastics, and these obtained the name of serving brothers, from the inferior offices which they were obliged to perform. These degrees were, however, at first, merely nominal, and each of the monks of St. John was an equal participator in the privileges and immunities of the order; but in a short time,

soldiers or the knights obtained some distinctions in their dress, both in the convent and the field, and in time were admitted to dignities to which the serving brothers had no pretensions.

The order increasing daily in splendor and reputation received new accessions of numbers from every part of the christian world, who were desirous of enrolling themselves under its banner. In consequence of this influx into the order, a new distinction was found necessary, which was dividing it into seven classes, according to the different nations and countries to which these different emigrants belonged. These divisions were called languages or tongues, and were those of Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, Germany, and England, and the commendries and emoluments belonging to the order in those countries were annexed to the language or order of knights belonging to these respective nations. The English, since the reign of Henry VIII. have forfeited the advantages of being admitted into the order, and the honours and emoluments of that nation, of which the order was not deprived, are now divided into the other nations, to which have been added the languages of Castile and Portugal.

During the wars which succeeded the commencement of this remarkable institution, the  
knights

knights of St. John were distinguished by their military enthusiasm, and heroic achievements; but the most determined valour and the most spirited exertions could not for ever render them successful against the attacks of an enemy whose forces were so infinitely more numerous than their own, and whose conquests were accelerated by the intestine divisions which had long prevailed in the order. The knights, compelled at length by the victorious arms of the Mahometans to resign to them, after many struggles, the holy land, retired to Candia, which, upon finding themselves ill treated by the king of that island, they afterwards forsook, and after much difficulty, and a war, continued with various success during four years, at length obtained possession of the island of Rhodes, and exchanged their ancient title to that of the knights of Rhodes. This delightful situation, which they acquired A. D. 1310, they enjoyed for near two hundred and twenty years; but at the expiration of that time were again compelled to desert a residence which they had rendered very delightful, and to resign the island with all its dependencies, to Solyman the Second. After several affecting vicissitudes of fortune the order at length obtained from the Emperor Charles V. an asylum for their scattered forces, and in A. D.

1530 took possession of Tripoli and of the islands of Malta and Gozzo. In these islands the order still exists; and very soon after obtaining the grant, exchanged the title of the Knights of Rhodes to that of the Knights of Malta, by which they are still distinguished.



## C H A P. XXVIII.

THE FORCES OF MALTA JOIN THOSE OF THE  
EMPEROR.—PROVOKE THE TURKS TO ME-  
DITATE SEVERE VENGEANCE.—SIEGE OF  
MALTA.

**P**ROFESSEDLY devoted to the extirpation of the infidels, and the establishment of the christian religion, the knights of Malta joined the forces of the Emperor, and attacked the Turks in several very obstinate engagements, in which their success was various, but their valour and intrepidity always called forth the warmest admiration, both of their associates and of their enemies. During the continuance of this war they were, after a very obstinate resistance, deprived of Tripoli, by the Mahometan powers, and Malta, and the little island of Gozzo, the latter of which had been dreadfully ravaged by the enemy, became the head quarters of the order. But their implacable enemies, made furious by their losses, permitted them not to enjoy in peace the possession of their territory. They had in-



deed met with sufficient provocations to irritate them almost to madness. The principal views of the knights were at all times directed to harassing the Mahometan states, and they were engaged in a continual war with the infidels, in which they ravaged their coasts, captured an infinite number of ships belonging to the corsairs and merchants, and protected the trade of the christians from the depredations of these barbarians. The Mahometants, in their turn, boldly attacked the Maltese squadrons, and the most desperate engagements ensued, in which each side performed prodigies of valour, and fought like men who were animated with implacable hatred, and reciprocally resolved to extirpate their opponents.

Exasperated by the successes of the knights of Malta against the piratical states of Barbary, and made furious by the loss of a very rich vessel, which belonged to some of the principal officers of the seraglio, Solyman II. resolved to vanquish a power so inimical to his interests; and conceiving the conquest of Malta would be the most effectual means of accomplishing this desirable event, he determined, in conjunction with his viceroys in Tripoli, and Algiers, to direct all the thunder of his arms against that island. His measures were not, however, so secretly

cretly taken as to deceive the vigilance of the grand master, who put the whole island into a posture of defence, and made use of every precaution which could be inspired by wisdom, in order to ensure the success of valour.

This siege, which afforded such instances of determined bravery, and heroic ardour, as have scarcely ever been exhibited, commenced in the middle of May, in the year 1565. The Turkish fleet, which consisted of more than two hundred sail, had on board, besides a great number of christian slaves, who were designed to serve as pioneers, above forty thousand land forces, composed of the bravest soldiers of the Ottoman empire, and this formidable army was to be augmented by the fleets of Hascem and Dragut, the viceroys of Algiers and Tripoli. The Turkish fleet was commanded by Piali, and the land forces by Mustapha, a general whose abilities, experience, and success, had entitled him to the esteem and confidence of his sovereign. Solyman strongly recommended to these men the acting in concert with each other, and required them, in every matter of importance, to consult with Dragut, whom he regarded as the ablest naval officer in his dominions.

