



# Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

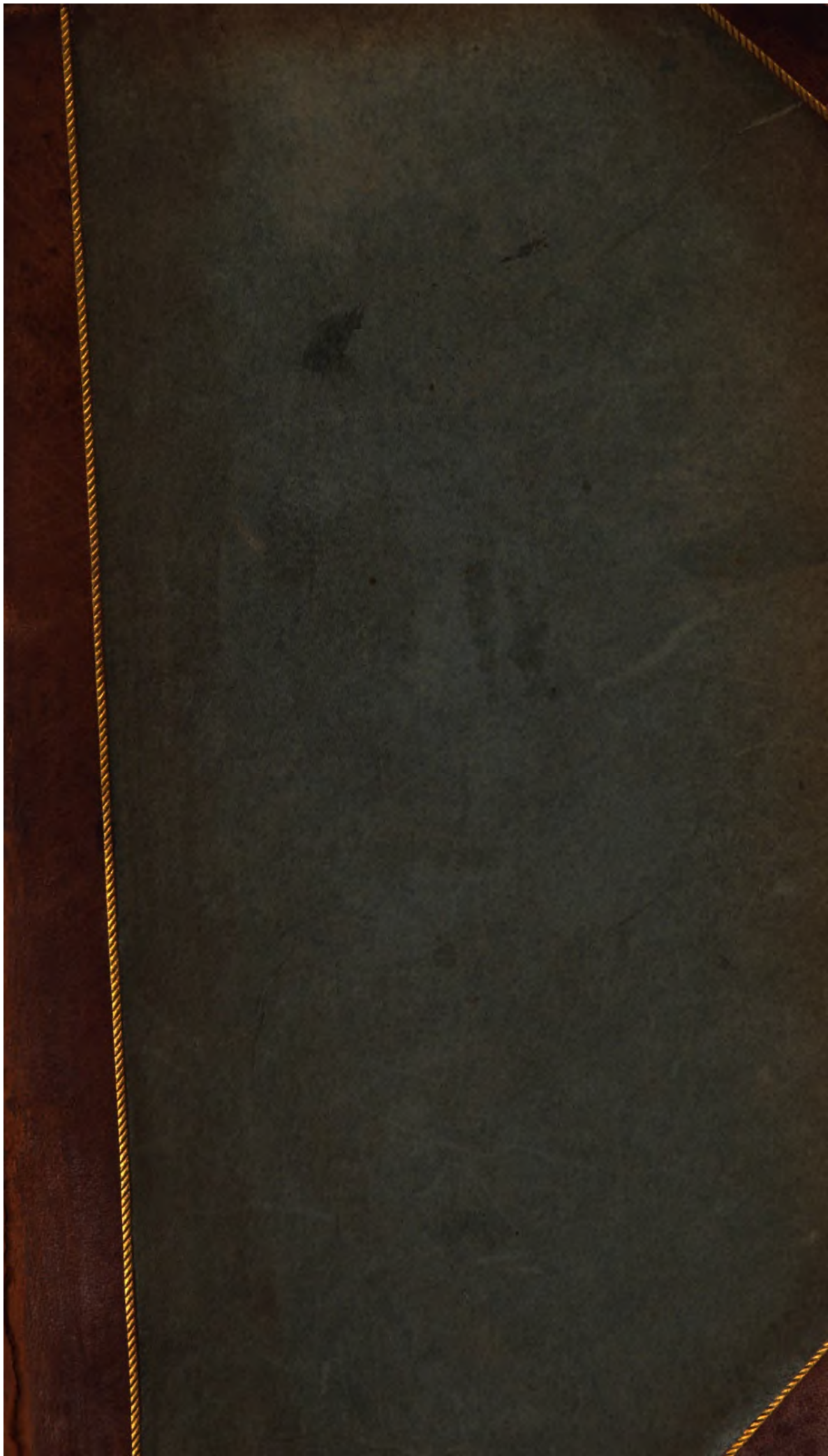
This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.



TAYLOR INSTITUTION.

*I 57.*

—  
BEQUEATHED

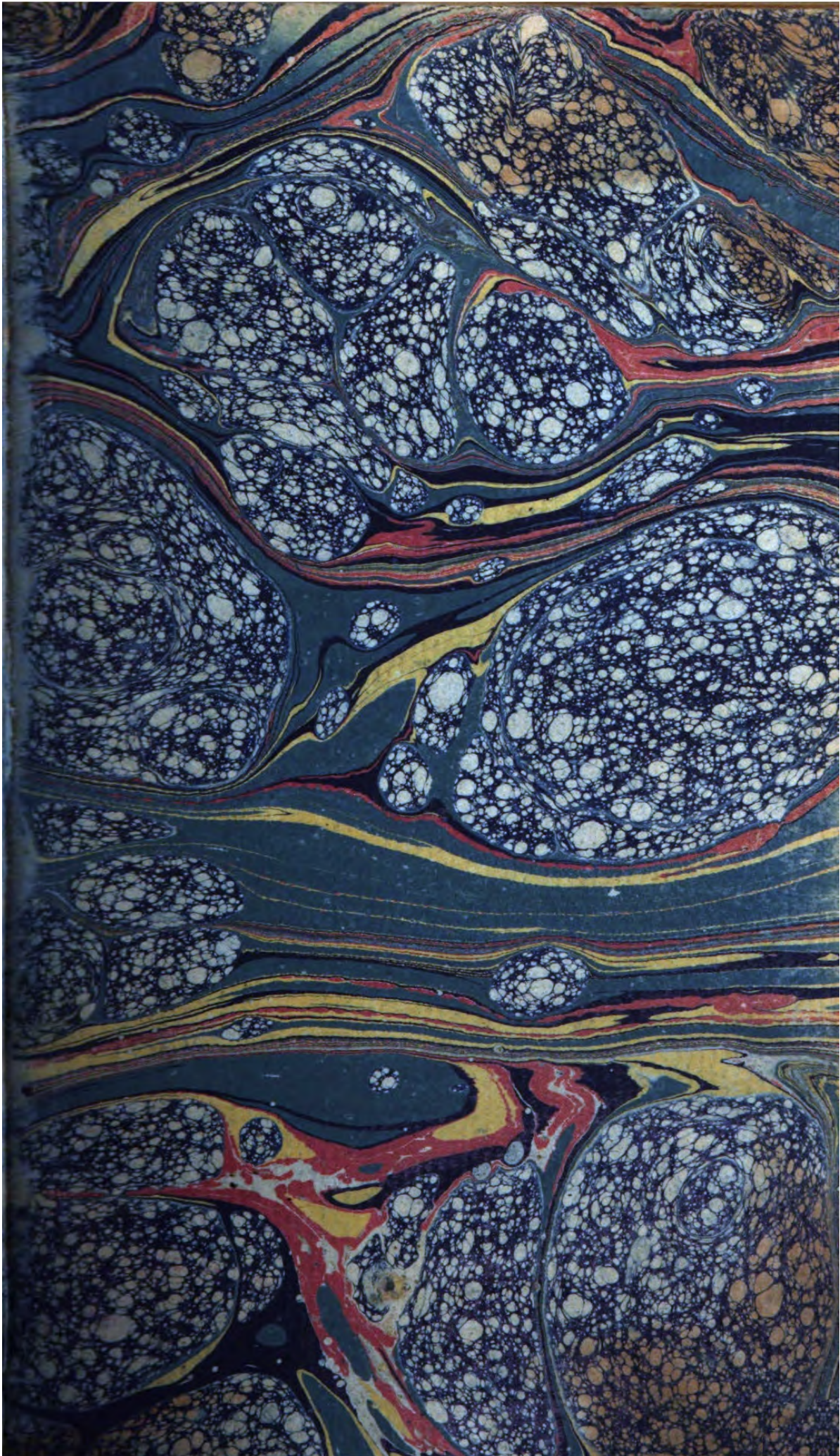
TO THE UNIVERSITY

BY

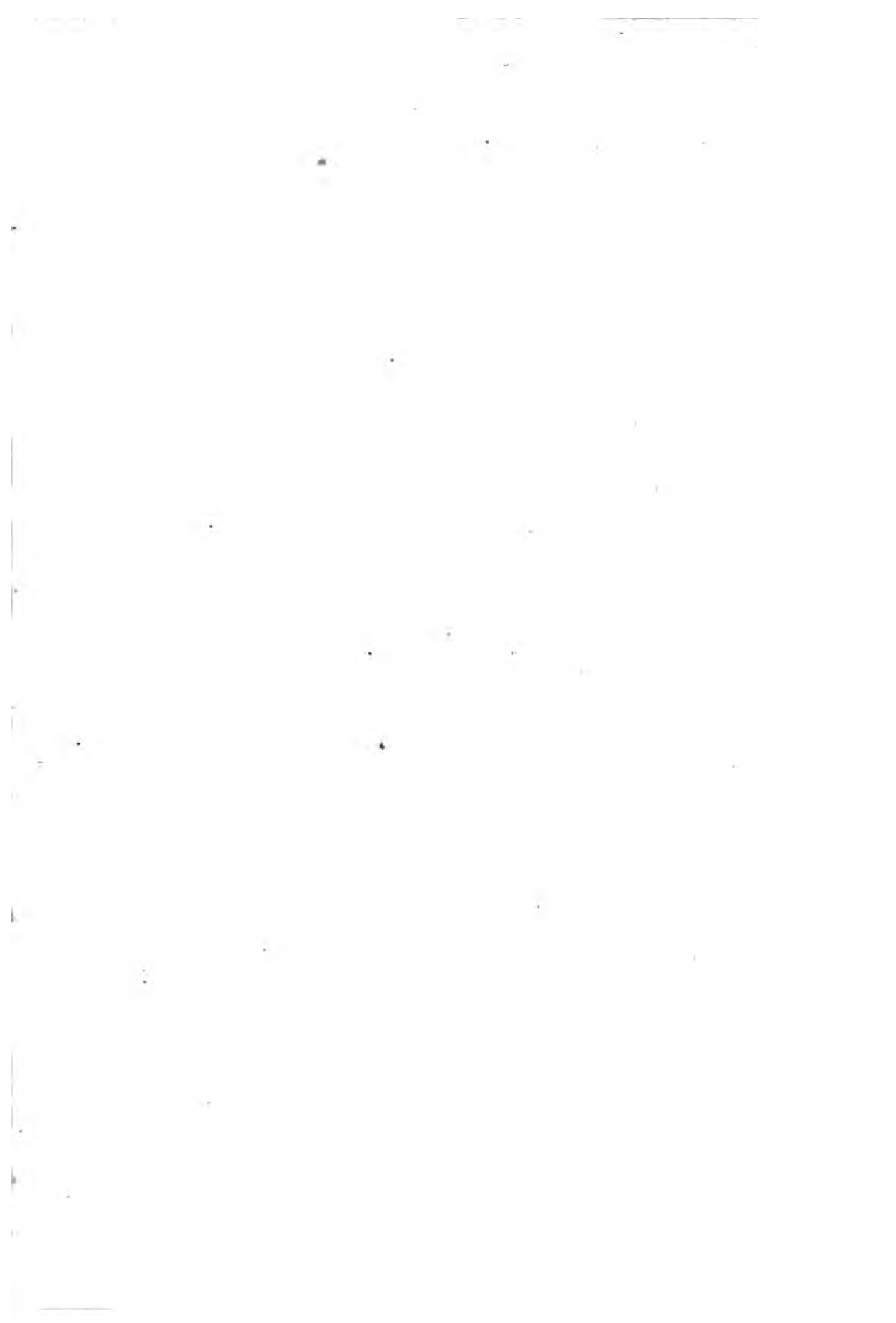
ROBERT FINCH, M. A.

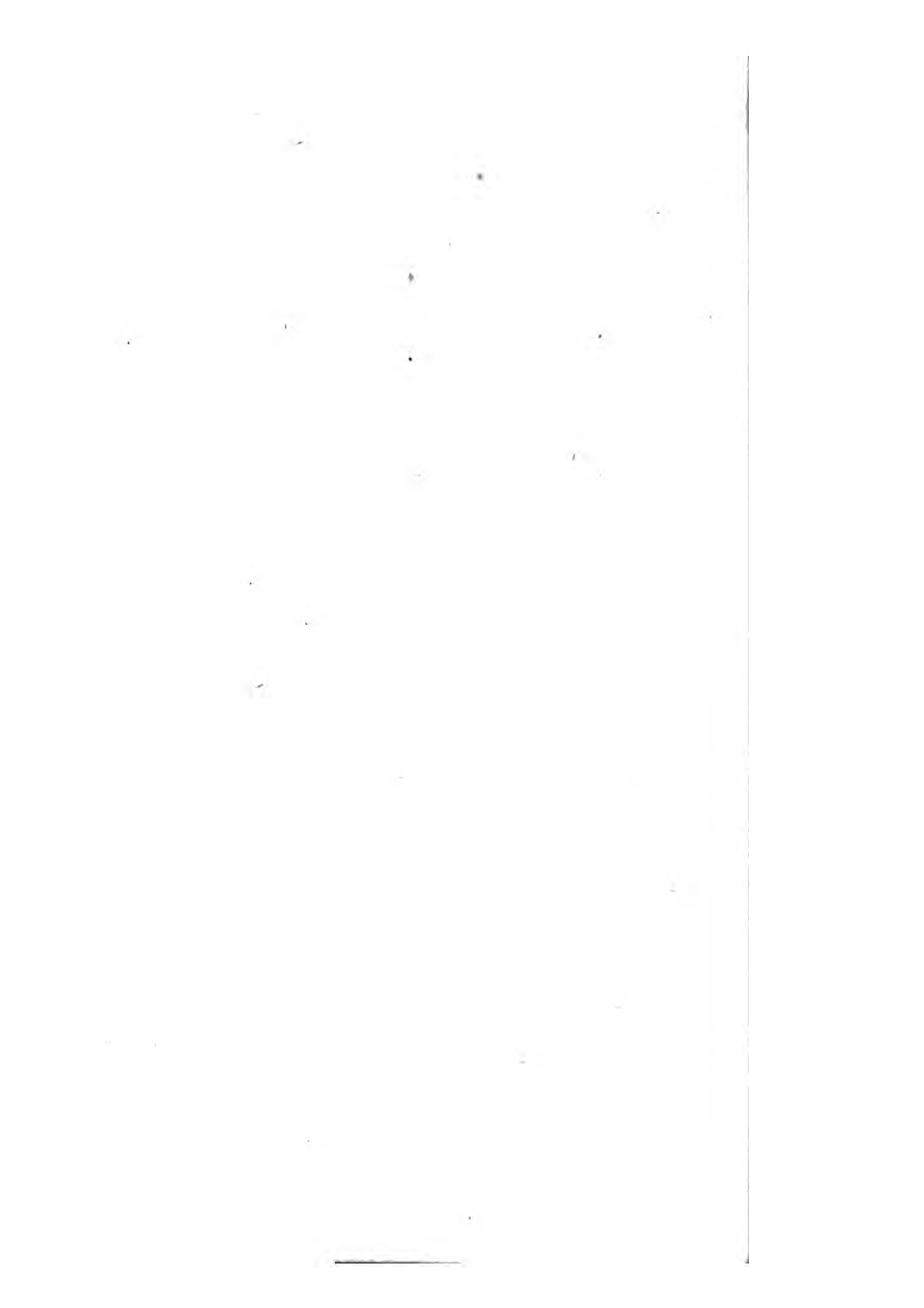
*20511*

*f. 9*  
OF BALLIOL COLLEGE.



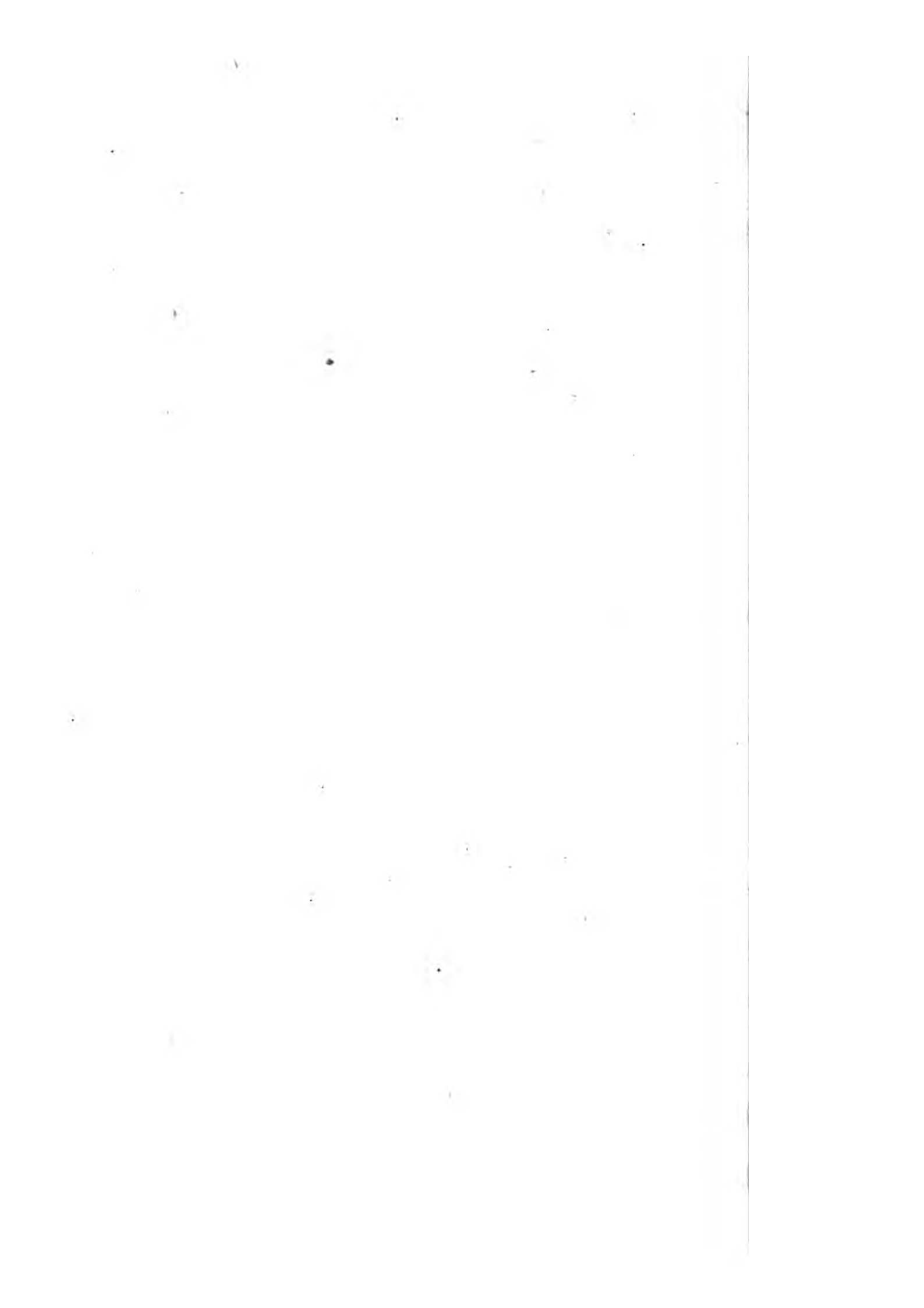
*Bound by*  
C. KALTHOEBER,  
*1876*











# PICTURE of PALERMO

Wm <sup>by</sup> Moody  
D. Hager

translated from the German

B. 11  
Mrs. Mary Robinson  
Bathampton  
Wills

*Knowst thou the Land where Citrons scent the gale,  
Where glows the Orange in the golden Vale,  
Where softer Breezes fan the azure Skies,  
Where Myrtles spring, and prouder Laurels rise.*

*Goethe.*



**L O V D O N,**

Printed for R. Phillips, N<sup>o</sup> 71, S. Paul's Church Yard.  
1800.

*By T. Gillett Crown Court, Fleet Street.*



## ADVERTISEMENT.

*THE Author of this Description of Palermo, having resided two years in that city, at the request of HIS SICILIAN MAJESTY, for the purpose of examining the Arabic Manuscripts of the ABBATÉ VELLA, supposed to contain the History of the Island under the dominion of the Saracens and Normans, availed himself of the opportunity to draw up a short account of its Climate, Customs, Buildings, Antiquities, &c. He hoped it would not prove unacceptable to the intelligent part of Europe, as the Travellers who had previously described Sicily had none of them resided more than a few days or weeks in the Capital.*

*The*

ADVERTISEMENT.

*The present residence of the Court of Naples in Palermo will, it is believed, add considerably to the interest of a Work, which has been read with much avidity in the native Language of its Author.*

SEPT. 22, 1800.

*Wm. Moody Bathampton*

CONTENTS.

	Page
The Winter at Palermo - - - - -	1
The Summer - - - - -	10
Buildings - - - - -	20
Customs - - - - -	33
The Observatory - - - - -	41
The Women - - - - -	47
Arabian Antiquities - - - - -	55
A View of the Sea - - - - -	61
Theatres - - - - -	66
Amusements - - - - -	76
Other Customs - - - - -	85
Language - - - - -	92
Cheats - - - - -	100
Solemnities - - - - -	117
Burials - - - - -	124
Society - - - - -	131
Country round Palermo - - - - -	140
Political State of Palermo and Sicily - - - - -	148

*In the Press, and speedily will be Published,*

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

AN

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE KNOWLEDGE

OF THE

*ELEMENTARY CHARACTERS*

OF THE

CHINESE LANGUAGE.

## PICTURE OF PALERMO.



### THE WINTER.

**T**OWARDS the end of October, the vintage being over, when in Germany winter appears rapidly approaching, as it terminates the autumnal season with apples and medlars, the more temperate climate of Palermo exhibits all the beauties which embellish the Theſſalian Tempe, in the writings of the Poets. The most delicious fruits and the finest plants appear in luxuriant succession. The plantations of orange begin at Florence; and present themselves to the eye of the traveller as far as Naples: the olive-trees attract his view on each side wherever he passes; while the sea, on the coast of which he journeys, the tepid breeze

B

which



which blows upon him, the bright summer's day, by which he is, as it were, again overtaken, and the diversity of the landscape, at once exhilarate and expand the heart.

At this period the small species of orange, *bastardoni*, which is ripe about a month before the common kind; then the sweet pomgranate, the *kartafi*, or the acid, the Italian fig, fill all the markets. These last, which do not resemble the European figs in the smallest degree, might be compared with dates, if they were not of a greenish hue, and covered with a rugged exterior. Their name, *kartafi*, proves that they are a fruit of Carthage, resembling the other pomgranates which the Romans called *punica mala*. Ripe olives, so delicious to an Italian palate, appear occasionally at the tables of the natives, and are all gathered by the middle of November. The delicious fig of August, the last and most luxuriant of the three species, has

has by this time disappeared ; but the tree still retains its foliage, as though it were June ; while the evergreen laurel, the lofty cypress, the American aloe, and the citron tree, display their never-fading beauties ; and all this at a time when, in our frigid zone, the gloom of winter appears, the vegetation has lost its splendour, and the mind is filled with sombre ruminations.

The larger kind of orange, called the Portugalli, which had become scarce and tasteless since the middle of summer, may be seen in all the streets of the city, when the first days of November are over. Their quantity, as well as their cheapness, is scarcely credible ; but their profusion rapidly augments, and they are in the greatest perfection in the beginning of February, ten or twelve of them being then purchased for one penny.

Fahrenheit's thermometer, which never sinks below 32 degrees, keeps chiefly the moderate temperature of 50 degrees, an height in which the oil of anise scarcely loses its fluidity. Here it is not necessary to draw anemonies, jonquilles, and hyacinths, in glasses or heated rooms. Even the delicate jessamin blooms at all windows, and expands on all the garden walls.

The single as well as the double *jessamin*, (which latter is called Arabia) is carried about the whole day, and sold at the lowest price. Next to this, the fragrant *cassia*, the *clove* of Messina, and the autumnal flowers of every kind, diffuse their perfumes. All these children of Flora still decorate the villas of Palermo; still the observer meets Sicilian girls in gardens, as though it were April; and what Virgil says of the southern part of Italy, may be more properly applied to Palermo:

“ Hic ver æfiduum atq; alienis mensibus æstas.

No

No mist or white frost, those forerunners of winter—no humid or dewy windows are here ever seen. Even in rainy weather the fostering sun still irradiates the horizon at intervals, with that brightness, which characterises our spring. Pennsylvania stoves, oriental *tennurs*, or Italian chimnies, are but seldom used here, even when the air is admitted through the doors and windows. Whilst one party assembles round the social hearth, others enjoy the delightful prospects from the open balcony, and converse as pleasantly, as though they were near the fire. The flies, which in less cherishing climates usually disappear in the early part of November, are still to be found in such myriads, that to preserve the hangings and the pictures from being foiled by them, a chandelier, of various-coloured paper, called *ninfa*, is suspended in the middle of the apartment, upon which these insects, from

an instinctive power not yet explained by Reaumur, or any other entomologist, throng together during the night in such numbers, that the *ninfa* appears entirely blackened by them. By this means the furniture is preserved from their injurious qualities.

In such a climate, it is not surprising that the almond-tree begins to blow early in December; which on the southern coast of Sicily, under the 37th degree of latitude, blooms at the end of October; and at Syracuse begins to bud about that time of the year. But Palermo, which is nearly a degree more to the north, is in this instance somewhat later; and (as Shaw says of *Barbary*, which is at no great distance, and bears a strong resemblance in climate to Palermo) the almond-tree is not in full bloom until the middle of January: it blows before it has its foliage; and towards the end of February its delicious fruit is eatable.

Towards

Towards the middle of December, the green grass spreads itself over the fields: white and yellow Mayflowers spring up on every side, delighting the eye of the passenger, and embellishing his pathway. Green peas, young radishes, as well as violets and orange-flowers, are at this season exposed for sale in the markets: *brocoli* of an extraordinary size, artichokes, and a vast variety of vegetables, may be purchased cheaply, until January, the middle of winter, arrives, which also displays in the open air fresh roses, narcissus's, and hyacinths. Still ice is eaten at the coffee-houses in the evening; and the cold is not more felt with the doors and windows open than it is in Germany at the end of April.

On the 9th of January, 1796, I walked half an hour in the gardens of the Prince of Trabia, towards *Monreale*. A lofty grove of oranges, like the golden apples of the Hef-

perides, encircled me and my companion, affording us a delightful prospect ! beautifully contrasting the snow, the winds, and naked trees, which memory presented in our native country : we now remembered the sledges, on which many an enchanting female was half frozen, to evince the warmth of her attachment to her attendant lover ; while we contemplated the *ananas* flourish better in the open air, than its companion in the greenhouse. We scarcely could believe that the sun was in Capricorn ; and thought, with Bailly and Rudbek, that we had found the *Atlantis* in an hyperborean season, or had seen before us the Island of Tinian, which, according to the description of Anson, is replete with such a variety of beauties.

After we had satisfied our palates, we filled our pockets with oranges ; and such was the profusion, that no one called us to account for it. Now also, early in February,  
the

the *pistacio's*, *manna*, and all other trees, begin to shoot; while the *tulip*, the *clove*, and the *ranunculus* make their appearance. Ripened *almonds* are at this period offered for sale; and in the early part of March we seem to have a perfect May.

How striking is the contrast, which this climate presents, when compared with Cook's description of the Sandwich Islands, or Phipps's Voyage to the North Pole, where perpetual snow scarcely affords a spot of moss for the *rein-deer* of Spitzbergen; where the ice-bear, the sea calf, and the sea-horse, with their hideous forms, are heard roaring terrifically over shoals of dreary, crackling ice, sometimes of an altitude of fifty feet; while the arctic circle extends a cimmerian darkness over the desolated landscape! nor is that contrast less obvious, when the eye of fancy contemplates the coast of Labrador, on which the savage is compelled, by want  
of



of food, to imbibe his own blood ! where, according to the testimony of Curtis, the dreadful sacrifice is practised of destroying the parent, that he may be preserved from a lingering death by hunger !

#### THE SUMMER.

AS early as the month of May, when the citrons and oranges give way to the summer fruits, the sun becomes more powerful through his perpendicular rays, and the continued drought, that it is often found with us even at the end of June. By this period the rain has subsided during three or four months, and the earth becomes parched, as in *Upper Egypt* : no gathering clouds, no refreshing shower, or thunder-storm, is to be expected till the autumn. Each succeeding day resembles the former ; and from the glimpse  
of

of dawn till the close of evening, every shade is peopled, the sun-beams being intolerable. In order to exclude the parching rays from the apartments, no double curtains are used, as at *Madrid*, and other cities of *Spain*; but they shut out the southern heat with green blinds or wooden shutters, as is the custom all over Italy. This is a necessary precaution, to keep the flies from molesting those, who take the refreshment of sleep during the heat of noon. Like the birds who during an eclipse of the sun repose, and the plants which shut their buds as soon as they are deprived of light, the insects of this climate also become tranquil (however troublesome they may have been), as soon as the chamber is darkened: no humming sound is then heard; and that sleep becomes easy, which it would otherwise be impossible to enjoy.

It is infinitely desirable to reside upon the coast, where the breezes are pure and refreshing,

freshing, as they are perpetually passing over the sea. Here are erected, near the shore, numerous bathing-houses, for the purpose of bracing the nerves, as was the practice of our ancestors in the time of Julius Cæsar and Herodian, before they had been enervated by luxury.

I here learned an art, (which will be useful to every one who does not wish to be incommoded with a Dutch scaphander, or English cork-waistcoat); an art which formed so essential a part of education with the Romans, that to swim and to read were considered as objects of equal importance. The natives of Sicily, who reside on the coast, have brought this art to the greatest perfection. They cannot indeed use any considerable degree of motion with their bodies erect, their hands above the surface of the water, and a vessel over their heads, as if they were walking upon land, which *Kolbe* says

lays is practised by the *Hottentots* ; yet they are accustomed to amuse themselves along the coast in a variety of ways. Sometimes they imitate the *pesce spada*, or sword-fish, and swim with one hand, whilst the other, which they extend over the surface of the water, represents the snout of the fish. They also, in the manner of the *whale* or *dolphin*, dive and emerge, at every rise flinging a quantity of water from their mouths into the air: they will lie supine upon the shore, as if they were drowned ; this they call *Il morto in tavola* (the corpse upon the bier) : they likewise swim as the frog, darting forth their hands and feet at the same moment : now they raise one half their bodies above the water, like marine quadrupeds ; which attitude was the most pleasing, because the least constrained. Like Proteus, they assume a thousand shapes ; and they are so delighted with their sportive exercises, that they

they remain many hours in the limpid element ; and I have heard it said that they consider this practice as the only real enjoyment in life.

To temporize the heat which prevails during the morning, instead of chocolate, that fashionable and delicious beverage of the Spaniards and Italians, the inhabitants eat ices in the coffee-houses, where they have various kinds unknown to us ; and if forbetti, or the common ice, is not deemed sufficiently cold and refreshing, they have *gelati forti*, or a solid lump, so completely frozen, that it can only be divided by a knife. Far from proving injurious, as some have erroneously imagined, nothing is more conveniently calculated to brace the stomach, thereby counteracting the power of heat, and restoring the vigour of appetite. For this purpose snow is transported from the loftiest mountains in Sicily, from *Madonia*,

*donia*, the famous *Eryx*, and even from the summit of *Etna*, in the same manner as it is brought to Constantinople from Olympus, for the *sherbet* of the Turks.

The labourer finds himself under the necessity of purchasing his pennyworth of snow at the shops which are open for that article, if he wishes to enjoy the cool beverage, which, owing to the excessive heat, is rendered unfit for use. No *alcaraza de andujar*, that vessel so well calculated to preserve water by means of evaporation, which serves that purpose in the southern parts of Europe and Asia, is here used in summer. A number of small asses convey the snow, well packed in straw, every morning to the capital, where by the aid of salt any degree of frigidity can be given to it, that is required to consolidate fluids of every kind; an art, of which the Roman Lucretia, in Voltaire's ingenious dialogue, was as ignorant, as of the use of  
shirts

shirts and stockings, and which this century has brought to such perfection, that we can increase it to the 568th degree of Fahrenheit's scale; a degree of cold sufficient to freeze mercury to the hardness of stone, although it never was considered by our forefathers in any other light, than as a liquid.

Now is frequently felt the Sicilian *samum*, that wind so fatal in Arabia, called by the Italians *scirocco*: it approaches like the hot air which issues from an oven; the thermometer then rises immediately to an extraordinary heat. When Count Borch was in Sicily, it reached  $38\frac{1}{2}$  degrees of Reaumur's scale; a warmth which not only exceeds the degree necessary for hatching eggs, but even the ordinary temperature of the bath, which is reckoned 36 degrees. However, this scorching wind, which is only felt once in the course of two years, generally continues

nues about an hour. It would otherwise be attended with consequences far more unpleasant than those which Gili relates of *Orinoco*, where the food is contaminated by maggots in the space of one short day: where, on account of the insupportable heat, the women go about the streets nearly naked; and where the Spaniards are under the necessity of binding their wrists with silver plates, to abate the violent aching which they feel in the pulse.

In the meantime, the heat at Palermo is so excessive, that after having kept it out of the rooms during the day, it is impossible to guard against it in the evening, when the sun is set: the interior heat then streams from the glowing walls so powerfully, to restore the equilibrium with the cool air, that the inhabitants are compelled to quit their houses, and hasten to the open streets, or the sea-side; where, from the end of June

C

until



until the autumn, every evening the best society is to be found ; where delightful music is provided at the expence of the Senate ; and cooling beverages, with various refreshments, are exposed for sale, in addition to the luxury of enjoying the sea-breezes.

Notwithstanding all this, scorpions, serpents, and other venomous reptiles, are rarely heard of in this country. The Bailiffe of the *Duca di Monteleoni* shewed me, near the Temple of *Selinunte*, a ditch full of vipers, which are sold for England. “ After the poison is extracted from them, (said he) no water must be given to them, or they will in that case recover it.” This venom, which destroys so quickly when it enters the veins through the wound, is, according to the experiments of *Mead* and *Moscatti*, entirely harmless, if sucked in by the mouth : the wound, however, should be perfectly  
free

free from fore, that the poison may not come in contact with the blood. In other respects, the method of sucking out the venom, should a man have the misfortune to be bitten, is much safer than the viper-stone, with which so many experiments have been made at *Milan*.