Before the arrival of the enemy the grand master John de la Valette Parisot reviewed the

forces which he had for some time been collecting from the various places where they were dispersed, and found they amounted to seven hundred knights, and eight thousand five hundred soldiers, including two companies which were sent to him from Sicily. He had besides this, the hopes of a reinforcement of troops from Philip the Second, who, on many accounts was materially interested in the fate of Malta, and who had promised him succours; and he possessed a considerable sum of money which had been sent to him by those knights, whose age or infirmities made their personal services impracticable. But these forces bore no proportion to those of his enemies, who landed near Il Borgo, the place where the strength of the order was concentrated, and began immediately to spread horror and desolation through all the adjacent country.

“ While the Turks were thus employed, says a late historian,\* La Valette sent out De Copier, marshal of the order, with two hundred horse and six hundred foot, to watch their motions. De Copier, an officer of great experience, executed his commission with so much prudence and vigour, that, by falling unexpectedly on detached parties, he

\* Watson's History of the Reign of Philip II. King of Spain.

he cut off one thousand five hundred of the Turks, with the loss of only about eighty men. But La Valette intended, by permitting these skirmishes, only to make trial of his troops, and to accustom them to the looks and shouts of the enemy. He considered that even so small a loss as was occasioned by these rencounters, was more than he could easily support. He therefore recalled De Copier, and sent the soldiers and knights under his command to their respective posts.

The Turkish general held a council of war as soon as all his troops were landed, to assist him in resolving where he should begin his attack. Piali was of opinion that they ought not to enter upon action till Dragut should arrive. But Mustapha having received information of the King of Spain's preparations to assist the besieged, thought that something must be done instantly for the security of the fleet; which lay at present in a creek where it was exposed to the violence of the east wind, and might be attacked with great advantage by the Spaniards. On this account he was of opinion, that they should immediately lay siege to a fort called St. Elmo, which stood on a neck of land near Il Borgo, having the principal harbour on one side of it, and on the other, another harbour large enough to contain the whole fleet in safety. This pro-

posul was approved by a majority of the council, and Mustapha proceeded without delay to carry it into execution. He vainly expected that he would be able to reduce the fort in a few days. But besides the valour with which it was defended, there were two circumstances which greatly augmented the difficulty of his enterprize; one of these was, that the garrison could easily receive supplies from the town, across the great harbour, which was secured by two forts, called St. Angelo and St. Michael, and the other, that his approaches to the fort were retarded by the nature of the road leading to it, which was either a bare rock, or the rock thinly covered with a stony soil. This last inconvenience he remedied, by substituting in the place of trenches, a parapet formed of planks and beams covered on the side towards the fort with earth, which they brought from a distance, and mixed with straw and rushes. By this invention he was enabled to open a battery mounted with his largest cannon, on the sixth or seventh day after his arrival on the island; and he quickly convinced the governor, that it would be impossible for him to hold out long. Of this the governor gave immediate information to the grand master, and made choice of a knight of the name of La Cerda for his messenger. This man, greatly disturbed by fear,  
 exaggerated



exaggerated the danger which he had been sent to represent, and had the imprudence to tell the grand master, in the presence of many of the knights, that he must not expect that the place would sustain the siege above a week longer. "And what loss," said La Valette, "have you received that makes you so soon despair?" "The fort," replied La Cerda, "is to be considered as a sick person, greatly reduced, who must receive continual remedies and supplies." "I myself," answered the grand-master with great indignation, "will be the physician; and will bring others along with me, who, if they cannot cure you of your fear, will at least preserve the fort from falling into the hands of the infidels."

"La Valette did not expect that a place which was neither strong, nor large enough to admit a numerous garrison, could be defended long against so great a force as was employed to reduce it; but he thought it necessary that the siege of this fort should be prolonged as much as possible, in order to give the viceroy of Sicily time to come to his relief. With this view he resolved to throw himself into St. Elmo with a select body of troops; and he was preparing to set out when the whole body of knights remonstrated with such earnest importunity against his leaving



leaving the town, that he at last consented to suffer the reinforcement which he had prepared, to be conducted to the fort by a knight called De Medran, upon whose conduct and intrepidity he could fully rely.

“ Not long after De Medran’s arrival in the fort, the garrison made a vigorous sally, in which they drove the enemy from their intrenchments, and put a number of them to the sword. But the rest soon recovered from their surprise; and having returned to the charge, they compelled the Christians to retire. In this rencounter, the vigorous efforts of the Janissaries were favoured by the wind, which blew the smoke of the guns upon the fort, and covered the besieged with a thick cloud, through which it was impossible to discern the operations of the enemy. This incident the Turks improved to great advantage. They seized, unperceived, upon the counterscarp, made a lodgment there with beams, woolfacks, and gabions; and raised a battery upon it with incredible expedition. After the smoke was dispersed, the besieged beheld what had been done with much astonishment; and they were the more disquieted, as the fortifications which the Turks had raised upon the counterscarp, overtopped a ravelin which lay near it, in which the besieged could no longer  
appear

appear with safety. They resolved however to defend this ravelin as long as possible, whatever it should cost them.

“ In the mean time Dragut and another noted corsair called Uluchiali arrived with twenty galleys, having, besides slaves and seamen, two thousand five hundred troops on board. This reinforcement and the presence of Dragut added fresh vigour to the operations of the siege. This gallant corsair exposed himself on all occasions with the utmost intrepidity ; spent whole days in the trenches ; and as he was particularly skilful in the management of artillery, he caused some new batteries to be raised in more advantageous situations than had hitherto been made choice of ; and kept up a continual fire both upon the ravelin above mentioned, and a cavalier that covered the fort, and was one of its principal defences.

“ This cavalier soon became the only defence which could prevent the besiegers from coming up to the very foot of the wall. Some Turkish engineers having approached the ravelin at day-break, to examine the effects of their artillery, they observed a gun-port so low, that one of them, when mounted on the shoulders of another, looked into it, and saw the Christian soldiers lying on the ground asleep. Of this they gave  
immediate

immediate information to the troops ; who, advancing as quickly and silently as possible, and clapping ladders to the gun-hole, got up into the ravelin, and cut most of the Christians to pieces.

“ Between this ravelin and the cavalier lay the ditch, over which the besieged had thrown a temporary bridge of planks, leading up to the cavalier. The Turks perceiving this, leaped instantly upon the bridge, and attempted to make themselves masters of the cavalier, as they had already done of the ravelin. But the garrison was now alarmed ; the bravest of the knights hastened from different quarters to the post of danger ; and, after an obstinate engagement, they compelled the Turks to retire into the ravelin. There the Janissaries observing another way of reaching the cavalier, by a path from the bottom of the ditch, they threw themselves down without dread or hesitation ; and having ascended by this path to the other side, they renewed their attack with greater fury than ever. The combat lasted from sun-rise till noon, when the invincible bravery of the garrison proved at last victorious. About twenty knights and a hundred soldiers were killed, and near three thousand of the enemy.

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As the ravelin was open on the side towards the fort, the besieged pointed some cannon against it, and made great havock among the Infidels. But Mustapha, sensible of the value of the acquisition which he had made, poured in fresh soldiers without number; and the pioneers coming forward with wool sacks, planks and gabions, put the troops at length in safety, and made a lodgement in the ravelin, of which the garrison were never able to dispossess them.

The grand-master's concern on account of this disaster was greatly augmented by considering that it could not have happened so soon, without some negligence on the part of the garrison. He sent them however an immediate reinforcement; but both the siege and the defence were carried on with the same vigour as before.

“ But the situation of the besieged was now become much more dangerous than formerly. The Turks applied themselves with unremitting diligence to heighten the ravelin till it overtopped the wall of the fort; and after this, the garrison could no longer appear upon the parapet with safety. Many were killed by the enemy's artillery. Several breaches were made in different parts of the wall, and the hearts of the bravest knights began to fail within them. They apprehended, that ere long the Turkish general would

would attempt to take the fort by storm, and they dreaded that it would be impossible for so small a number to resist so numerous an enemy.

“ They agreed, therefore, though with much reluctance, to apply to the grand master for liberty to quit the fort ; and most of the knights in council thought that this request ought to be immediately granted. But La Valette was of a contrary opinion. The fort, he acknowledged, would not probably hold out much longer ; and he lamented the fate of those gallant knights and soldiers who were stationed in so perilous a situation. But there were cases, he said, in which it was necessary to sacrifice some of the members for the preservation of the body ; and such he knew to be the present critical state of their affairs. For he was credibly informed that the Sicilian viceroy had declared, that if the fort of St. Elmo were lost (as he could not then attack the Turks with the same advantage as at present), he would not expose his fleet to the risk of a defeat for the sake of the rest of the island. And on this account La Valette subjoined, that the preservation of the Order depended almost entirely on the length of the present siege. This he represented to the chevalier De Medran, and sent him back with instructions to remind the knights of the vow which they took at their entrance into the order,  
of



of sacrificing their lives for its defence. He likewise bade him assure them, in his name, that he would not fail to send them such reinforcements as they should stand in need of, and was determined, as soon as it should be necessary, to come himself to their assistance, with a fixed, unalterable purpose to lay down his life, sooner than deliver the fort into the hands of the Infidels.

“ This answer had the desired effect on several of the knights, and particularly on those whose principles of honour and attachment to the Order were confirmed by years. But the greater part of them were much dissatisfied. They thought the grand master’s treatment of them harsh and cruel, and wrote him a letter, subscribed by fifty-three, in which, after repeating their former request, they informed him, that if he did not, on the next night, send boats to carry them to the town, they were determined to sally out into the Turkish camp, where they might fall honourably by the sword, instead of suffering such an ignominious death as they had reason to expect, if the fort was taken by storm.

“ To this letter La Valette replied, “ That  
 “ they were much mistaken, if they expected to  
 “ satisfy their honour by throwing away their  
 “ lives; since it was no less their duty to sub-  
 “ mit to his authority, than to sacrifice their lives  
 “ in



“ in defence of the Order : that the preserva-  
 “ tion of the whole depended on their present  
 “ obedience to his commands : that no aid was  
 “ to be expected from Spain, if the fort were  
 “ given up; and that, if he should yield to their  
 “ request, and bring them to the town, the town  
 “ itself would then be immediately invested, and  
 “ they, as well as the rest, soon afterwards re-  
 “ duced to a situation more desperate than that  
 “ from which they were so solicitous to escape.”