The *tarantula*, on the contrary, so common in the vicinity of Apulia, is not to be found in Sicily; there, however, its bite is always cured by means of the violin, guitar, bagpipes, and violoncello. All kinds of movements are tried, till the sympathizing tone is discovered, when the patient springs up and dances to the time. This exercise continues from eight to ten hours a day, and must, frequently, be repeated six or seven days together, to the no small fatigue of the reluctant dancer; who, when the story is once told, cannot easily obtain a husband.\*

\* See Vol. II. of the *Opuscoli Scelti di Milano*, p. 306.

## BUILDINGS.

AMONGST the buildings of Palermo, the palace of the Viceroy, which, on account of the present residence of the King of Naples, merits particular notice, claims precedence. A spacious square, which deserves to be compared with the largest in Europe, gives this superb palace as magnificent an appearance as that of Versailles, or of Caserta. A singularly wide and commodious staircase, with very low steps, after the Italian model, which far surpasses in elegance the famous staircase of the palace Ruspoli at Rome, leads to the royal residence of Ferdinand III. This was formerly the abode of Roger, that valiant Norman, who not content with driving the Saracens out of Sicily, pursued them so closely, on the opposite coast of Africa, that the Prince of  
Tunis

Tunis was compelled to pay an enormous tribute annually. From the windows of this palace the eye commands a sublime prospect over the whole city, the sea, and the neighbouring islands. From them may be seen, in the most charming point of view, the Mount Pelegrino, the distant light-house, the island Ustica, and the ships as they majestically sail out of or put into the harbour. The late Viceroy shewed me here the hall of the Divan, which was adorned with oriental paintings, and mosaic work, and finished by Arabian artists, who were still, during the reign of Roger, in possession of the mechanical, as well as of the fine arts. Roger made use of their services in Sicily, in the same manner as Alphonso and other Kings in Spain had done during the middle age. To have some idea of what the Arabians were at that period, the traveller need only look at the great mosque at Cordova, that monument of

Arabian splendour, which attracts the attention and excites the wonder of all nations. It is 600 feet long, and 250 broad. It is supported by more than 300 columns of alabaster, jasper, and marble. The entrance was through 24 brazen doors, ornamented with golden sculpture, and 4700 lamps illuminated, during the night, this magnificent building.

The palace of the favourite Sultana of Abdurrahaman, two miles from Cordova, was not inferior in size. Beside 40 columns of granite, which the Emperor of Constantinople had sent this Prince of the House of Ummia, one might count 1200 others of Spanish and Italian marble. The walls of this grand hall were covered with ornaments of gold: many animals composed of this metal threw water into a basin of alabaster, over which hung the costly pearl which the Greek Emperor, Leo, sent to the Caliph.

In

In the pavilion, where Abdurrhaman was accustomed to spend the evening in the society of his favourites, the ceiling was inlaid with steel, gold, and precious stones, which reflected the light from an hundred crystal lamps—all this is affirmed by the most correct historians. At Palermo too, in the time of the Normans, when this Court was half oriental, gardens, fountains, and artificial seas, with gilded vessels for the King and his females, were to be seen. Here were costly pieces of worked silk, which, with their red and green colours, dazzled the eyes, or being embossed with pearls, gold, and jewels, exhibited a curious picture, and served for an imperial garment when decorated with Arabic inscriptions. Here was made the Emperor's robe, which is kept at Nuremberg. Palermo, in the inscription upon it, is called *Medina*, or the City, as in former times Rome and Constantinople were denominated,

minated, by way of distinction. The King's chapel at Palermo, which is in this palace, is still adorned with Arabic inscriptions, which cover the walls. The well-preserved azure, the variegated colours, and the gold which embellishes the interior, form a beautiful monument of Arabian art. The librarian of the Senate Angelini, before I quitted Palermo, had prepared a description of it for the press. At the entrance there is an inscription, very interesting to a Sicilian, cut in stone, in three languages; the Latin, Greek, and Arabic. From this it is clear, that in the time of Roger these languages were used, as in the days of Apuleius the Punic, Greek, and Latin tongues were spoken in Sicily. The Latin inscription says, that in the year 1142, at the command of Roger, a time-piece was made, which confirms the opinion that time-pieces (about the history of which so little is known at present)

present) owe their invention to the Arabians. They were the people which, at that period, were not only acquainted with the arts and sciences, but also made considerable progress in astronomy and mathematics. Before their time moveable time-pieces were not known. The first machine of this kind was that, which Charles the Great received as a present from an Arabian Prince, which, by its curious mechanism, not only marked the hours, but at every hour vibrated a musical sound, while figures on horseback came out of the windows, and when they re-entered, again closed them.

After the time of Roger, the Sultan of Egypt sent the Emperor Frederick II. another time-piece, which not only shewed, by means of artificial wheels and weights, the hours of day and night, but also represented the motion of the sun, moon, and the other planets.

Next



Next to the palace of the Viceroy, the cathedral, on account of its Arabic architecture, claims our notice ; for it was built in the 12th century, when the Arabians were in possession of Sicily. It appears like the Arabian mosques and caravanseries in India, which are so well known through Hodges's beautiful drawings. A number of cupolas adorn the exterior, like the grand Dschami's at Constantinople ; and the four towers remind the observer of the great mosques of the Levant. In this cathedral Frederick the II. was buried, who died at *Fiorenzuola*, in Abruzzo. An astrologer, whom he had long before consulted respecting his destiny, warned him against a place which had the name of a *flower*, and of *iron gates*. In consequence of this he always refused to visit *Fiorenza* ; nay, he would not even once approach this city, till death overtook him at *Fiorenzuola*. When in the year 1781 his  
porphyry

porphyry tomb was opened, the body, at the period of 500 years, seemed as fresh as if it were alive.

His perfect and entire corpse, which was immediately described by Cardini, was wrapped in a triple imperial dress, the *Alba*, the *Dalmatica*, and the *Pluviale*. Upon the *Alba* were seen various ornaments; and upon the arms Arabic inscriptions, embroidered in gold, but in characters of writing different from those of the borders of the imperial mantle at Nurenberg. Below the left shoulder a cross of red silk was embroidered, as emblematical of his crusade to Palestine. The silk *Dalmatica* upon the arms was covered with a gold lace four fingers broad: the mantle had an oval gold clasp to fasten it, which was ornamented in the center with an *amethyst*, with twenty small *smaragds* on the circumference, and with four large pearls. On both sides of  
the

the border, which was set with a double row of pearls, eagles were embroidered in ornamental circles, turning their beaks towards each other in pairs. The embroidery of this mantle and the other vests prove the beauty of the work, and the singular art of the Arabians in performances of this delicate nature. Frederick himself had several lovely Arabian girls at his Court, who were well experienced in this art, and on account of which he was accused by some envious persons before the Pope. He learned the Arabic, which at that time was the fashionable language, as at this day is the French. From this circumstance it is evident, why so many Arabic words have crept into the Italian vocabulary: it was owing to the intercourse with that people, who then gave the fashion: and, to evince a single example, the Italian terms for embroidery, *ricamo*, and to embroider, *ricamare*, are Arabic.

Frederick

Frederick was dressed in green, after the Arabic fashion, as at this day the Sultan is at Constantinople. Instead of the noble Hungarian life-guard, the Imperial life-guard at that time consisted of Arabians; and, just as in the present times, a Vestris or a Gardel is engaged from Paris, so the Emperor ordered an Arabian to be provided for the opera at the Court of Palermo.

He introduced into Sicily the practice of heron-hunting, (about the origin of which the learned are divided) just as he had learnt it in his crusades. The falcons were first covered with a small hood, after the manner of the Arabians. He relates himself, in his work upon this subject, that he sent to the Indies for able fowlers, for the purpose of obtaining from them the necessary instructions. The ladies at that time were so fond of falcons, that they were as much favoured and caressed as the lap-dogs of the present day.

day. Haffelquist relates, that the Arabians are still accustomed to hunt that fleet animal, the *antelope*, with falcons. Tilts, tournaments, and all the eccentric exploits of chivalry in the Spanish romances, in which the ladies of the middle age bore so conspicuous a part, were likewise introduced by the Arabians, who were settled in Spain 700 years, as we learn from the *Romancero-general* and other Spanish romances. The Jesuit Andres, that zealous defender of the Arabians, has already remarked this; and Professor Rosenmuller, of Leipzig, has proved the resemblance of the Arabian poem—*Lebid* with the Spanish *Sirventes*.

A relic of these tournaments, the play with the cane, or, as it is otherwise called, the *Game of the Arabians*, still continues, even after the expulsion of that people from Sicily, just as in Spain, where the play of the cane (*juego de cannas*) even yet, according

ing

ing to Twifs, is a favourite pastime, in which the champions on horseback hurl canes at each other instead of spears. It has also been till now the favourite diversion of the Mamelukes in Egypt, and is still of the Turks at Constantinople. I saw the Captain Pacha with his sea-officers, whilst the fleet lay in the harbour, practise it himself on horseback; and was witness on many other occasions to their skill in throwing the *dschirid*.

This is but a faint image of the Arabian tournaments, as St. Florian has described them, from contemporary writers. The charming women, who were interested in the victory of their lovers; the ribbons, devices, and epigrams, which were sent by them on these occasions, or which the knights chose themselves; sometimes the initials of their heroines' names; sometimes a heart perforated with darts; sometimes a lion, led in chains by a shepherdes; with a  
variety

variety of other symbols: then the various colours, each of which had its particular signification; as green was emblematic of hope; red, of love; yellow, of pain; and other colours representing other passions, The glittering armour of the knights, their darts and javelins, shields and sabres of Damascus; the wild horse from Barbary, apparently breathing fire, its covering ornamented with pearls and precious stones; the knights vestments, enriched with gold; the towering feathers on their splendid turbans; the scene decorated with many colours; a thousand windows full of animated spectators; the presence of the King, of the Royal Family, and all the Court; the exhilarating sound of the trumpets, drums, and all the other oriental instruments; in short, the combat itself, and the dexterity and youthful spirit displayed in it, must have altogether formed a delightful scene; which we now only behold in the  
faint

faint images we form from the compositions of modern romances: for though it was remarked by BURKE, that the age of chivalry was no more, the fervour of imagination is, unquestionably, at this epocha, in its full and most splendid zenith.

## CUSTOMS.

SICILY, like all other countries, has its peculiar customs. As drums serve the Arabians, from whom we have adopted them, instead of bells, in Sicily likewise a similar use of them prevails: the churchwardens go about the streets in the habit of their office, with these instruments in their hands, to proclaim a festival; and at Naples it is not unusual for a bagpiper, many of whom are seen in the streets, to begin blowing his bagpipes, as soon as he comes into the  
D church,



church, in the middle of mass, and before the whole congregation. At Madrid, too, may be seen Canary birds in the churches, and sometimes in cages upon the high altar, which as soon as the music commences, begin a loud cry, entirely discordant with the orchestra.

Although in other countries, nuns, because they have renounced the world, are accustomed to reside in habitations detached from the rest of the neighbourhood; yet at Palermo, on the first floor, men, and on the second floor nuns, are seen looking down from the windows.

As many cloisters are situated apart from the center of the town, they make a passage sometimes under ground, and sometimes over the tops of the neighbouring houses, in order to reach the chief street of the city. At *Cassero*, which has been already mentioned, they hire the upper apartments, whilst  
the

the lower stories are inhabited by seculars, for the sake of enjoying the sight of the processions among the multitude, and of the illuminations. In other places they are usually confined for life; but in Palermo, youthful nuns are seen in carriages, or, under the pretext of indisposition, living in the houses of their relations. There they stand on the balconies over the streets, dressed in the habits of their order, contemplate the youthful of the other sex, and frequently enter into lively and even gallant conversation, until they obtain their secularization, which has become very easy since the time of the Viceroy *Caraccioli*. I saw several married women at Palermo, who had been formerly nuns, and from the cloister had passed into the marriage bed. Of these nunneries there are in Palermo *alone* twenty-

twenty years of age buried from society ; for they find themselves obliged to assume the veil, because the female who possesses no portion cannot easily obtain a matrimonial establishment.

Besides the common *fiacres*, two-wheeled *caleffini*, drawn by a single horse, stand in waiting in the square called *Piano di Marina*. With these latter vehicles it is allowed here, as well as at Naples, to drive as fast as you think proper through the thickest crowds. As the horse may be managed by a single person, they are of great utility ; for, by means of them, one may go from one extremity of the city to the other with wonderful speed, nay, almost fly : for this reason, in the extensive city of Naples, they are in general use : there they are finished in the best fashion, and at the highest prices : for, in general, there is much less luxury and wealth at Palermo than in that city : and it bears the  
fame

same proportion to Naples, both in respect to the smallness of its population and size, as Prague or Bruffels to Vienna.

Besides these two-wheeled carriages, sedan chairs are used here as in other places: here, however, they are not only employed for the living, but for the dead. The observer meets almost every day a funeral, (consisting merely of a sedan chair) of which there is scarcely any appearance externally. When I first arrived at Palermo, I looked into one of them, in the eager expectation of seeing a well-dressed girl, or a lovely woman; but my consternation was infinite, when I beheld a ghastly and livid corpse! I hurried back as speedily as I was able, and never was again tempted to examine any other of those vehicles during my stay at Palermo, much less to suffer myself to be borne in one of them. Certain whimsical customs also prevail in their churches. As chairs have

not yet been introduced, you must at your entrance hire a seat of straw, unless you would stand during the whole service. For this purpose poor *ragged* women are always to be found there, who provide you with them for money. On a grand ceremony, therefore, there is no end to the bustle of their occupation: whether you go for devotion, or for the sake of the music, you will be considerably interrupted by this very troublesome custom.

Besides these *poissardes*, one may see the Sicilian *sans-culottes*, who, without shoes or stockings, stripped to their shirts, and those too with tucked up sleeves, and linen drawers, appear tattered and dirty on a Sunday, or at a festival at church, and look just as if they had come from working in the fields. Instead of turning their faces towards the altar, they look towards the church door, and they are all intent upon  
the

the music. This is scarcely finished, (and it is generally over in the middle of mass) when they disappear all at once with such haste, that in four minutes there is rarely a soul to be found in the church, excepting the priest at the altar, and the few who attend upon him.

When it is dark, many such *lazari* cry out piteously for alms in the streets, until midnight; *O Divina Provvidenza! poveretto morto di fame! O boni servi di Dio! facite la carità!* without any persons feeling for their extreme distress. Their countenance is more hideous than any I ever saw in other countries: they may be compared with the *Fakirs* in India, whose shocking nakedness and mortifications *Sonnerat*, *Dow*, and others, have described, and which in the King's library at Berlin I saw well painted amongst the Indian pictures.

Homicide is still a common crime amongst

the lower classes. A word spoken in anger, a little jealousy, or the too copious use of wine, are the common causes of assassinations in cold blood; and thus at Palermo, as well as in the other parts of Italy, men are frequently permitted to live, who have already destroyed some of their fellow-creatures, and who glory in the crime they have committed. When I once passed a night in the *Pontine Marshes*, the *Veturino* informed me that the *landlord*, the cook, the hostler, and the waiters, were all murderers; that in the whole inn there was no one who had not committed at least one assassination. They are obliged to confine themselves to this spot for a punishment; which, however, as it now appears, is one of the most pleasant in all Italy. I therefore took care to be very civil to this tolerated destroyer, and to make no words about the charges he made:

I con-

I contemplated, as often as he set a dish before me, the features of this affaffin's physiognomy, to see whether *Lavater* was to be trusted. For the sake of observing them better, I questioned him on several subjects, and fixed my eyes earnestly upon his countenance during the whole period of our conversation.

#### THE OBSERVATORY.

AT the end of the King's palace, just described, the newly-erected observatory raises its head, which, like its contemporary at Leipzig, is built upon an elevated turret of this ancient Arabic castle : but its horizon is not on all sides expanded, as is the case in the view from the Leipzig observatory ; but is only open facing the north-east : towards the north, the Mount Pellegrino



grino raises itself five degrees above the horizon ; on the south-side, which is of the most consequence to an astronomer, Mount Mezagno covers 6 degrees, 30 minutes ; Mount Cuccio to the west, and Falso-melle to the south-east, are still higher ; for they form with the horizon an angle of eight degrees.