Besides this letter, he sent three commissioners  
 to examine the state of the fortifications, two  
 of whom thought it impossible to defend the fort  
 much longer. But the third, named Constantine  
 Castriot, a Greek prince, whether from igno-  
 rance, or consciousness of greater resources in  
 his native courage than the other two possessed,  
 maintained that the garrison was far from being  
 reduced to the last extremity; and offered to  
 enter the fort himself, and to undertake the de-  
 fence of it with such troops as should be willing  
 to accompany him.

“ The grand master, strongly impressed with  
 a sense of the necessity of protracting the siege,  
 immediately accepted this offer, and bestowed  
 the highest encomiums on Castriot’s zeal and re-  
 solution. Nor did Castriot find any difficulty in  
 persuading

persuading a sufficient number to attend him, who were no less zealous and resolute than himself.

“ When La Valette saw the spirit by which these men were animated, and had no longer any doubt of being able, by their means, to prolong the siege of the fort, he sent a letter to the knights, acquainting them, that he was now willing to give them their discharge ; and would immediately send another garrison, into whose hands, he desired, they should be ready to deliver up the fort, and come themselves to the town in the boats in which their successors were to be transported. “ You, my brethren,” continued he, “ may be in greater safety here than in your present situation ; and I shall then feel less anxiety for the preservation of the fort, although I think it of so great importance, that on the preservation of it, that of our Order seems entirely to depend.”

“ The contents and style of this letter affected the knights in the most sensible manner, and roused within them that delicate sense of honour, by which the Order had been so long and so eminently distinguished. They dreaded the reception which they were about to meet with from the grand master and the other knights : “ And should this new garrison,” said they to each other, “ which is appointed to succeed us, be  
“ fortunate

“ fortunate enough to hold out till the Spa-  
 “ niards arrive, in what corner of the earth  
 “ shall we conceal our infamy ?” They resolved  
 without hesitation to remain in the fort till every  
 man should perish, rather than either deliver it  
 to the new garrison or abandon it to the enemy.  
 And they went in a body to the governor, and  
 intreated him to inform the grand master of their  
 repentance, and to join with them in praying  
 that they might be suffered to wipe out the re-  
 membrance of their fault by their future con-  
 duct.

“ The governor readily complied ; and, in  
 order to prevent the new garrison from setting  
 out in the night, he dispatched his letter by a  
 noted swimmer before it was dark. La Valette  
 secretly rejoiced at this application ; but sent  
 word to the governor, that he must always pre-  
 fer even a body of new troops to the most expe-  
 rienced warriors, who had refused to submit to  
 the controul of military discipline. When this  
 answer was reported to the knights, they were  
 overwhelmed with anguish, and had recourse to  
 the most submissive intreaties of forgiveness.—  
 The grand master suffered himself at last to be  
 overcome ; and henceforth the garrison were in-  
 tent on nothing but how to prolong the defence.

“ The

“ The grand master sent them every night fresh troops, to supply the place of the killed and wounded ; and kept them well furnished with provisions, ammunition, and fire works. Of these last he had invented a particular kind, which consisted of hoops of wood, covered with wool, and steeped in boiling oil, and other inflammable liquors, mixed with nitre and gunpowder. To these machines they set fire, and threw them flaming in the midst of the enemy, when they were crowded together at an assault. It happened often that two or three of the Turks were hooked together and scorched to death ; and the utmost confusion was produced wherever the hoops were thrown.

“ The besieged stood much in need of every instrument of mischief, that could be devised for their defence. In spite of the most vigorous opposition, the Turks had cast a bridge over the ditch, and begun to sap and undermine the wall. From the seventeenth of June to the fourteenth of July, not a single day past without some encounter ; and Mustapha had frequently attempted to scale the wall of the fort, but had been as often repulsed with the loss of some of the bravest of his troops.

“ Ashamed at having been detained so long before a place of such inconsiderable strength, he  
resolved

resolved to make one great decisive effort, and to bring to the assault as many of his forces as the situation of the place would permit him to employ. He had already made several breaches; but in order to secure the success of the assault which he now intended, he kept his batteries playing all the fifteenth without intermission, till the wall on that side where he designed his attack was almost level with the rock. On the sixteenth the fleet was drawn up before sun-rise as near the fort as the depth of the water would allow; four thousand musketeers and archers were stationed in the trenches; and the rest of the troops, upon signal given, advanced to the breach. The garrison was prepared to receive them. The breach was lined with several ranks of soldiers, having the knights interspersed among them at certain distances. The Turks attempted often to break through this determined band, and to overpower them with their numbers. But their numbers served only to augment the loss which they sustained. Every shot from the fort did execution. The artillery made dreadful havock among them, and the burning hoops were employed with astonishing success. The novelty of these machines, and the shrieks of those who were caught in them, added greatly to the terror which they inspired, and made it impossible for the  
Turkish



Turkish officers to keep their men firm and steady in pursuing the advantages which, had they preserved their ranks, their numbers must have infallibly secured.

“ At length Mustapha, after having continued the assault for more than six hours, without gaining a single inch of ground on the besieged, gave orders for founding a retreat.

“ In this attack the garrison lost about twenty knights and three hundred soldiers ; but this loss was immediately supplied by a reinforcement from the town : and Mustapha was at last convinced, that, unless the communication between the fort and the town were cut off, it would be impossible to bring the siege of the former to a period, while any troops remained in any other part of the island. By the advice of Dragut he resolved to extend his trenches and batteries, on the side next to the town, till they should reach to that part of the great harbour, where those supplies were landed which the grand master daily sent to the garrison. This undertaking he knew must be attended with the utmost difficulty, because all the space between his entrenchments and the point to which it was necessary to extend them, lay exposed to the artillery both of fort St. Elmo and St. Angelo. In viewing the ground a Sangiac, in whom he put confidence, was kil-

M led



led by his side ; and which was still a more irreparable loss, Dragut received a mortal wound, of which he died in a few days. This did not however discourage Mustapha from pursuing his design. By employing his troops and pioneers at the work day and night without intermission, he at length carried it into execution. Then having planted batteries along the shore, and filled his trenches with musketeers, it was impossible for any boat to pass from the town to the fort, without the most imminent danger of either being sunk or intercepted.

“ After this precaution, he resumed with fresh vigour his attempt to take the fort by storm. On the twenty-first, he made four different assaults ; all of which the garrison withstood, and in repulsing so many thousand brave and well-disciplined troops, displayed a degree of prowess and fortitude which almost exceeds belief. But this heroic garrison was now exceedingly reduced in number ; and there was the strongest reason to apprehend, that, in one assault more, they must inevitably be overpowered, unless a reinforcement were sent them from the town. Of their desperate situation they gave intelligence to the grand master, by one who swam across the harbour in the night. The boats were instantly filled with knights and other soldiers, who generously

nerously resolved to devote themselves to certain destruction, for the general safety and the preservation of the fort. They set off from the town with as much alacrity as if they had entertained the most sanguine hopes of victory; but they found the Turks every where so much upon their guard, and the lines so strongly defended, that, after several fruitless attempts to land, they were at last obliged to return, depressed with sorrow for the fate of their brave companions.

“ The garrison now despairing of relief, gave themselves up for lost; but instead of their capitulating, or attempting to escape, they prepared for death, and passed the night in prayer, and in receiving the sacrament; after which, they embraced one another tenderly, and then repaired to their respective posts; while such of the wounded as had been disabled from walking, were, at their own earnest desire, carried to the side of the breach, where they waited, without dismay, for the approach of the Turkish army.

“ Early in the morning of the twenty-third of July, the Turks advanced to the assault, with loud shouts, as to certain victory, which they believed so small a handful of men as now remained in the fort would not dare to dispute with them. In this expectation they were disappointed. The garrison being resolved on death, and despising

danger, were more than men, and exerted a degree of prowess and valour that filled their enemies with amazement. The combat lasted upwards of four hours, till not only every knight, but every soldier had fallen, except two or three who saved themselves by swimming. The Turkish colours were then planted on the ramparts; and the fleet entered the harbour which the fort commanded in a kind of triumph.

“ In this siege the Order lost about one thousand five hundred men, including one hundred and thirty of the bravest knights. The grand master was deeply affected at so great a loss; but he wisely dissembled his concern, and wearing still the same magnanimous and intrepid aspect as before, he inspired all the troops that remained, with a fixed, unalterable resolution, to defend the town and the other forts to the last extremity.

“ Mustapha vainly imagined, that being intimidated by the fate of their companions, they would be now inclined to listen to terms of capitulation; and in this hope he sent an officer with a white flag to one of the gates, attended by a Christian slave, designed to serve for his interpreter. The Turk was not allowed to enter within the town; but the Christian was admitted, and led through several ranks of soldiers under  
arms

arms by an officer, who, after shewing him all the fortifications of the place, desired him to take particular notice of the depth and breadth of the ditch, and said to him, “ See there, the only  
 “ spot we can afford your general; and there  
 “ we hope soon to bury him and all his Janis-  
 “ saries.”

“ This insulting speech being reported by the slave, excited in the fiery mind of the Basha the highest degree of wrath and indignation, and made him resolve to exert himself to the utmost in the prosecution of the siege. His troops, though greatly diminished, were still sufficient to invest at once both the town and the fort of St. Michael. He kept a constant fire on both; but he intended first to apply himself chiefly to the reduction of the latter, which he proposed to attack both by land and water, at the extremity of the peninsula on which it stands. In order to accomplish this design, it was necessary he should have some shipping introduced into the harbour, for transporting his forces. But the mouth of the harbour having been rendered inaccessible by a great iron chain, and the cannon of St. Angelo, his design must have been relinquished, if Piali had not suggested an expedient against which the grand master had not provided. This was to make the christian slaves and the crews of

the ships draw a number of boats, by the strength of their arms, over the neck of land on which stood fort St. Elmo. Of this proposal, which Mustapha immediately adopted, information was carried to the grand-master. In consequence of this intelligence, La Valette set a great number of hands to work in framing a stacado along that part of the promontory where the Turks intended their attack; and at another part, where the depth of the water or the hardness of the bottom would not admit of the stacado, he ordered strong intrenchments to be made upon the beach. Mustapha in the mean time fired incessantly upon the fort, while the slaves and crews were employed in transporting the boats over land into the harbour. At length the Basha resolved, without further delay, to make an attack both by sea and land. He was the more confident of success, as, since the taking of St. Elmo, he had received a considerable reinforcement, by the arrival of Hascem, son of Barbarossa, with two thousand five hundred select soldiers, commonly called the Bravoes of Algiers. Hascem begged of Mustapha to intrust him with the assault of fort St Michael; and vaunted, with his natural arrogance, that he would soon make himself master of it sword in hand. The Basha readily complied with his request; and having added six thousand



thousand men to his Algerines, he promised to support him with the rest of his army.