The observatory itself, according to the observations which Father Piazzì, who superintends it, has made, lies under the latitude of 38 degrees, 6 minutes, and 44 seconds ; for which reason all those maps are erroneous which represent the latitude of Palermo either higher or lower. Here Hook, after the consecration of this temple of Urania, observed a comet, which appeared in the year 1793, without, however, deciding whether it was one of those meteors which will probably occasion the end of the world, by their approximation to our planet (as the  
ladies

ladies at Paris last year apprehended, and on that account sought consolation of Lalande); or, whether (as Professor Murhard, of Göttingen, maintains in his new theory) it was a fluid body, which probably in time will become solid, and will bring forth plants, men, and animals, after it has become cool and dry like our globe. I, for my part, observed the degree of heat on the 6th of May, as I happened to be there in the forenoon, and found that Reaumur's thermometer was at 13 degrees, in the shade, and turned towards the north. From the above-named palace, which the Arabians called *Kassar*, or Castle, the principal street of Palermo, that leads straight from this building, received the name which it still bears, *Il Casfero*, not *Strada Cassara*, as Mr. Jacobi, a late traveller, calls it. The city, according to the Nubian geographer, was even in the time of Roger, that is, about 600 years since, divided

divided into two parts, the *Kassar* and the Suburbs. To alarm the inhabitants, this Prince, when he besieged the city, made use of the Arabian courier-pigeons, which he found in their encampments, and which the fair sex, in the time of Anacreon, employed in the task of conveying letters to their lovers. These Arabian carrier pigeons were much in use but a few years ago at Aleppo. The doves arrived from Bagdad, which lies at the distance of 150 hours, in two days; and from Alexandretta, which is at the distance of 40, in three or four hours. Once a dove remained out three days: it must have lost its way, for it had been during this while at Ceylon, in the East-Indies: This circumstance was inferred, says Maillet, from the clove-root which was found still green in its stomach\*. The Caliphs by

\* Desc. de l'Egypte, B. 2, p. 271.

these

these means maintained a quick correspondence between Bagdad and Cairo; and Otter found them still in use between the former city and Bassora.

People assign different reasons for the return of the doves to their home. Malaterra says, it is effected by means of grain dipped in honey, which is given them by way of food: being accustomed to this delicate nourishment they journey back, without the aid of compasses, as soon as they are set at liberty. According to others, it is owing to the separation of the mother from her young, or the male dove from his beloved mate. When this separation lasts long, the memory grows feeble as with man under similar circumstances; the male then ceases to remember his love; and no dependance can be placed upon him. According to all accounts, fourteen days are sufficient to make the mother forget her young: the male,  
most

most probably, will forget his love still sooner.

Roger, on the contrary, gave to the doves which he sent to Palermo, letters dipped in blood instead of *billets-doux*, a device which occasioned such terror to the Musselmen women and children, that the air was filled with the same terrified complainings, as when the valiant Laudon menaced Belgrade, ten years since, with 300 pieces of artillery ; or as when Suwarrow, nine years ago, stormed Ismail. The city immediately surrendered, and became the capital of a kingdom, which before was no larger than a province. The old capital of Sicily, which had disputed the first rank with Athens, declined gradually ; and Palermo has since become the capital of Sicily, and the residence of the Viceroy, in the absence of the Monarch.

## OF THE WOMEN.

THE women of Palermo are of a middling stature, not so tall as the lusty inhabitants of Stiria, Carinthia, or the Tyrolian mountains ; or as the far-famed beauties of Caucasus, the Georgian and Circassian women, among whom exists such an extensive traffic for the harems of Agra, Ispahan, and Constantinople : still they are not of so diminutive an appearance as the race of our climate, or so enervated by the excess of luxury. No light-coloured hair, no blue eyes, those distinguishing features of the Germans, according to Juvenal and Tacitus, are here to be seen ; a few white-haired Albinos excepted, which may be found here as well as amongst the negroes in Africa. These people, like rabbits, are so weak-

weak-fighted, that they cannot well bear the sun-beams. Coal-black, or chefnut-brown hair, black fiery eyes, like those of the antelope, with regular features, are the predominant characteristics in the physiognomy of the girls at Palermo. A slender shape, a full bosom, a Grecian profile, give the gazer an idea, even at the present day, of that beauty which formerly served a Praxiteles and a Polycletus as a model, or inspired Acis with a passion for Galatea. The Princess *Lionforte*, (that Aspasia so celebrated for her person and her wit) the charming females, Calascibetta, Villa rosata, Castelforte, and many other of lower rank, might serve as examples. It was a Sicilian woman who so dazzled the eyes of the Governor Euphemius in the 9th century, that Sicily became subject to the Saracens for the space of 300 years. Lais, that licentious slave, who had captivated even more  
men

men at Athens, was, according to Thucydides, carried away from Sicily; and Arnaud has drawn the portrait of Nina, in colours so attractive, as to make his reader in love with a Sicilian beauty.

They are educated in a cloister, where, to guard against seduction, they must remain until they are of a marriageable age. Even the lower classes are shocked at the idea of suffering their daughters to serve as chamber-maids in the bloom of youth, much less as common servants: these services are performed partly by men, and partly by elderly women. Should the custom, they say, which is related of Germany, prevail in Sicily, of suffering blooming girls to do the business of the kitchen and the house, like the cook-maids and chamber-maids at Vienna, no one would ever be able to provide herself with a husband, amongst the jealous race of Italians. On the contrary,

E

they



they are often married from the cloister, at the age of twelve, and become grandmothers at thirty.

Beside the Italian language, they seldom acquire even a little French ; but they do not even bestow a thought on the English or German languages, and are very ignorant of foreign literature. No Marmontel, or Crebillon, or Mercier, or any other distinguished genius, is here known even by name : no romances, novels, chivalrous adventures, or tales of spectres, with which Germany at the close of the 18th century is overwhelmed, constitute the fashionable reading of the fair sex at Palermo : perhaps *Metastasio*, perhaps *Alfieri*, *Parini*, or any of their own writers and poets, (amongst which *Melli* at present is allowed the first rank) form the general taste of the reading of a Sicilian female, and harmonize the sensibility of her mind : and perhaps were the

pages of literature as universally explored by the women of Sicily as by those of Britain, Palermo might produce such illustrious females, as now embellish the metropolis of England.

The *piano-forte*, which has now become so ornamental a piece of furniture all over Europe, is here also very common. I have learnt on this delightful instrument many soothing airs of Cimarosa, or Fioravante, and many a trio or duet of Andreozzi, by the side of a Sicilian enchantress. Love mingles imperceptibly with harmonious sounds, and the dulcet unison of melting tones occasions that of sentiments; for nothing can be imagined more fascinating than attractions of this species.

Besides the piano-forte, upon which instrument there are as capital performers as there are good makers, the *guitar* is as common there as in Spain. This instrument

the Sicilian girls accompany, in those graceful attitudes to which they naturally incline, with short popular Sicilian songs, the soothing or sprightly mazes of which yield not to the German in acuteness: yet the melody is not only different from ours, but from the Italian; it sounds altogether like the Asiatic style in the tone, which is called, technically, *mol*, just as I have heard it on the coast of the Thracian Bosphorus: it was, unquestionably, introduced into Sicily either by the Arabians, or the Arragonians, who kept possession of that country still longer.

Thus during the carnival a kind of *fandango*, or *volero*, with *castagnettes* and tambour drums, is exhibited, which occasions such attitudes, that modest females are frequently obliged to turn from their observation. In other respects, it agrees with that very dance which I saw first in the Levant, and afterwards in Spain.

The

The dress of the women is adapted to the climate which they inhabit. The head is always uncovered, as in a great part of Italy: no Spanish *retesilla*, much less any thing like the clumsy Nurenberg hood, envelopes, or rather disfigures their beautiful countenances: a silken ribbon, a fresh rose, of which there is no scarcity even in winter, particularly after Christmas, or gauze embroidered with silver and a variety of colours, is blended with their unpowdered tresses: no Swabian boddice destroys, by an unnatural pressure, their well-formed figures: no high stays distort the charming contour of the women: a light corset encompasses the prominent bosom; amber from Catania, or red coral from Trapani, adorn their polished necks. A black veil, made after the oriental or Spanish fashion, covers the head when they appear in the streets. Still the charming females know how, when they meet

the engaging of the other sex, sometimes by the motion of their heads, sometimes by their fans, to turn their countenances in such a position that the passenger can most advantageously behold them. The remainder of their dress is after the German or French fashion. The finest muslin, with embroidery, point lace, gold chains, medallions, and trinkets from London and Paris, embellish the charms of the Palermo women.

Their deportment, their dancing, and their attitudes, display something attractively elegant : they resemble the mimic graces of Lady Hamilton, which Rehberg, of Naples, has so well represented. Their conversation is lively, and, as their countenance is accompanied sometimes by a soft languishment, at others, by playful fascinating smiles, and frequently by vivid flashes of fancy ; the tone of their voice is enchanting, and their presence perpetually enlivens society.

ARABIAN

## ARABIAN ANTIQUITIES.

As Sicily was in the hands of the Saracens about 250 years, there are consequently many other monuments and reliques still remaining at Palermo, besides those which have already been described ; of which the traveller, who has not studied oriental literature, has hitherto made little or no mention. Beside a number of Arabic inscriptions, chisselled in stone, partly in the Karmatic, partly in the common character, and still remaining, several of which the canon, Gregorio, has elucidated in his collection of Arabic inscriptions : there are also many neatly-wrought earthen vases, and copper urns, with similar decorations. Cufic gold and silver coins are every day engraved ;

and Arabic diplomas are preserved in the ecclesiastical archives, not only of Palermo, but of other cities of Sicily. Arabic inscriptions appear upon them all, in the same manner as the Chinese cover their walls and furniture with writing.

Beside these works of the Saracens, there are at Palermo a kind of aqueducts, by which the finest water is conveyed from the neighbouring hills to the city, where every story of the houses is supplied. I questioned many persons well versed in the history of their country, whether the Romans, the Greeks, or any other nation, that have had the possession of Sicily, had built the *Giarre*, and no one would answer me. But the Arabian term *giarra*, which means a reservoir of water, and the circumstance that they are yet remaining in the city, which the Saracens chose for their capital, place it beyond all doubt, that we have to thank their invention

tion for this charitable institution. The name *Katus*, which they give to the subterranean canal, corroborates this conjecture, concerning which there can be no written account, because there is no Arabic history of that period now extant; and the Christians themselves, during the dominion of the Saracens, had no writers; for which reason the annals of this country, from the beginning of the 9th to the end of the 12th century, are very defective. The inquisition, which till of late continued, seemed to have assumed some merit, in having destroyed books which they did not understand, while they really imagined their ignorance to be piety! By these means numberless accounts have been lost, as Pirri and other Sicilian writers lament. Thus *Kuba*, an Arabian palace, still remaining, is called, not after the Arabian Princess Kuba, as Mr. Jacobi supposes,



supposes, and as the Dominican Fazello had said before him, but after a *vaulted palace*; many of which, according to Shaw, are also to be found in Africa, where the *Marabut*, or hermits, reside.

*Pelgrin*, a mountain near Palermo, where the tomb of St. *Rosalia* is to be seen, does not signify a *neighbouring mountain*, as Mr. Swinburne would teach us to believe; nor is Palermo derived from two Arabic words, which signify *all water*, as the Count *Borch* was informed. *Monte Pelegrino* is Italian; *pan—ormus* are two Greek words, which a celebrated antiquarian has long since explained.

*Azziza*, which in Arabic means *dear*, or *very fine*, may with much more probability have become the surname of a charming Arabian lady's chamber. An Arabian palace near Palermo is thus called, which is thought one of the objects most worthy of notice about  
this

this capital. At the entrance, as it were, of this square palace, built of hewn stone, is an arched vault, or *sala terrena*, lined with marble, in the midst of which a stream of fresh water discharges itself into a large marble basin, and is conveyed through the middle of the hall by means of a canal well contrived for the purpose. The walls are adorned, after the oriental fashion, with Mosaic work and Arabic inscriptions. The whole hall may be compared to those beautiful oriental summer-houses, which are called in Persian *Kioschk*, some of which adorn the strait which leads from the *Dardanelles* into the *Black Sea*. The roof is quite flat, like the houses at Jerusalem, Mecca, and other cities of the south of Asia, or like the superb palaces of a *Durazzo*, a *Doria*, or *Brignole*, at *Genoa*, which are decorated on the top with vases, fountains, and artificial gardens.

Here

Here the observer enjoys a luxuriant prospect over the sea, the harbour, and the whole city ; and, if he turns towards the land side, he contemplates verdant fields and flowery meadows, and the tasteful villas surrounding Palermo. Here the voluptuary can inhale, in the hot evening of summer, the exhilarating breeze ; or, like the most beautiful of all the children of Israel, Absalom, pass the midnight hour in the society of beauty. For in the east it is not unusual to receive visits upon the top of the house, and to repose there—where, with us, cats only are accustomed to sleep. There also may be observed, in the palace Azziza, Mohammed's Paradise, represented according to the description in the Koran, in which he promises gardens to all true believers, through which fountains shall flow ; and that nothing may be wanting to embellish the scene, there is an *harem* on the second story, set  
apart

apart for the Circassian beauties. This is so contrived, that every person can see from it, though they are themselves invisible at the same time to those beneath them. Here I was reminded of the noble, but not sufficiently known, *Kiagidchane* of the Ottoman capital, where by a gentle and even stream, shaded with trees on both sides, under a pavilion of white marble, adorned with gilding, and reclined on costly carpets, and cushions embroidered with gold, the Persian ambassadors or Tartar envoys are regaled with the sound of the oriental guitars, flutes, and cymbals, amidst the most fragrant perfumes, rose-water, and confectionaries.

## A VIEW OF THE SEA.

WHAT is more calculated to give us a sublime conception of Omnipotent power than the view of the sea?

Now

Now one beholds a tremendous storm exalt the waves: the billows dashing against each other cause a terrific roar, like a boiling furnace; so that a man cannot hear his own voice, either on board the ship or on the shore. The colour of the water, which at first appears green, like oil, changes to blue, then becomes dark, and afterwards jet black: the white foam dances upon the sombre and rolling waves: rocks of stupendous altitude elevate their heads above the surface of the water, which threaten at every moment to engulf the traveller: the billows, agitated by the wind, roll higher and higher round the sides of the rocking vessel: the hurricane from the north-east, south-west, or any other point of the compass, blows strongly, and with a clamour which far exceeds any land storm even during the equinoxes: waves, that seem to menace death, extend to the distant margin of the horizon,

horizon, where a frightful solitude leaves the pilot, during a storm, to his perilous destiny ; no help is to be found over the ocean, far and wide ; the only hope then rests upon the few wooden planks which are attached together by pitch. The wind increases ; the waves begin to rage more furiously ; the high masts bow, with their sails drawn in, to the surface of the waters, now on the right, now on the left : no one can stand steady on account of the incessant and violent motion of the ship : all the planks crack so terribly that they seem ready to burst asunder, while the foaming billows beat on the outside of the hollow rebellowing body of the vessel : and no one knows whether it has not already sprung a leak, and by the entrance of the water, made destruction certain. In effect, it rushes into every crevice of the lower part of the ship. The crew, which before in sportive merriment had amused

amused themselves with finging, vaulting, cards, or any other species of diversion, now crowded in a mass, and become desponding, no syllable is uttered from their lips. Now, too, night arrives; the black clouds envelope the horizon, and shut out every gleam of light; thick darkness augments the diversity of horrors; moon and stars are entirely obscured; the neighbouring rocks; the unknown sand-banks; the lightning in the firmament; the powder magazine in the ship; the African pirates; the French corsairs; all rush in a terrifying accumulation upon the mind of the beholder.

At another time, the traveller witnesses a different prospect; the outstretched ocean then exhibits the brightest calm: the sun enlivensthe luxuriant coast, enriched with flowers and fresh verdure; a cooling breeze, like the gentle moaning of the turtle-dove, steals softly over the clear curling water. Many vessels,

vessels, of all forms and descriptions, cross the calm sea with their white sails, purple flags, and painted rudders. The freshly-decorated foreign ships, with their striped and coloured flags, their masts and sails, ride at anchor. The near light-house; the high batteries; the splendid villas and magazines on each side of the harbour; the far-extended suburbs, islands, and villages; the numerous throngs from different countries: Dutch captains, American merchants, English travellers, and strangers from the east, in their various habits and manners, bring intelligence from Lisbon, Alexandria, Philadelphia, and speak of Bengal, Jamaica, of Madras or Essequibo, as of places not far distant. The roaring of the cannon, which announces sometimes the arrival of a packet, sometimes the sailing of a war ship; the striking view of this *winged* castle, as it glides there majestically, and carries with it so many

F sailors,



failors, foldiers, and cannon: all thefe, with other circumftances, render the fea a moft interefting object; while they make the mariners forget their paff fatigues, and invite them chearfully to commence new voyages.

THEATRES.

BOTH the theatres at Palermo are fupplied from year to year with fingers, dancers and actors, by the travelling companies from Italy. No harlequin offends the ears of the delicate fpectator by his coarfe buffoonery; no ftage trick degrades the dignity of the Italian *fpectacle*; regular representations are exhibited, inftead of low pantomimical deceptions, or refined fatires; and well delineated characters have, by degrees, fuperfeded the low humour of former periods. However, there are fometimes exhibited  
fuch

such scenes, as are not to be witnessed in any other city. For instance: *Abbé's* are seen not only to tread the stage in the habit of their order, but to undertake the arrangement of amorous negociations. At Naples last year, in the *Modista Raggiratrice*, (the *Intriguing Milliner*) two girls were seen to put upon an ecclesiastic, a woman's hood, to tear from his neck the collar of his order, that chief ensign of holy dignity, to throw it upon the ground, and with contempt to tread upon it; they then made him gallant proposals, and tenders of favour not very characteristic of Catholic celibacy. I saw that scene exhibited at least twenty times, for the piece was repeated daily; and I told it at the table of a celebrated Cardinal, to whose house I happened shortly afterwards to be invited, merely for the purpose of hearing his observations upon it. I did not think, at that time, that about a year after-

wards the same thing would happen at Palermo.