“ Hascem divided his forces with Candeliffa, an old corsair, his lieutenant; to whom he committed the attack by sea, whilst he reserved that on the land side to himself.

“ Candeliffa having put his troops on board the boats, set out with drums beating, and hautboys and other musical instruments playing, preceded by a boat filled with Mahometan priests, some of whom were employed in offering prayers to Heaven for his success, or in singing hymns; while others had books in their hands out of which they read imprecations against the Christians. Candeliffa attempted first to break down the stacado which had been formed to obstruct his landing; but finding it much stronger than he expected, and that, while he was employed in demolishing it, his troops must suffer greatly from the enemy's fire, he thought it would be easier to make a descent on that part of the shore which the grand-master had strengthened with intrenchments. At this important post the Christian troops were commanded by an ancient knight of the name of Guimaran. This experienced officer reserved his fire till the Turks had advanced within a little distance of the shore, when by a single discharge he killed about four hun-



dred men. This did not prevent the rest from approaching. Candelissa pushed forwards while the christians were loading their cannon, and landed at the head of his Algerines. But Guimaran having reserved some cannon charged with grape shot, did dreadful execution among them after they had landed, and many of them began to fly to their boats; which Candelissa observing, he commanded the boats to be put off to a little distance from the shore. His troops, perceiving then that they must either die or conquer, took courage from despair, and advanced boldly to the intrenchment, with ladders for scaling it in one hand, and their sabres in the other. The combatants on both sides displayed the most intrepid valour. Great numbers fell, and the ditch was choaked with blood, and with the bodies of the dead and wounded. The Turks at last, after an engagement of five hours, reached the top of the intrenchment, and there planted their ensigns. The knights, stung with shame on account of their retreat, returned with redoubled ardour. But they would probably have been overpowered by the superior number of the enemy, had not the grand master sent them a seasonable reinforcement, which fell upon the the Algerines and Turks with a degree of fury that struck terror into Candelissa himself, who was noted for his  
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his intrepidity. Having ordered the boats to be brought nearer the shore, he was among the first who fled. His bravoës fought desperately for some time after he had left them: but were at length thrown down from the intrenchments, and compelled to fly to their boats with the utmost precipitation. The Christians pursued them, and the batteries continued firing on them without intermission. Many of the boats were sunk; the water was covered with dead bodies, mangled limbs, shields and helmets. Of the four thousand who had been sent on this enterprize, scarcely five hundred remained, and many of these were dangerously wounded.

“ Hascem was not more fortunate in his assault by land, than Candeliffa was by sea. After having been repulsed at one breach with great slaughter, he rallied his troops, and led them on to another, where he fought long and desperately, till most of the bravoës having fallen by his side, he was obliged to sound a retreat.

“ Mustapha, not unmindful of his promise to support him, no sooner perceived him beginning to retire, than he ordered the Janissaries, whom he had kept under arms, to advance. The garrison had maintained an engagement with Hascem for five hours, in the middle of the day, and in the hottest season of the year; yet, as if

they had not been subject to the wants and weaknesses of humanity, they advanced beyond the breach to meet the Janissaries, and fought apparently with as much vigour and fortitude as before. By the power of superior numbers, they were compelled to fall back within the breach. But there they made the most desperate resistance; and, being reinforced by the troops which had triumphed over Candelissa, they at last repulsed the Janissaries with dreadful slaughter; after having lost more than forty knights, and two hundred of the bravest of the common men.

“ Mustapha, enraged by this invincible obstinacy which the Christians displayed in their defence, and dreading the arrival of the Spanish succours, resolved now to employ his whole force at once, and while he himself prosecuted the siege of Fort St. Michael with one half of his troops, to employ the other under Piali, against the town. More batteries were raised. The trenches were advanced still nearer than before. Bridges of sail-yards and masts were thrown over the ditches. Mines, notwithstanding the hard and rocky soil, were sprung. Assaults were repeated without number, and the two Bashes, emulous of one another, and each of them agitated with continual anxiety lest victory should declare first for his competitor, exhibited the most shining proofs  
of

of personal courage, and exhausted all the art of war then known in the world. Yet, through the determined bravery of the knights, conducted by the grand master with consummate prudence and indefatigable vigilance, the Turks were baffled in every attempt, and repulsed with slaughter. Mustapha flattered himself once with the most sanguine hopes of success on his part, made a machine invented by his principal engineer, in the form of a huge cask bound strongly with iron hoops, and filled with gun-powder, nails, chains, bullets, and such other instruments of death. After setting fire to a train which was fastened to this machine, it was thrown by the force of an engine, upon a ravelin that was the principal defence of the fort. But the garrison undismayed, found means, before it caught fire, to cast it out again into the middle of the assailants. In a moment afterwards it burst with dreadful fury, and filled the Turks with consternation. The knights then sallied out upon them sword in hand, and taking advantage of their confusion, killed many of them, and put the rest to flight.