The two theatres are not to be compared with any of the largest theatres of Europe, either in respect to outward ornaments, or internal decorations. No commodious, much less grand entrance, as at the *Fenice* of *Venice*; no capacious and well lighted boxes, as in the *Alla Scala* at *Milan*; no such *façade*, adorns the grand opera-house at *Berlin*, or the theatre at *Bordeaux*, (which is supported by Corinthian pillars) are here to be found. Still, however, the spectator is not obliged to stand in the pit during the whole performance, which Voltaire objected to in the French theatres, and which is still customary in many parts of Germany. The price of admission is very moderate. The dresses, orchestra, and decorations, are not indeed to be compared with those of the theatres of *Vienna*, *London*, or *Paris*; still all these things  
are

are much better regulated at Palermo, than in many other richer and more populous cities of Europe. There is beside no throng of carriages going and returning; and, in general, no very numerous audience is to be expected, in a city which scarcely appeared to me to contain more than 70,000 inhabitants. On the contrary, there is no need to be alarmed about pickpockets, who may rob the passenger of his watch, purse, or pocket-book, either on entering or coming out of the theatres.

The performers know very well how to represent the characters assigned to them; the *saturnine Englishman*, the *sprightly Frenchman*, and the *German, en caricature*. There, indeed, the spectator does not find a *Contat*, a *Siddons*, a *Mollet*, or a *Jordan*: the *Tommeoni's* and *Billington's* do not travel as far as Sicily for an engagement. Yet there are several actresses of this place, as well as

young actors, who are competent to display a considerable degree of theatrical genius. They are still, however, without a relish for foreign compositions, and know but little of *Cornille*, *Racine*, or *Voltaire*, still less of the chief German pieces; such as those of *Schiller*, *Kotzebue*, and *Iffland*.

The Italians do not pay much attention to the acquirement of languages, as the Germans do; they seldom understand even a little French or Spanish, and consider all other tongues as too discordant. Being exclusively devoted to the beauties of their own language, they are accustomed to have exhibitions in the theatres of their talents in speaking it; just like the musical entertainments of other nations.

Here the *improvvisatori* (or people who possess so remarkable a command of language, that they can return *extempore* an answer in rhyme to any subject proposed to them)

them) are met with. I saw at Palermo four subjects given, one after the other, of which the first was, *Ariadne at Naxos*; the second, *Curtius* precipitating himself into the gulf; the third, *Coriolanus* before his native town; and, lastly, the Invention of the Mirror. The *improvvisatore* answered these points extempore, not only with great facility, but with a splendour of ideas and images conveyed in the most flowing rhymes: and I do not believe that any other language yet known (except the Arabic, in which, as Savary relates, the Egyptian women have an equal readiness, and which far excels the Italian in richness) would be adapted to this purpose.

Beside these colloquial exercises, there are also exhibitions of fencing between twenty persons, or more, either introduced singly on the theatre, or represented in the *ballets* as battles: in which last, the man

who leaps and turns himself in a *grotesque* manner, is applauded more than the solo dancer. He who can whirl himself most skilfully round, three or four times upon one foot, is more admired than the best *prima Donna*; and even the most indifferent ballet is continually preferred to the very best songs.

A small theatre is erected in the summer near the sea. In this *spectacle* men are dressed as women; but no *castrati*, as till now has been the case in Rome, perform female characters. The most indifferent actor plays a *vastaso*, or a porter, dressed according to the fashion of Sicily. Here certainly we must not look for the refined taste which characterizes the larger theatres. The prominent jests consist in blows and cheats. The language is Sicilian, and scarcely intelligible to those who are not well versed in it: *sciariare*, to contend; *chiannare*,

*nare*, to jump ; *taliare*, look ; *costurero*, a taylor ; and many other expressions, which must be learnt even by a native Italian. Punch too, (*pulicinello*) exhibits his public performances, before the people who are passing by, in his usual tone, which any one can imitate by laying a small piece of tin upon the tongue.

In short, there are not wanting, from time to time, *Charlatans* or *Mountebanks*, who amuse by their tales the idle and credulous multitude, and early in the morning keep them from their occupations, as has since been the case at Naples, Milan, and Venice. But the alternative, either to trust to the mercy of the ocean, or to undertake a troublesome and expensive journey through all Calabria, and the north side of Sicily, prevents many people from visiting Palermo. It has therefore a miserable appearance, both as to jugglers and good players. *Mefina,*



finna, on the contrary, which has so long contended for the first rank, which were it not for the residence of the Viceroy, would leave Palermo far behind, has the superiority not only in this, but in other respects. There the traveller enjoys the consoling sight of the not far distant continent, which lies as near as the Asiatic shore is to Constantinople. He can sail over to *Reggio*, in Calabria, in the same manner as to *Scutari*, by breakfast-time, and return home to dinner. Whilst the prospect at Palermo exhibits nothing more than the wide-extended ocean, with the painful recollection, that he must travel perhaps eight days before he can reach the continent. Strangers and news are daily arriving at Messina from Reggio, Scilla, and the opposite coast of Calabria. At Palermo one must frequently wait a whole week before the wind will permit the arrival of a single vessel from the continent. All ships  
which

which sail from the Mediterranean to the Adriatic, or return thither, must pass the Straights of Messina: no day, no hour of the day passes, in which vessels are not in view, either on the right or on the left: most of them put in there; and the port affords a perpetual supply of news. The harbour of Palermo, on the contrary, is generally empty; for, except when a storm drives in some vessels from *Tunis*, *Malta*, or *Sardinia*; or, when the packet-boat, every three weeks, brings over letters and passengers from Naples, it is for the most part but little frequented. Messina has been rebuilt, quite regularly, since the earthquake; provided with most commodious hotels; arranged according to the French and English fashion, and with a convenient theatre; it is, therefore, now become one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. Palermo has still an antique appearance; the houses are built in an awkward

ward top-heavy style, with clumsy iron balconies at all the windows, and without a single tolerable inn : it is also extremely dirty, like Madrid, and is quite after the Spanish fashion.

## AMUSEMENTS.

BESIDE the theatre, that daily *rendez-vous* of the higher classes, cards, concerts, entertainments, and *promenades*, are the usual recreations here, as in other places. *Commerce* and *Bassetta*, that well known chance-game, are played here with as much warmth, as *Pharao* is at our Leipzig and Frankfort fairs. *Chefs*, which in Russia is so common, that *Coxe* says he saw it played in all companies, and even in shops, is as rare here as in other parts of Italy. The game of billiards, on the contrary, is universally known,  
as

as in Germany ; yet it is not played in coffee-houses, but in places particularly appropriated for that purpose. The coffee-houses of Italy have neither the capacious extent, nor the convenience and splendour, which you find in those of Vienna, or other cities of Germany ; where the gilded clocks, the looking-glasses and lustres, the marble walls, pictures, and other ornaments, strike you as you enter ; where political journals and newspapers, of all names and descriptions, supply the inquisitive traveller, with the most interesting accounts from every quarter of Europe, added to those of the place where he happens to reside. There also he is provided with the latest discoveries in all branches of science, and with the most pleasant voyages and books, as in Beygang's noble museum at Leipzig.

Smoking, nine-pins, shooting at a mark, and other amusements, of which the populace

lace partake, are here, as in the other parts of Italy, entirely unknown. The Grecian horse-race, in which formerly Hiero distinguished himself so much, that the sublime Pindar composed an ode in his praise, is likewise at present in little use among the Sicilians.

But instead of it, in summer, a race is often run, in which young jockeys, till lately, could have displayed their skill as brilliantly as at Newmarket. However, since different accidents have happened, the *corfa* at present consists merely of horses without any riders. The race is arranged in the following manner:—As soon as the hour has struck, and all the people are assembled at the place appointed, the first signal is made at the end of the course, by the discharge of a mortar. The horses, caparisoned with ribbons, stand by each other in a row, full of spirit, and stamping with such eagerness to commence

mence their career, that they are with difficulty held by their thick manes. Scarcely is the signal given, when they are all released at once from the lifts. Every eye is fixed on the fleet animals. They fly with the swiftness of the wind before the crowded windows, and seem to separate, with incredible velocity, the thronged rows of spectators: the rods flung about their necks strike them the harder, the quicker their bounding motion becomes in the impetuous career. The last is often swift enough to overtake his adversary, until a signal at the goal announces the arrival of the foremost. The conqueror, crowned with the prize, is then led back in triumph through the crowd, full of animation: he seems to feel his importance, when he receives the applause of the female spectators, who clap their hands; whilst the lively trumpets and kettle-drums fill up the interval in delightful and cheering sounds.

founds. After he has paced slowly through the long rows of spectators, the discharge of the mortar gives the signal for the second and third sweepstakes.

Beside this amusement, which they seem to have derived from the Greeks, bull-fights have also continued from the time of the Spaniards. These are but faint imitations of those which are exhibited before the gate of Alcala, at Madrid, where the Andalusian bulls, eighteen at a time, in a spacious amphitheatre, are first attacked with spears, by the *Picadores* on horseback, then pursued with fire-breathing *Vanderillas*, by the *Vanderilleros* on foot; and, at last, are killed by the pointed sword of the *Matador*, who protects himself with a mantle of a scarlet colour.

This is a curious fight! The blood flows like a stream from the breast or from the mouth of one horse; whilst another, without  
uttering

uttering any sound, drags after him his entrails that have been torn out by the bull : now a bull is seen, whose neck is covered with oats, which just before were in the stomach of the horse ; then another, running about for some time with a sword penetrating his body, even to the hilt : here a horse, whose belly the bull has gored with his horns, is with his rider precipitated to the ground : there a bull jumps over the barriers, forces the *Torreros* that are within, leaps almost perpendicularly, or kneels upon the ground with his front legs, and expires even before the *Matador* can have time to slay him. During the whole scene, the spectators are kept in continual expectation.

Amongst the public walks of Palermo, the Flora, or the newly planted flower-garden, is distinguished : this is not, indeed, so long as the *Villa Reale* at *Naples* ; but it is as *open*, and as near the sea coast, as that delightful



spot. The fragrant orange-walks, the pellucid fountains, the statues and pavilions, the salubrious climate, and the prospect of the sea, all conspire to augment the beauties of this *promenade*.

The botanical garden, situated commodiously near the *Flora*, with the temple erected at the entrance, which is ornamented with fluted colossal pillars, festoons, and niches, also adds greatly to the attractions of this public walk, which is surrounded with iron grates, like the new botanical garden at Madrid; so that the eye can trace its extent without entering; and, as it displays throughout the year, in the open air, an infinite variety of flowers and the rarest plants, the *musa*, the *papyrus*, the *sugar-cane*, and *palm*, it becomes no trifling ornament to the adjoining *Flora*.

But the principal promenade is in the vicinity of the sea coast, by the northern gate,  
the

the *Porta Felice* : an extended straight mole, of quarry-stones, is raised along the city, in the most convenient manner for foot passengers of both sexes. The most splendid equipages of Palermo here assemble in an evening ; are driven backwards and forwards, as in the *Corso* of the other cities of Italy, remain on the left, and on the right, according to their possessor's fancy, or stand still while they enjoy a view of the carriages as they pass by in a train, and the magnificent prospect of the open sea.

Here may be seen phaetons of the latest fashion, English harness plated with silver, and chariots ornamented with gilding, and with the highest varnish ; beside thoroughbred horses, which, with their beautiful colours and shapes, their fire and spirit, attract all eyes towards them. Here the spectator may meet sometimes an intimate friend, who drives his foaming steeds ; sometimes

the most lovely women, who nod a flattering salutation from their open carriages, or converse familiarly as they pass by. Mount Pelegrino, which towards the north forms a promontory in the sea, there exhibits a picturesque view to the eye of the passenger. This was the mountain, on whose summit formerly Hamilcar, the General of the Carthaginians encamped, to defy the Roman forces : and here the *Numidian cavalry*, the elephants trained and accoutered, the African armour, all present themselves to the imagination.

Below it, at the entrance of the harbour, is the light-house, which being illuminated in the evening with a number of lamps, makes, with its crimson fire, a pleasant *point de vue*. Near this is heard the whispering murmur of the waves, which, with their ceaseless motion, harmonize the mind, and enliven the whole landscape. New acquaintance

quaintance are formed there ; interesting news is heard ; schemes of entertainment, and parties of pleasure are arranged ; the day is ended cheerfully, and every one returns to his home, by the high city gate, as soon as the twilight closes.

## OTHER CUSTOMS.

AT Palermo, decapitation is performed by means of a machine, similar to the guillotine ; it is called a *Manara*. I saw the lawyer *Blasi* beheaded by it ; being convicted of a desire to effect a revolution in Sicily. Three days before the sentence was announced, a red flag was displayed at the court of justice, on which was inscribed the Latin inscription, *Discute justitiam populi*. A confraternity attended the criminal to the scene of execution ; and, after the law had taken its due course, the ceremonies were

performed as in other countries. Shortly after this event had taken place, I was sensibly impressed, while I read in the public library a dissertation, written by the same person, wherein he repeals the capital punishment with *Beccaria*, though, at the same time, he fixes the punishment for high-treason. *Blasi*, at that period, did not foresee that he was anticipating his own fate.

I also particularly disliked to see those who are condemned to the cord, after hanging scarcely half an hour, consigned to the grave. It was once my lot to be the witness of so inhuman a practice, when, after the ceremony had concluded, I was proceeding on horseback out of the town, and, on passing near a burying-ground, I saw a body consigned to the earth, which I had beheld not an hour before—an animated being! I communicated the sentiments which possessed my mind, upon this subject,

to

to the President of the country, the late *Viceroy*, while I was at dinner with him the following day ; but both the circumstance, and my observations arising from it, seemed equally uninteresting to his feelings.

I was still more astonished at another period, when, going to witness a sacred ceremony in the church of the Capuchins, on my entrance I perceived, in the middle of the choir, a coffin, closed ; it was covered with black garments, in which were enveloped the remains of a young female, who had recently expired by the side of a despairing husband. I shuddered at this sight, because it has been proved, that as long as putrefaction has not taken place, there remains a principle of animation in the human body.

There is also another instance of neglect in this country, with regard to drowned persons. I saw a man, who had precipitated

G 4                      himself

himself into the sea, immediately afterwards brought on shore; yet no person thought of attempting the smallest of those experiments, by which in England so many examples are annually shewn, of re-animation under similar circumstances.

I did not find at Palermo any of those conductors, the important discovery of which adorns the present century. I found no electrical machines, by which, in other countries, such effects have been produced upon the human body. Mr. Though, an Englishman, established at Palermo, has, however, that species of machine in his possession: and many invalids have, in consequence of its influence, been indebted to him for their recovery.

As a general observation, it will be found correct, that Sicily is not in a state the most perfectly enlightened. There are no inns, but those that are so miserably inconvenient,  
that

that the traveller finds himself necessitated to lodge in a monastery. During my sojourn in Sicily, I was offered to lodge in two different convents; that of the Carmelites, and the Conventual Friars. Owing to the uncomfortable, as well as slovenly, state of the public inns at *Terra Nuova*, the nearest post towards *Malta*, we were obliged to lodge at the Franciscans, and at *Taormina*, where there still remains the magnificent theatre, surrounded by those sublime prospects, which Hakert lately travelled from Naples to copy; we called at the Capuchins, who having kept me, with an American gentleman and a numerous suite, waiting for half an hour, the door being closed against us, we were under the necessity of seeking accommodation at the second-rate inn of the town (kept by a shoe-maker), where, not long before, the lovely Princess *Belmonte*, the daughter of the Marquis *Verac*,



Verac, had passed a night; being prohibited by the *clausure* to enter the Capuchin convent. Under similar circumstances, Lord Wycomb, the son of the Marquis of Lansdowne, in whose society I had travelled the preceding year, to the temple of *Segesta*, and to the ruins of *Agrigentum*, was obliged to dine once in a kitchen, and at another time in a stable. Such are the accommodations for travellers, who make the *tour* of Sicily!

Owing to the want of convenient roads, those who proceed on their journey, are conveyed seven hundred English miles, either on horseback or in palanquins, borne by mules. Our party completed such a distance in twenty-eight days. It is necessary, on this *route*, to carry not only knives, forks, glasses, coffee-cups, and napkins, but even a bed; in neglect of which the traveller is obliged to pass his nights on straw;

no very soothing situation, after a fatiguing journey.