“ Piali had, on some occasions, still more reason than Mustapha to entertain the hopes of victory, although the town was much stronger than the fort, and La Valette commanded there in person. By his batteries he had demolished all

the out-works of the place, and had made an immense breach in the wall. While his troops were engaged in a furious assault, that engrossed the whole attention of the besieged from morning till night, he employed a great number of pioneers in raising a platform of earth and stones, close by the breach, and so high as to overlook the parapet. Night, in the mean time, came on, and prevented him from carrying any further this great advantage ; but he doubted not that next day he should be able to make himself master of the place.

“ As soon as he had drawn off his forces, a council of the Order was convened, and most of the knights were of opinion that the town was no longer tenable ; that the fortifications which still remained should be blown up, and that the garrison and inhabitants should retire into the castle of St. Angelo. But the grand master received this proposal with horror and indignation.—

“ This would be in effect,” said he, “ to deliver the whole island into the hands of the infidels. It is here we must either die or conquer. And is it possible that I, at the age of seventy-one, can end my life so honourably as in fighting, together with my friends and brethren, against the implacable enemies of our holy faith ?” He then told them what he thought



thought proper to be done, and proceeded instantly to put it in execution. Having called all the soldiers from Fort St. Angelo, except a few who were necessary for managing the artillery, he employed them and the inhabitants all night in throwing up intrenchments within the breach; after which he sent out some of the bravest knights, with a select body of troops, to make an attempt on the platform. These men stole softly along the foot of the wall till they arrived at the place appointed; when they set up a loud shout, and attacked the guards whom Piali had left there, with so much fury, that the Turks, believing the whole garrison had fallen upon them, abandoned their post, and fled precipitately to their camp.

“ The platform was immediately fortified, a battery of cannon planted on it, and a parapet raised on the side towards the enemy. And thus the breach was rendered impracticable; the town put in greater security than before; and a work, which had been devised for its destruction, converted into a bulwark for its defence.

“ The grand master had now greater confidence than ever of being able to hold out till the Spaniards should come to his relief. In consequence of the assurances given by Philip, and the Sicilian viceroy, he had, long before this time, entertained



entertained the hopes of their arrival, and had often earnestly solicited the viceroy to hasten his departure from Messina. The conduct of this nobleman was long exceedingly mysterious. The patience of the knights was worn out by his delays; and they, and many others, suspected that the real motive of his conduct was the dread of encountering with an admiral of so great a reputation as Piali. But it afterwards appeared that the viceroy had acted agreeably to his instructions from the court of Spain. For although Philip was sincerely interested in the preservation of the knights; and had amused them with the most flattering promises of assistance, yet he seems from the first to have resolved not to expose himself to danger on their account, and to avoid, if possible, a general engagement.

“ In consequence of this impolitic and ungenerous plan, the viceroy did not think himself at liberty to yield to the repeated applications of the grand master, till the operations of the siege began to relax, and the Turkish forces were reduced from forty-five thousand to fifteen or sixteen thousand; of whom many were worn out with the fatigues which they had undergone, and others rendered unfit for action by a bloody flux, which for several weeks had raged among them.

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“ In this situation of affairs, when it was probable that the knights would, without assistance, have compelled the Turks to raise the siege, the viceroy let the grand master know that he had now received such instructions from the King, as put it in his power to shew his attachment to the Order; that he was not indeed permitted to attack the Turkish fleet; but that he would immediately bring him a strong body of troops, whose commanders (as he himself must return to Sicily) were to be entirely subject to the grand master's authority, till the enemy should be expelled.

“ The viceroy, although still suspected of interposing unnecessary delays, at length fulfilled his promise; and on the seventh of September landed six thousand men, in that part of the island which lay at the greatest distance from the Turks; after which he immediately carried back the fleet to Sicily.

“ The Turkish bashas had been persuaded by their spies, that the viceroy's intention was to land his troops at the castle of St. Angelo; and to prevent this, Piali had lain several days at anchor before the great port, after having blocked up the entrance into it by a chain of fail-yards, piles, and boats.

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“ In the mean time, intelligence being brought to Mustapha that the Spaniards were landed, and marching towards him, he was thrown into the most dreadful consternation. Sensible that his soldiers were much disheartened by their ill success, he imagined that he was about to be attacked by a superior army, consisting of the bravest and best disciplined troops in Spain. Without waiting for information of their number, he forthwith raised the siege, drew his garrison out of St. Elmo, and leaving all his heavy cannon behind him, embarked his troops with as much precipitation as if the Spaniards, with superior forces, had been in fight. He had scarcely got on board when a deserter arrived from the Spanish camp, and informed him, that with fifteen or sixteen thousand men, he had fled before an army that did not exceed six thousand, having no general at their head, and commanded by officers who were independent of one another. The Basha was overwhelmed with shame and vexation by this intelligence, and would have immediately disembarked; but this, he knew he durst not attempt without consulting Piali, Hascem, and his other principal officers.