This is often the case in various parts of Italy, where, only within a few years, more commodious inns have been established. Even on the principal high road from Rome to Naples, both lodgings and provisions for the table are deplorably defective. At *Capua*, a town only two posts from Naples, the traveller is obliged to lodge miserably, and still more wretchedly to dine. On the cross roads, as from *Naples* to *Manfredonia*, the accommodations are rather worse than better: unfurnished walls, and uncomfortable beds; no casements at the windows; and the only food, *maccaroni*, prepared with no very tempting cleanliness, added to sheep-cheese and water, compose the scanty accommodations of the unrested traveller.

## LANGUAGE.

THE dialect spoken in Sicily differs materially from that of the Neapolitan, and other states of Italy ; not only in the extent, but even in the words. No Doric sounds, like those which gave delightful harmony to the pastoral strains of *Theocritus*, and which were iterated by Virgil, on Roman and on German ground, now salute the ear. No Latin, as it was spoken in the days of *Cicero*, is now understood by the inferior classes of the people. The Arabic, a language cultivated more than three hundred years in that island, is spoken no longer ; though a number of Arabic words still mingle with the Sicilian dialect, as well as with that of Portugal and Spain. By that means several Arabic expressions have been inter-  
spered

spread in the German vocabulary ; though they are not so generally used as has been represented by Mr. Koch, who, in his *Comparisons of the Mineralogic Names of Germans*, attributes even the derivation of the words *gold*, *silver*, and *copper*, to the Arabic.

Though the dialect of Sicily deviates from the purity of the Tuscan, as widely as the Swiss does from the German spoken in Saxony, there are poems printed in the Sicilian language ; and these convey as dulcet a tone to the ear of a native, as did the Attic to that of the Greeks. They even commiserate the German pronunciation, as an inhabitant of *Nanking*, the ancient capital of China, contemns the corrupted jargon of the south-eastern province *Fokien*. Yet, where the various vowels of the German, the *o*, the *u*, and the *a*, are properly accented, the language is in no degree less mellifluous than the French, or the Hungarian. To

To exemplify the Sicilian dialect, I here present to my reader four lines of a celebrated composition, in that language :

Occiuzzi nivuri, si taliati,  
 Facciti cadiri casi e citati !  
 Jeu muru debuli di petra taju  
 Cunfideratilu, si allura caju !

TRANSLATION.

Thou brilliant eye ! whose magic glance  
 Can bid the loftiest fabric shake !  
 O ! say, can I, who feebly gaze,  
 Resist thy strong and piercing blaze ;  
 Nor in a sweet delicious trance  
 Fall prostrate, for thy sake ?

It is to be observed, that the Italian language owes its profusion of vowels to that of the Sicilian ; and to those vowels it is also indebted for its sweet and melodious sound : for that offspring of the Latin should, like her sisters, the Spanish, the French, and the Wallachian, be terminated by consonants. But, in the court of Frederick the Second,  
 when

when the Arabic was the learned language of Sicily, it received those vowels which found so well in the dialect of the *Koran*.

At the court of Palermo, the Italian became the book language. The earliest of the Italian poets were from Sicily; and, according to the testimony of Dante and Petrarca, were denominated Sicilians. Frederick was himself a poet: and not long since a *sonetto* was published at Palermo, written by that Emperor to his mistress; in which he describes the graces of her person, and his ardent passion for her, in that language, which is so peculiarly adapted to such a subject.

There is also another poetical composition still extant, from the pen of *Ciullo d'Alcamo*, the most remote of the Sicilian poets. It was published at the same period with the *sonetto* of Frederick; but being, perhaps, one of the most beautiful, as well as  
the

the most ancient specimen of the Italian language that has appeared, I here present my readers with a copy :

*Proposta.*

ROSA fresca aulentissima, ca pari in ver l' estate ;  
 Le donne te defiano pulcelle maritate ;  
 Traheme d'este focora, se t'este a bolontate.  
 Per te non aio abento nocte e dia  
 Penzando pur di voi, madonna mia.

*Risposta.*

Se di mene trabalgiati, follia lo ti fa fare,  
 Lo mare potresti arompere avanti a te menare ;  
 L' abete d'esto seculo tutto quanto assembrare.  
 Havere me non poteria esto monno ;  
 Auanti li cavalli mari sonno.

*Proposta.*

Si li cavalli attoniti avanti fossio mortto,  
 Caifi mi perderà lo solazzo e lo diportto.  
 Quando ci passo, e veioti, rosa fresca del' ortto,  
 Bono conforto donimi tutt'ore,  
 Poniamo ca s'aiunga il nostro amore.

*Risposta.*

Ke'l nostro amore aiungasi non boglio m'attalenti ;  
 Se ci si trova paremo col gli altri miei parenti,  
 Guarda non t'argolano questi forti corenti :  
 Como ti seppe bona la venuta,  
 Io ti configlio, che ti guardi a la partuta.

*Proposta.*

*Proposta.*

Se tuoi parenti trovanmi, e che mi pozon fare?  
 Vna difesa mettoci di dumi . . . .  
 Non mi tocara patreto, per quanto avere ambare.  
 Viva lo 'mperadore graz' a Deo,  
 Entendi, bella, quel che ti dico eo.

*Risposta.*

Tu me non lasci vivere nè sera nè matino,  
 Donna mi sono di perperi d'auro massa motino:  
 Se tanto avere donaffimi quanto à lo Saladino,  
 E per aiunta quant' à lo Soldano,  
 Tocaremè non poteria la mano.

*Proposta.*

Molte sono le femine, c'anno dura la testa,  
 E l' omo con parabole le domina ed à 'n potesta  
 Tanto intorno percazala fin chè l' hà 'n sua podesta;  
 Femmina d' omo non si puo tenere,  
 Guardati, bella, pur de ripentère.

*Risposta.*

Ch'eo mene pentesse davanti fossio auccisa,  
 Ca nulla bona femina per me fosse riprisa:  
 Et sera ci passasti, o coremo, alla distisa:  
 A questi ti risposa canzoneri,  
 Le tue parabole a me non piaccion gueri.

*Proposta.*

Donna, quante son le sciantora, che m'ai miso a lo core,  
 E solo pur pensando . . . .  
 Femina d'esto secolo tanto non à mai amore  
 Quanto mo . . . .  
 Bene credo, che mi fossi destinata.

H

Rif-



*Risposta.*

Se diffinata foffeti, caderia dal' alteze,  
 Che male mese forano in te le mie belleze :  
 Se tua adiveniffimi, talgliariami le treze.  
 E comfore me tenno . . . .  
 Che mai tochino le perfone.

*Proposta.*

Se tu comfore arementi donna col viso zete  
 Alo mostero . . . .  
 Per tanta prova vencierre, faralo volentieri ;  
 Con tico stao la sera, e lo matino,  
 Che fogno ch'io ti tenga al mio domino.

*Risposta.*

Hoimè tapina misera, com'ajo reo diffinato,  
 Gieso Christo l'altissimo del core m'è aitato  
 . . pistime ad abattere in omo bestemiato,  
 Cierca la terra, che ste . . . .  
 Chiù bella donna di me troverai.

*Proposta.*

Ciercat' aio Calabria, Toscana, e Lombardia,  
 Puglia, Constantinopoli, Genova, Pisa, Soria,  
 La Magna, e Babilonia, tutta la Barberia ;  
 Donna . . . .

. . . . .

*Risposta.*

Poi tanto trabagliafi, facioti meo pregheri,  
 Che tu vadi adomanimi a mia mare : ed a mon peri,  
 Se dare mi ti dengnano, menami a lo mosteri ;  
 E sposami davanti dela jente,  
 E poi farò lo tuo commannamento. *Pro-*

*Proposta.*

Di ciò che dici, vitama, niente non ti bale,  
 Ca de le tue parabole fatte n'ò ponti, e scale,  
 Penne penzasti mettere, son ricadute l'ale,  
 E dato t'ajo la bolta sottana;  
 Dunque, se poi, teniti villana.

*Risposta.*

En paura non mettermi di nullo manganiello,  
 I' stomi 'n esta grolia d' esto forte castiello,  
 Prezzo le tuo parabole meno che d' un zitello,  
 Se tu non levi, e vattire di quaci,  
 Se tu ci fossi mortto, ben mi chiaci.

*Proposta.*

Dunque voresti, vitama, ca per te fosse strutto?  
 Se morto esser deboci, o dintagliato tutto,  
 Di quaci non mi mosera, se non aio de lo frutto;  
 Lo quale stao nelo tuo sordino,  
 Difiolo la fera e lo matino.

*Risposta.*

Di quello frutto non abero conti, nè cabalieri,  
 Molto lo disiano marchesi, e justizieri,  
 Avere non de potero, gironde molto feri;  
 Intendi bene ciò che bol dire  
 Ben'este di millonze lo tuo havire.

*Proposta.*

Molti sono li garofani che salmandai,  
 Bella, non dispregiareme, s'avanti non m'affay:  
 Se vento è in proda, e girati, e giungeti ale prai  
 A rimembrare taozte parole  
 Cade trasta animella affai midole.

*Risposta.*

Macara se dolesseti, cha cadesse angosciato,  
 La gente ci coreffero da traverso, e d'allato,  
 Tura mevé diciesono acorri esto malnato;  
 Non ti dignara porgie e la mano,  
 Per quanto avere a'l Papa e lo Soldano.

*Proposta.*

Deo lo voleffe, vitama, ca te fosse morto 'n casa  
 L'arma manderia consola, cà dì e notte pantafà;  
 La giente ti chiameranno oi periura, malvasa,  
 Ca morto l'omo in casata traite:  
 Sanz' omni colpa levimi la vita.

*Risposta.*

Se tu non levi, e vatine cola maledizione e,  
 Li frati mei ti trovano dintro chifsa magione:  
 Bello mi foscio, perdici le persone,  
 Ca mene se' venuto a sermonare,  
 Parente ned'amico non t'ave aiutare.

*Proposta.*

Amene non aitano amici, nè parenti  
 I' strani mi sono, carama, e fra esta bona iente  
 Or fà un anno, vitama ch'entrata mi se' 'n mente  
 Dicanno ti vististi lo traito,  
 Bella, da quello iorno sono fornuto.

*Risposta.*

Ai tanto 'namorastiti i vola lo traito,  
 Come se fosse porpora, iscarlato, o sciamito:  
 S'a le vangiele iurimi, che mi sia a marito,  
 Avere me non poterà esto m onno:  
 Avanti in mare ijtomi al profonno.

*Pro-*

*Proposta.*

Se tu nel mare gititi, donna cortese e fina,  
 Dereto mi ti misera per tuta la marina,  
 Poi catergareti trobareti ala rina:  
 Sola per questa cosa ad impretiare,  
 Con tico m'ajo a giungere, e pecare.

*Risposta.*

Segnomi in patre, en filio, e di santo Mateo,  
 So ca non se' tu retico, o figlio di giudeo,  
 E con tali parabole non udire dire ancheo  
 Morttasi la femina a loututto  
 Perdici lo laboro, e lo dir dotto.

*Proposta.*

Bene lo faccio, carama, altro non poza fare  
 Se chisso non arcomplimi, lassone lo cantare:  
 Fallo, mia donna, plazati, che bene lo puoi fare,  
 Ancora tu non m'ami, molto t'amo,  
 Si m'ai preso come lo pesce all' amo.

*Risposta.*

Sazo che m'ami, & amoti di core paladino,  
 Levati suso, e vattine, tornaci alo matino:  
 Se ciò, che dico, faciemi, di buon core t'amo, e fino:  
 Questo ben t'imprometto, e sanza falglia,  
 Tè la mea fede, che m'ai in tua balglia.

*Proposta.*

Perzò che dici, carama, neiente non mi movo,  
 Inanti prenni, e scannami, tollo esto cortello novo,  
 Esto fatto fare potesi inanti scalfi un uovo.  
 Arcomplimi talento, mica bella,  
 Che l'arma colo core mi s'infella.

*Risposta.*

Ben fazo, l'arma doleti, com'ommo, c'ave arfura,  
 Esto fatto non poterfi per null'altra misura  
 Se non m'ale vangeliè, che mo ti dico, iura ;  
 Avere me non puoi in tua podesta,  
 Inanti prenni, e talgliami la testa.

*Proposta.*

L'evangelie, carama, ch'eo le porto in fino.  
 Alo mostero prefile, non ci era lo patrino,  
 Sor'esto libro iuroti, mai non ti vengno mino :  
 Arcomplimi talento in caritate,  
 Che l'arma me ne sta in sutilitate.

*Risposta.*

Meo Sire, poi iurastimi, eo tutta quanto incienno,  
 Sono alla tua presenza, da voi non mi difenno,  
 S'eo min espreso aoti, mercè a voi m'arenno.  
 Alo . . . .  
 Che chista cosa m'è data in bentura.

## CHEATS

IT is related by *Cicero*, who sojourned for some time in Sicily, that *Cajus Canius*, a Roman Knight, had chosen the Sicilian climate for his home. He therefore wished  
 to

to purchase a villa near Syracuse, which was at that period the capital of the island, where he might entertain his friends, and the distinguished females of that country. *Pythius*, a wealthy banker, having obtained information of his desire, acquainted him that he had an handsome villa to let, which, though he did not mean to dispose of entirely, *Canius* might enjoy, as frequently as he thought proper. To this proposal he also added, an invitation to dine with him the following day. The banker having an extensive circle of acquaintance with all ranks of people, gave orders that on the succeeding day a number of fishermen should employ themselves in their occupation near the garden of his villa. At the appointed hour *Canius* was punctual to his invitation. *Pythius* had prepared a splendid repast; during which the labourers in their boats, bringing the fish they had taken, and placing

H 4

them

them before their employer, *Canius*, astonished at so extraordinary a proceeding, demanded to know the reason why so many fishermen in boats were thronging to the shore. *Pythius* replied, that there was nothing singular in the circumstance, for that the fishermen were accustomed to assemble on that spot, as the principal fishery of Syracuse.

On receiving this intelligence, *Canius* became more desirous than ever of purchasing the villa. *Pythius* at first affected a reluctance to part with it; but, after some hesitation, at length consented. *Canius*, being sufficiently wealthy, immediately paid the sum demanded, and invited his friends to his new habitation on the following day. On his arrival, before his guests, and beholding no fishing-boats; his consternation was only to be equalled by his disappointment. Supposing their absence was the consequence  
of

of some holiday, he enquired earnestly of a neighbour ; but the answer convinced him that he had been deceived, and that the spot which he inhabited was not the fishing-place of Syracuse. The indignation which *Canius* felt was infinite ; “ but he had no remedy,” says *Cicero*, (de Offic. lib. iii. cap. 14.) “ for *Acquilius*, my colleague, had not then published the law *de dolo malo* : and barbarism was still so prevalent in Sicily, that no other law then existed for the punishment of such an imposition.”

The modern capital has also produced many remarkable impostors. The well-known Joseph Balsamo, afterwards called the Count *Cagliostro*, was a native of Palermo. At his trial in the Bastile, he asserted that he was born at Malta, and reared at Medina, in Arabia, in the house of the *Mufti Salaahym*, where he was known by the name of *Ahharat* : his establishment consisted



fitted of his mentor, *Altotas*, and three eunuchs, who were his attendants.

At the age of twenty-one years he commenced his travels, with the caravan, to *Mecca* : there he resided during three years, with the Sheriff, who, at the termination of that period, dismissed him, with tears of sorrow, at the same time exclaiming, “*Farewell ! unhappy Son of Nature !*”

He then proceeded, with his mentor, towards Egypt, where he became a pupil of the Egyptian priests, who initiated him in their mystic sciences. After having passed three years more in visiting the principal kingdoms of Africa and Asia, he returned, by Rhodes, to Malta, and to his father, the Grand Master, *Pinto* ; declaring himself, at the same time, to be his son, by the *Princess of Trebifonte*. Here he and his mentor relinquished the oriental habit, and *Balsamo* was recognized as the Count *Cagliostro*.

*Altotas*

*Altotas* being dead, he declared that he came to Sicily, accompanied by a Knight of Malta, the *Principe Caramanico*, who was afterwards Viceroy of Sicily.

At Palermo he commenced his practice of deception. Being one day in company with some friends, they wished to know in what occupation a lady of their acquaintance was employed at that moment. He drew a square on the floor, and, upon passing his hand over it, the figure of the lady became visible: she was seated, with three gentlemen, at a gaming-table. A messenger was instantaneously dispatched to her lodging, and she was found precisely in the situation which had been presented by *Cagliostro*.

At another time, he intimated to a silversmith that there was hidden, near the town, a considerable treasure; that he only required some assistance to become the possessor of  
it.

it. At the same time he displayed about sixty ounces of gold, (near thirty guineas) as samples of the ore. The silversmith, however, instead of finding the promised treasure, was waylaid and most inhumanly beaten by several powerful assailants, in the habits of devils, and afterwards sent home to lament his credulity. Speedily after this event, *Cagliostro* thought it advisable to prepare for his departure from Palermo, and to make some other spot the scene of his impostures.

A character no less mysterious has been since exhibited by *Joseph Vella*, a native of *Malta*. This personage also circulated a report, that the same Grand Master, *Pinto*, had sent him to Rome, to the College of the *Propaganda*. There he is said to have studied the Arabic during seven years, under the learned *Affemanni*; and afterwards to have been sent by the Grand Master to the  
Levant,

Levant, where he travelled through *Palestine*, *Egypt*, and *Barbary*, during several years.

Above ten years ago, he caused a report to be propagated over Europe, that he had recovered the lost works of *Livy* in an Arabian manuscript. All hope has been long relinquished, respecting the *decades* of *Livy*, which are still wanting in an Arabic translation\*. *Pietro della Valle*, *Erpenius Clodius*, and others, were of opinion, that those precious remains were preserved in the library of the Grand Seignior, at Constantinople †. *Savary* conjectures that not only *Livy*, but *Tacitus* also, and *Diodorus*, of Sicily, have been translated into the Arabic ‡: and Sir William Jones wished that also the works of *Archimedes*, the *Newton* of

\* There are fifty-nine Books lost.

† Toderini's Letter. Turca, tom. ii. p. 46.

‡ Lettres sur l'Egypte, tom. iii. let. 79.

Sicily,

Sicily, might be restored, by the aid of Arabic versions \*.

To the discovery of the Arabic *Livy*, in Sicily, the newest travels of *Bartel*, *Salis Marshlin*, *Stollberg*, and *Jacobi* have references. *Vella*, pursuing the same idea, speaks of a French painter, (*Fabré*, or *Favay*) who, as he was drawing the mosque of St. Sophia, at Constantinople, had found on the cornice of that magnificent fabric a packet, which he took possession of, and which he presented to the Grand Master, *Pinto*, at Malta. He is said to have presented this valuable relique to his favourite, *Vella*, with the following words: "Take this manuscript, it will some day render you happy!"

I was given to understand the same when I first travelled to Palermo, in the year 1794, in order to examine that manuscript; and I then hoped that if *Livy* could be found in

\* *Asiat. Research.* vol. I. The Second Discourse.  
a country,

a country, which was possessed by the Arabs during several centuries, other works of the ancients might also be recovered. But I drew the veil from the imposture, and publicly declared the truth at my return to Vienna\*.

Not satisfied with having amused a considerable part of Europe, during several years, with that delusion, and with persuading an English lady to offer, with British generosity, in the year 1794, a sum sufficient for the publication of that part of the Roman History so much desired, he availed himself of the arrival of an ambassador from Morocco; who, returning from Naples, was by contrary winds, detained during some days at Palermo. He declared that the African Minister had found in the abbey of St. Martin, near Palermo, (whither Vella

\* Reise von Warschau nach der Hauptstadt Siciliens.  
Wien. 1795.

accompanied him) a curious Arabian MS. containing the history of Sicily, during the period of the Arabic dominion.

As the tradition of those times is extremely defective, this report was popularly fancied. An opulent Bishop of Palermo expended considerable sums in the translation of the work, in six volumes, which appeared in the course of ten years; and it was not till the greatest part was completed, that the manuscript was discovered to be a forgery\*.

The impostor also persuaded his Sicilian Majesty to believe, that a ring, with an antique inscription, in Arabic, discovered near *Sora*, in Calabria, had been the nuptial ring of Roger, the founder of the Sicilian monarchy; which formerly had been but a pro-

\* The author of this work, last year, published an account of this imposture, both in the German and the French languages.

vince,

vince, till it was by him created a kingdom. To this mysterious relique of antiquity he ascribed the following line :

*Annulus nuptialis Rogerii—*

and report affirms, that his Majesty was so highly gratified by the present, that he constantly wore it on his finger during his journey to Vienna. For my own part, I did not hesitate to declare to Mr. Daniele, the royal historiographer, who had purchased it for the Sovereign, that the inscription spoke neither of Roger, nor of a nuptial ring : and the translations of it, by the two learned orientalists, Mr. *Sacy*, at Paris, and Mr. *Adler*, at Copenhagen, fully confirm my opinion ; the latter of which, as being more accordant with my sentiments upon the subject, I here transcribe in the original characters.





TRANSLATION BY MR. ADLER.

يسير الحق من القدر  
كل من راي فلا غدر

Truth and Justice come from God! who  
perceives it does not err. \*

The same author made use of false inscriptions, to prove that *Messina* was, in the

\* The other translation wholly differs from this, and has been published in Mr. Millin's *Magazin Encycloped.* année 8. N. 23.

time

time of the Saracens, denominated *Zankle*, a name which Messina had lost a thousand years before the arrival of the Arabs, when the Messenians came from Peloponesus. For that purpose he pretended that he found *Carmatic* inscriptions at *Messina*, which he published at Palermo.

I here present a specimen of those *Carmatic* characters ; for I was myself at Messina, with a view to make researches respecting that inscription. No person among the learned of that town ever knew of it, neither was it in the palace of M. Ruffo, where *Vella* said it was preserved ; and it is unquestionably proved, by the *Nubian Geographer*, and all other Arabic Historians, that Messina was not, under the Saracens, denominated *Zankle*, but Messina.

مَنَّا مَنَّا مَنَّا مَنَّا مَنَّا مَنَّا  
 لَنَفْسِكَ لَنَفْسِكَ لَنَفْسِكَ  
 لَنَفْسِكَ لَنَفْسِكَ لَنَفْسِكَ  
 لَنَفْسِكَ لَنَفْسِكَ لَنَفْسِكَ  
 لَنَفْسِكَ لَنَفْسِكَ لَنَفْسِكَ  
 لَنَفْسِكَ لَنَفْسِكَ لَنَفْسِكَ

*Vella* translated it as follows:—"Congregabimus vos. Volumus neque gratiarum actionem, neque remunerationem nisi faciem Dei liberalis. Safian filius Kafagia, Emir Zanklæ."

Which translation, although right, and agreeable to that which Mr. *Tychsen* gave, is nevertheless fruitless, the original being forged.

SOLEMNITIES.

## SOLEMNITIES.

IN addition to the annual festivals, in the different churches of the capital, and of the neighbouring places, there are fairs, where booths and shops are erected, and where the beauties of Palermo assemble to display their taste, and their attractions. There is likewise every year, at the beginning of July, a solemn *fête*, which the English traveller *Brydone* has exquisitely described, in his *Tour* through Sicily: though, as few strangers sojourn at Palermo during the sultry season, the work is not so universally known as it deserves to be.

A triumphal car, three tier in altitude, is annually erected at the *Porta Felice*, upon which is placed an orchestra, with the image of *Saint Rosalia*, whose *fête* is thus celebrated.

brated. This car is drawn, on the first day, from the Viceroy's palace, through the principal streets of Palermo, to the sea-side. From twenty to thirty horses, with a proportionate train of attendants, convey this majestic machinery, (which towers even to the third story of the houses) representing an altar, sumptuously decorated with silver branches, for tapers, and vases festooned with flowers. At the distance of every twenty paces the cavalcade is arrested in its progress, in order to afford the spectators a view of its splendour; while the orchestra sends forth the most harmonious strains. During the whole of the afternoon the procession parades through the streets, till it arrives at the termination of that which crosses the whole city.

This magnificent cavalcade is succeeded by the most vivid illuminations. The *Casfero*, a street of one Italian mile in length, extending

extending from the northern to the southern gate, is decorated with dazzling pyramids of light, which form at once a rich and brilliant perspective.

Near the town-house, a fountain throws out its glittering streams, encircled with orange-trees, and aromatic plants of the most beautiful description. This spot being also illuminated, affords a delightful *promenade*, as well as a lively scene, to the spectator.

Along the sea-shore, on the public walk, the walls of the city are covered with blazing lamps, which magically attract the eye, appearing three times more extended in length, than they really are by day-light. The whole seems studded with brilliants, as the sportive imagination has described in fairy imagery. The lustre of so many artificial stars, reflected on the ocean; the gay and ever-moving throngs; the sounds of har-

I 4                      mony,

mony, and the superb fire-work, which rises on the sea-shore, accompanied by cannonading from the vessels, (representing a marine engagement, and intermingled with rockets whizzing through the air) present a scene which is perhaps unequalled.

On the fifth and last day of this annual festival, a procession is displayed, in which every order of monks exhibits a stage, bearing their particular saints. Some of these platforms are again so lofty, that they are on a level with the third stories of the buildings; and they are also of such magnitude, that more than thirty men are employed to bear them. The reliques of *Saint Rosalia* are borne at the close of the procession, in a silver coffin. The whole Senate, and all the Colleges, accompany the cavalcade, and the evening concludes with a fire-work and illuminations.

A similar ceremony is displayed at Constantinople,

stantinople, when a *Donanmaw* is celebrated. During five, six, or seven nights, all the streets of that spacious city, with their shops, magazines, and public buildings, are illuminated in a manner the most brilliant and diversified. The palaces of the Grand Vizier, the Reis Effendi, and all the nobility, on that occasion, display their magnificence. The *Beseftan*, or the principal Exchange in that capital, is decorated with Persian and Indian stuffs, Damascene fabrics and arms, oriental gems, and pearls in a sumptuous profusion. Every individual endeavours to attract the notice of the multitude towards his habitation, by the display of fountains, artificial gardens, mirrors, lustres, and furniture of massy silver. The enchanting *kiosks* \*, near the sea; the illuminated *minarets* †; the lofty *dchamees* ‡, form

\* Persian summer-houses.

† Turrets of the Mahometan temples.

‡ The great mosques.

a luxuriant



a luxuriant prospect. On the ocean, the siege of Rhodes, Malta, or some other maritime place, is represented, while the Grand Seignior visits the splendid mansions of the foreign Ministers.

On a horse, whose front and chest are adorned with jewels, whose covering, embroidered with gold and Arabian pearl, sweeps along the ground, guarded on both sides by attendants, dressed in golden drapery, and crowned with waving feathers, sits the Sultan: his robe is of green, bordered with sables; on the sides of which five rows of diamonds superbly glitter. His head is surrounded with a white turban, which is fastened in the front by a jewel of considerable magnitude, from which issues a plume of dazzling brilliants.

A long train of *Janissaries*, *Kapidchibashees*, *Tshoushes*, and *Tchohadaurs*, attend either before, or around the horse of their Sovereign.

Sovereign. Behind him rides the *Grand Vizier*, with a quadrangular turban, about which a band of gold is twined obliquely. A numerous suite encircles the horse of state, which majestically bears his costly trappings. Near him follows the *Mufti*, in another species of habit, attended also by his retinue; with the *Kapoodan Pachaw*, the *Agaw*, or general of the janissaries; the Chief of the Eunuchs; both the supreme Judges, that of *Anatolia*, and that of *Roomeli*; the *Hafnadawr*, or treasurer, who distributes money; the *Silihdawr*, or armour-bearer, who carries the precious sabre of the Sultan on his shoulder; the Court Interpreter, who is a Greek Prince, and many others. This extensive and costly cavalcade proceeds during a quarter of an hour; and is considered as the most splendid on the *Bairam*, or Mahometan Easter, when the whole Court is present in grand gala.

BURIALS.

## BURIALS.

AMONG the objects most curious to the eye of the traveller, at Palermo, are the subterranean vaults of the Capuchins; where, like those of their convent at Rome, near the palace of Barberini, a gallery of dead bodies is to be seen. Monks are there placed in an erect attitude, covered with their *capuch*, their beards still pendent, and their persons still preserving their original form. The wall is symmetrically set with human bones; and the front of the altar is composed of teeth, strikingly resembling the *Mosaic* pavement of *Pompéjé*. Thus I saw in the famous *Caveau des Cordeliers*, at Toulouse, near five hundred uncorrupted dead bodies, which are preserved in the subterraneous vaults of that monastery.

The

The view of these cadavres, reclining against the wall, or almost in an erect position, was rendered still more horrible by the faint light of a lantern, which was borne by the sexton who attended me.

When I evinced marks of astonishment, my guide, placing his finger under the chin of one, whose face I was earnestly contemplating, raised the body from the ground, as though it had been made of paper ; so light was this withered emblem of mortality.

It is well known that the Egyptians, by the exercise of the embalming art, preserved their dead bodies, and even carried the perfection of it to such extent, that the physiognomy remained, as in a state of animation. It was in this extraordinary way, that they were accustomed to preserve their ancestors, even for a long series of years ; and it was a practice among them, not only to shew these samples of their skill to all their  
friends,

friends, but even at their banquets, to place them at the table.

At Palermo, as is related by *D'Orville*, the process is somewhat dissimilar. The corpse is there extended upon a kind of iron grate, where it remains six months over a swiftly-gliding water, by whose rapid circulation of air, it becomes perfectly dried: they then clothe it, and place it in a niche, on which is affixed the name of the person so preserved, and the date of the period when he died. I once saw at Florence, that singular representation of the dissolution of the human frame, which is there preserved in wax-work. It was executed in the time of Ferdinand the Second, of the House of Medici, and is known by the name of *Lo Sfascello*. It is impossible for any thing of the kind to be more perfect. The correctness of the execution, the selection of colours, and the perfect proportion of all the

the

the parts, render that model, as well as its companion, which represents the plague, *chef d'œuvres*. These extraordinary works of the *Abate Lumbo*, their artificer, were again purchased by the present Grand Duke of Tuscany, at a considerable expence ; his father, the Emperor Leopold, having made them a present to his archiater, Dr. *Lagufius*.

The public burial-place at Palermo is also remarkable. It forms a species of calendar ; and every day in the year has its particular grave, where those who die on it are buried. The space allotted to each body is of an equal size. They form regular rows each month ; and the burier may reckon the days by the number of the graves.

There are likewise, at Palermo, places for the dead of a more ancient description.

In the year 1785, catacombs were discovered

vered without the gate of *Ossuna*. They are described by the Prince *Torremuzza*, in the Roman Anthology. I found them similar to the catacombs of Saint Sebastian, at Rome. But as the corpses had their faces turned towards the east, with *Punic* inscriptions affixed to them, similar to those found at *Malta*, *Eryx* and *Mozia*, that learned Sicilian, entertained no doubt, but that they were graves of the *Carthaginians*, who, as the first *Punic* war evinces, were once in possession of that island.

Those of the Greeks, which are frequently discovered in Sicily, (since the Sovereign recalled the prohibition of digging) are still more extraordinary. There may be contemplated those exquisite Greek vases, which have been erroneously considered as *Etruscan*: they are now proved to be of Grecian manufacture, having not only Greek inscriptions, but being also precisely similar to those  
which

which the English, *Graves* and *Paars*, have recently found at Athens, and in the island of *Milo*. Mr. Tischbein shewed me, in the collection of Sir William Hamilton, several of those vases, which, by the indelicacy of their decorations, are rendered unfit for public inspection. The most beautiful of these vases came from Sicily.

In addition to the Greek graves, there are also those of the Saracens: their inscriptions are in the *Carmatic* characters; several of them have been published by Mr. Gregorio.\* Three of them, lately discovered in that capital, have been translated by Mr. *Vasalli*, the composer of a Maltese Dictionary and Grammar, at Rome. And the inscription of Palermo, published by the English writer Brydone, as an ancient *Chal-*

\* *Rerum arabicarum quæ ad Hist. Sic. spectant ampla Collectio*, Panormi, 1790, fol.



*daick* one \*, of great importance, is nothing but an Arabic epitaph, in *Carmatic* characters

\* Tour through Sicily and Malta, new edit. Lond. 1795, vol. ii. p. 165; and again published this year by Mr. Fry, in his *Pantographia*, page 38, as the 18 Chaldean.

## SOCIETY.

THE general character of society is not so free at Palermo, as it is at Naples. The lively and ingenuous disposition of the Neapolitan, seems not so strongly the characteristic of the Sicilian. However, that formality of manner is not prevalent, which is to be observed in smaller towns; for the inhabitants of Sicily are neither haughty nor reserved. Foreigners are there received with particular hospitality and affability. The natives are always eager to congratulate the arrival of strangers, and every stranger is made welcome; but the English are peculiarly favoured with attention, when they visit Sicily. They speak sparingly, and they pay liberally; and consequently they are more cordially greeted than the Italian,

who utters more words in one day, than an Englishman will suffer to escape him during a week. In addition to this loquacity, the Italian has little to throw away ; which is not always the case with the English traveller.

The conversation here is similar to that of other organized European societies : and the news of the day, or the entrance or departure of a packet-boat, is generally the leading topic ; for, by this conveyance, all intelligence, letters, and passengers, come from Naples ; excepting, that once a week a post arrives, by way of Messina ; but the letters are a fortnight after date, by the time that they are received (through Calabria, and the northern coast of Sicily) at the capital, whilst the packet-boats cross the sea sometimes in thirty-six hours, and at others, they accomplish the voyage in eighteen. When the late Viceroy suddenly died, the

Court

Court of Naples was apprized of the unexpected event on the following day; although the same intelligence, by land, did not arrive till the expiration of a fortnight.

In addition to these sources of information, ships sometimes convey news by the way of *Genoa*, *Leghorn*, and other sea-ports; but the harbour of Palermo not being much frequented, this does not often happen. Nevertheless, travellers from *Syracuse*, *Catania*, *Trapani*, and other cities of Sicily, perpetually arrive at the capital, by which means an universal communication is kept up: and accounts constantly reach Palermo from *mezzo Monreale*, and the *Colli*, where the gentry of the capital have their country-houses. *Casini*, after the most exquisite taste, with all the conveniencies of life, are there to be met with. But the spot most admired for its beautiful *villas* and gardens, is the *Bagheria*: here the months of Novem-

ber and December are passed ; for at the time when we are accustomed to inhabit towns and cities, the nobility of Palermo, as is frequently the case in England, visit their country residences ; for which reason they are rendered worthy of considerable attention.