“ While he was deliberating upon it, the grand master improved to the best advantage  
the

the leisure that was afforded him. He employed all the inhabitants, men, women and children, as well as the soldiers, in filling up the enemy's trenches, and demolishing their works; and put a garrison without delay into fort St. Elmo; in which the Turks now beheld from their ships the standard of St. John erected where that of Mahomet had lately stood.

“ This demonstrated to Mustapha how much new labour awaited him in case he should return to the siege; but being enraged against himself on account of the precipitancy of his retreat, and disquieted at the thoughts of the reception which he had reason to expect from Solyman, he wished to atone for his imprudence, and to wipe off the reproach in which it had involved him, by victory or death. A majority of his council were of a similar opinion; and it was resolved to land the forces again without delay, and to march directly against the Spaniards.

“ The Turkish soldiers complained bitterly of this unexpected resolution, and obeyed the orders to disembark with much reluctance.— Their officers were obliged to employ threats with some, and force with others. At length the number intended was put on shore, and  
 Mustapha

## 258 TURKS FINALLY DEFEATED.

Mustapha set out at their head in search of the enemy.

“ The grand master had not neglected to give early notice of their march to the Spanish commanders, who had intrenched their little army on a steep hill, which the Turks would have found almost inaccessible ; and it was the opinion of some of the principal officers, that they should avail themselves of the advantage of their situation, and stand in their defence. But this proposal was rejected with disdain by the greatest part of the Spanish officers ; and the troops were led out of their encampment, to meet the enemy in the open field. This conduct contributed to increase the dejection of the Turkish soldiers, and to facilitate their defeat. Having been dragged against their inclination to the field of battle ; and being attacked by the Spaniards with great fury, both in front and flank, they scarcely fought ; but, being struck with a sudden panic, they fled with the utmost precipitation.

“ Mustapha, confounded and enraged by this pusillanimous behaviour of his troops, was hurried along by the violent tide of the fugitives. He fell twice from his horse, and would have been taken prisoner, if his officers had not rescued him. The Spaniards pursued briskly till they came to the sea shore. There Piali had his  
boats.

boats ready to receive the Turks, and a number of shallops filled with musketeers drawn up to favour their escape. Without this precaution they must all have perished ; and even, notwithstanding the protection which it afforded them, the number of their killed amounted to two thousand men, while the victors lost only thirteen or fourteen at most.

“ Such, after four months continuance, was the conclusion of the siege of Malta, which will be for ever memorable on account of that extraordinary display of the most generous and heroic valour by which the knights, so few in number, were enabled to baffle the most vigorous effort which could be made to subdue them by the most powerful monarch in the world. The news of their deliverance gave universal joy to the christian powers ; and the name of the grand master excited every where the highest admiration and applause. Congratulations were sent him from every quarter ; and in many States public rejoicings were celebrated on account of his success. The King of Spain, who derived greater advantage than any other from that glorious defence to which La Valette had so highly contributed, sent an ambassador to present him with a sword and dagger of which the hilts were solid gold, adorned with diamonds, as a testimony



mony of his respect ; and engaged to pay him annually a sum of money to assist him in repairing his ruined fortifications.”

This ever memorable siege fully convinced the Infidel powers that the Order possessed in the intrepidity and conduct of its members, such resources, as superior numbers, whose operations were directed by the utmost efforts of their military skill, could scarcely hope to destroy. Rankling with rage at the interruptions to its trade, and the capture of thousands of its subjects, the Ottoman Court has frequently meditated a fresh attack upon Malta, and as frequently been deterred from the attempt. This little island still remains the memorial of an action, the fame of which will descend to the most remote posterity ; and has continued to be an object of terror to the Infidel world.



ROUTE OF MR. BRYDONE IN TRAVELLING  
THROUGH SICILY AND MALTA.

Messina,  
Taurominum,  
Giardini,  
Piedmonte,  
Jaci, or Aci,  
Catania,  
Nicolosi,  
Montpelieri.  
Syracuse.  
Capo Passero.  
Malta,  
Valetta,  
Citta Vecchia,  
Gozzo,  
Agrigentum,

Thence across the country to Palermo.

ROUTE OF MR. SWINBURNE, IN TRAVEL-  
LING THROUGH SICILY.

THE distance between Naples and Palermo is  
200 computed miles,

From Palermo, to

La Favorotta	—	—	—	24
Alcamo	—	—	—	21
Calatafimi	—	—	—	10
Castelvetro	—	—	—	18
Memfrici	—	—	—	15
Sciacca	—	—	—	12
Ribera	—	—	—	10
Siculiana	—	—	—	15
Girgenti	—	—	—	12
Palma	—	—	—	12
Licata	—	—	—	12
Terranovo	—	—	—	18
Calatagerone	—	—	—	20
Palagonia	—	—	—	18
Lentini	—	—	—	15
Syracuse	—	—	—	22
Augusta	—	—	—	18
Catania	—	—	—	24
Giarri	—	—	—	25
Nifi	—	—	—	24
Messina	—	—	—	28

## ERRATUM.

Page 109, line 9th from the bottom, *for* never been able to establish, *read*, never been able fully to establish,