Sometimes the conversation of mixed society is interrupted by the expression of fine features, and the softness of insinuating attentions. Scandal also bears its part in the topics of discussion ; and, as in all other places, its influence is not without a leading feature. Self-love and self-praise are often exemplified at Palermo ; yet, upon an impartial investigation of society and manners, the Sicilians are an enlightened people. No person is ever heard to question another upon the subject of religion : all descriptions of sects, from the Romish to the *Herrnhut*, are tolerated, the Jews alone excepted ;  
who,

who, though the inquisition is abolished, have yet received no permission to return.

The theatre, which in many parts of Europe attracts so large a portion of public interest, excites but little attention at Palermo. Horse-races, illuminations and festivals, engross the conversation of the people. I have frequently been questioned whether I had ever visited in other parts of the globe, so fine a city as Palermo, or beheld a festival so splendid as that of St. Rosalia; with many other observations, respecting the proud and distinguished superiority of its prerogatives.

Political papers are here, as in all other parts of Italy, extremely scarce. Two half sheets appear weekly from the printing-office of *Solli*; these are but of little importance as to interest or communication; the restrictions being extremely rigid, and the intelligence which they contain being generally two

months after date : thus information of events is very frequently circulated, as conclusive, which arrives, imperfectly commenced three weeks after, by the way of Calabria.

The papers, published at Naples, are little superior in point of regulation. Those who do not particularly attend to Court intelligence, are very sparingly amused. Their literary information is very scantily distributed, and the little they publish treats purely on the general subject of literature. No fashionable or entertaining magazine ; no periodical works of fancy, or of knowledge ; no miscellaneous productions, or interesting journals are here printed. Every month the *Giornale Letterario* appeared at Naples ; for that of Palermo was concluded during my residence there. Romances and voyages are, when compared with our profusion, a species of phenomena ; comedies and tragedies are not, for a twentieth part, so universally

verfally compofed or tranflated as they are in Germany ; and with almanacks and anthologies, the Sicilian markets are wholly unacquainted. The want of fuch literary resources is therefore fupplied by converfation upon drefs and fashions, the weather, or public intelligence, of whatever nature, or however ungraceful, from the lips of feminine beauty.

This was precisely the ftate of information when I arrived at Palermo, on my recherches after Arabian manufcripts. During half a year the impositions of *Vella* were the fubjects of univerfal converfation. Ladies were heard to reafon upon the authenticity of the *Martinian manufcript*, the *Norman code*, and the *Mauritanic characters* ; although they fcarcely underftood a fyllable of the fubject which they difcuffed ; yet, from the fcarcity of other topics, they not only attempted to inveftigate, but to  
judge



judge the subject. Hence two parties arose. Some females asserted the innocence of *Vella*, and insinuated that mine was the erroneous opinion. Others, on the contrary, defended my sentiments, assured me that they yielded implicit credit to my belief, and that they relied upon my judgment respecting the contest. It was both my pleasure and my pride to obtain the sanction and applause of the most amiable and enlightened of the sex, for the opinions of others were to me of little importance. At length, the Bishop of Aleppo arrived from Rome. The females of the opposing party were anxious to hear his decision; and as they were obstinately prejudiced in favour of their own discrimination, they concluded that the cause would terminate in their favour. The more distinguished and impartial phalanx, was no less interested in the termination of the contest; when the Arabic  
Judge

Judge put a period to the altercation, by pronouncing *Vella* an impostor; and by declaring, that those works which had been as implicitly credited as the holy gospel, were entirely spurious. Thus fell the curtain—and the comedy was finished.

## COUNTRY ROUND PALERMO.

THE country in the vicinity of Palermo, does not present an extent of plains, like the vast tracks of Hungary, Poland and Tartary. Excepting the views of *Catania* and *Caltagirone*, in the neighbourhood of Palermo, as well as the whole of Sicily, high mountains, and a circumscribed horizon, compose the prospect. It was therefore a subject of astonishment during my journey round the coast of Sicily, that the island should be the granary of Italy; little else being seen, but lofty and uncultivated mountains.

On the summit of these eminences, within the view of the observer, every evening a signal is given by means of a blazing flambeau, which in a few minutes, in the  
manner

manner of a telegraph, extends to the limits of the whole island. For this purpose light-houses are erected on the utmost altitude of the loftiest mountains, from *Palermo* to *Messina*; and from thence again to the former city: by which speedy information may be conveyed throughout the whole island, on the approach of an enemy's squadron during the night. *Barclaius*, in the first book of his intelligent *Argenis*, mentions those signals; though not from the time of *Ceres*, as *Poliarchus*, one of the heroes of that poem, imagined; - neither do they appear to originate in the period of the Spanish or Arabic government in Sicily. The Roman History mentions that the *Carthaginians* had raised such towers, near the coast of Spain; and as that nation were in possession of Sicily, about that period, the custom might have been coeval with the lately discovered *Punic catacombs*.

The

The exterior of those mountains displays nothing but a bare extent, similar to that which appears on the full moon, towards the east, when observed through an English telescope. But the interior strata contain all kinds of shells and marine productions, like those of the Alps, the Pyrennees, and other mountainous parts of the globe. In these unperishable archives the history of nature, and the theory of the terrestrial sphere, are preserved: they resemble the Egyptian hieroglyphics, which, instead of letters and of words, presented the objects themselves, hewn out of solid stone; which *Dequignes*, of late, endeavoured to decypher by Chinese characters. Here we may read the first chapter of *Genesis* in a philosophical language, declaring that the sea rose to the height of many hundred fathoms, and remained so during more than the period of *forty* days.

Besides

Besides these natural hieroglyphics, there are also to be found bones, of extraordinary dimensions, similar to those which have been discovered in *Siberia*, and other places. But Sicily needs not adopt *epoques of nature*, with *Buffon*, in order to bring elephants from the burning zone, to Palermo. At the period of the *Punic* war, there existed elephants enough on the banks of the *Orethus*, the river of Palermo; although it is not ascertained whether the enormous bones were those of that animal; of other species of the brute creation; or of a singularly gigantic race of men.

In addition to these physical antiquities, *lava* and *pumice-stones* evince that there are also extinguished volcanos in Sicily, which corroborate the discoveries of the present age. Two opposite elements, *fire* and *water*, alternately predominate in the vast laboratory of the globe: they are symbols of the  
two

two powers existing in the moral world, and combating each other. *Fire*, (emblematical of VIRTUE) contrary to all other bodies, always ascends, illuminates, and moves; and (if we may rely on the recent experiments of Count Rumford) shews itself almost immaterial: for which reason, in *Chaldea*, and *Persia*, at *Jerusalem*, and at *Athens*, fire was held sacred, as the symbol of divinity. Water, as the opposite principle, was supposed to be the abode of evil spirits. Thus, *ördek*, which, in the Tartarian language, signifies duck, or water-fowl, is the name by which the Hungarians signify the devil: and the Finnic tribes, throughout northern Asia, still believe, that water is the dwelling-place of Satan\*.

With regard to the mountains that sur-

\* Vide *Georgi Russia*, or a Description of all the Nations of the Russian Empire.

round Palermo, *Ætna* (the summit of which may be seen in clear weather from the capital) is the most remarkable. Though this promontory is at least one hundred and fifty miles distant, its extraordinary altitude renders it visible even as far as *Malta*, from which it is still more removed, as the Peak of Teneriffe is to be discovered on the outstretched ocean. This summit is presented to the eye, the whole year, covered with snow; as it was in the days of *Pindar*, who in his Odes recorded this circumstance. I ascended to the top of this mountain, in the month of June; a month when the heat is, in Sicily, excessively powerful; and yet, I experienced a sensation of cold, which I should have expected in January. Extensive wastes of snow were there congealed, as they are in *Greenland*. A strong sulphureous smell was borne towards me on the breeze; and the path was so extremely

L steep,



steep, that we were under the necessity of quitting our mules, and climbing to the summit of the precipice. The opening of the crater is composed of millions of pieces of *lava*, which, like shattered fragments, lie one upon another. About forty fathom from the point, the smoke ascended from a variety of small chafms, as from chimnies ; while a hollow-sounding crash, from time to time, was heard, in the interior of the mountain, resembling the snapping of wood in a fierce furnace ; or like cannon, at a considerable distance. Death and desolation seemed to hold their reign, in this grand, though terrific scenery ; not a verdant spot, not a single plant, diversified the waste of wonders ; black *lava* contrasted the snowy summit, where, for more than half an hour, I was absorbed in contemplating this majestic volcano : excepting when the eye relieved itself in tracing the luxuriant prospect,

spect, which opened to my view, over the whole extent of Sicily. From the borders of *Scylla* and *Charybdis*, near the Italian coast, to the distant *Lilybæum*, opposite the shores of Barbary; and from the southern promontory behind Syracuse, to the northern extent of Palermo and Mount *Peligrino*, the whole kingdom of Sicily may be contemplated at one view. Calabria seemed so near my feet, that I almost imagined I could instantly tread its domains: the *Lipari* islands were also at no great distance; while the mouth of the Adriatic; the Ionian sea, which separates Sicily from Greece; the African ocean, and the Mediterranean, were all visible in one vast extent of prospect.

## POLITICAL STATE.

AS there is scarcely any evil which may not be productive of some advantage ; so it is respecting the voyage of the King of Naples to Palermo. It had long been the earnest wish of the Sicilians that their Sovereign should, by his presence, revive the commerce, promote the industry, augment the populousness, by the attraction of strangers to that spot, and also establish a remedy for correcting the disorders of public affairs. But many years elapsed, and this desire never had been gratified : for, whether from the jealous temper of the Neapolitans, the inconvenience of a sea voyage, or the difficulty of travelling in Calabria, the inhabitants of Sicily saw their Monarch sojourn at  
Genoa,

Genoa, Vienna, and Frankfort, without his paying a single visit to their island. His father only favoured the Sicilians with his presence at the commencement of his reign. But Ferdinand had protracted the period of his arrival, from time to time, and Palermo had not even the honour to receive the hereditary Prince within its walls, though the palace had been prepared for his reception. An unexpected event in the history of kingdoms, has since compelled the Sovereign to seek an asylum there; and however the necessity of such a journey may be lamented, as springing from political causes, still the presence of the Monarch may be productive of great advantages, in remedying, or exterminating many political evils.

The country has long been infested with armed *banditti*, who in parties, amounting to some hundreds, have frequently committed the most daring depredations. They

are provided with fire-arms ; and they have not only been known to plunder the unprotected traveller, but also to commit the most atrocious murders. During my residence at Palermo, the heads of some of these robbers were publicly exhibited on pikes ; but the innumerable caverns which mountainous countries afford for the security and secretion of such depredators, rendered the extermination of their phalanx almost impracticable.

SICILY, which once contained so many flourishing colonies, as the exquisite Greek medals attest, at this period produces scarcely as many inhabitants, as were formerly known to people the capital : the population at present does not exceed 1,200,000. The heights surrounding Palermo, present a blank solitude of barren rocks, lofty and desolate. No thriving village, no cultivated farm, no verdant woodland,

land, clothes or decorates the bare acclivity. As the traveller recedes from the coast, and traverses the interior of the country, the unfertilized blank becomes still more cheerless; for a considerable portion of the soil lies in a state of dreary uncultivation. Consequently, from the want of population, many articles which this soil would produce, were there hands to work it, are now purchased from foreign markets. The sugar-cane, originally transplanted from this country, to *Madeira*, which was once, with the corn, the most valuable production of Sicily, is now scarcely sufficiently cultivated to supply the demands of the *Duca di Monteleone*; on whose estates, at *Avola*, there is only a small stock to be found, scarcely sufficient for a few bottles of rum. The palm-tree, so delightful to contemplate, which in the reign of Frederick the Second produced considerable quantities of exquisite dates,

has, excepting a few flourishing trees which survive the defoliation, entirely disappeared. The camels which in the thirteenth century formed a considerable article of trade with Sicily, and which were proved to be of the greatest utility in a country so deficient in highways, are also sunk into decay: the interior commerce is therefore ill-stated. Continual complaints are made of the badness of roads; a small track was somewhat amended near Palermo; but the larger part of the island is, as it was supposed to have been in the time of the *Cyclops* and *Lestrigons*; and it was with infinite regret we experienced the greatest inconvenience, even at this period, of travelling through the country.

The exterior of the island of Sicily is similar to the interior. In the year 1796, its state was so perfectly defenceless, that at Palermo the inhabitants trembled at the  
squadron

squadron of *Toulon* ; for had it proceeded to Sicily, the whole island must have surrendered without a single shot. The temperate winter of this climate is scarcely passed, when African pirates from *Tunis*, *Gezair*, and other parts of Barbary, which is at no great distance, annoy and interrupt the small portion of commerce still circulating in Sicily ; they possess themselves of the most valuable prizes, owing to the want of an armed defence, even before the eyes of their owners : and frequently not content with plunder, they absolutely consign the most respectable individuals to slavery. This act of oppression was put in practice only last year, in the person of the Prince *Paternò*, while he was proceeding from Palermo to Naples. This traveller was forcibly sent to *Tunis*, where, instead of the easy life to which he had been accustomed ; instead of the society of the young and lovely part of the  
the



the creation, he was, during the period of six months, condemned to behold the ape-like visages of *Sahara* and *Biled-ul-gerid*, in the land of *lions* and of *tigers*; until a *Capidgi Basfi* arrived from Constantinople, with a firman of the Grand Seignior, for his release. But the *Bey* was not intimidated by the imperial seal, and the Prince was at last obliged to purchase his liberty, by the payment of nine hundred thousand florins.

The small islands of Sicily suffer considerable inconveniencies, from similar causes; particularly *Pantelleria*, *Ustica*, and *Lampedusa*. The last of these, which might be productive to its owner, (a Prince of the House of *Tommasi*) of a very splendid revenue, is, for the want of proper defence, entirely deserted. Only one solitary hermit is there to be found, who at the approach of a Christian vessel, illumines a little glimmering lamp before the image of the Virgin ;

gin ; but when an African ship appears in view, he lights his feeble flame to greet the Mussulmen : it is therefore become a saying at Palermo, when a man is alternately influenced by two parties, that he is “ *the Hermit of Lampedusa.*”

The number of Monks and Friars, in Sicily, is extremely prejudicial to the kingdom ; this grievance is augmented by the sequestration of the nuns ; and by the celibacy of these persons the state is deprived of the finest race of youth. Bound in bonds as unnatural as they must be wretched, they linger through a life of solitary musing ; their asylums the nurseries of discontent ; and the persecuting spirit of penance, the source of eternal inquietude. Thus they exhibit a striking contrast to those voluntary penitents, the *Fakeers* of India ; while the manufactories, and the useful branches of trade, are sinking into decay. The wages  
of

of mechanic labour are, for this reason, also extremely high. The manufactures of the country admit of no comparison with those of other nations; while a soil, so blessed by nature, is hourly withering for want of cultivation, and its inhabitants compelled to derive every necessary article of comfort and convenience, from the prosperity and the toil of foreign kingdoms.

Another disadvantage has arisen, from the extraordinary number of law-students and practitioners. A military profession presenting no hope of preferment, in a country to which war was an alien during sixty years, the youth, of the middling classes of the people, beheld only the alternative of becoming either lawyers or ecclesiastics; and the latter choice predominated, because the situation was most calculated to become important to the state. The number of law-suits consequently augmented considerably,

siderably, and some of the most opulent houses sunk into decay by their encreasing litigations. Scarcely a family, resident at Palermo, escaped the contagion, and many individuals were involved in five and six law-suits at a time. Thus, the attorneys and pleaders were daily enriched; and it is a singular circumstance, that there are, at this epocha, some legal processes, still undecided, which were absolutely commenced in the preceding century.

Finally, the military, which according to the present political system of Europe, should occupy the first rank, has been entirely neglected. Few persons, excepting those who are in distressed circumstances, or who have been stigmatized with impropriety, are here enrolled. The nobility avoided entering into a situation, so degraded by the admission of improper persons,  
and

and which during a peace was rendered wholly inactive; and yet, at this period, such an establishment is absolutely necessary, for the preservation of the state. *Francesco Sforza*, (says *Macchiavelli*) being of a spirit warlike and brave, rose from the rank of a private soldier, to that of Duke of Milan. His sons, on the contrary, wholly divested of that martial inspiration, which actuated their parent's mind, and abhorring the use of arms, descended from the high rank which had been presented to them, and became private characters. *Roger*, the founder of the Sicilian monarchy, being of a martial nature, with a small portion of Normans, drove the Saracens from Sicily: he afterwards persecuted them in Africa, where he took from them their cities and islands; and at last rendered the *Bey of Tunis* tributary: we, on the contrary,

trary, have beheld an army without discipline, though four times exceeding their numbers, defeated;—and with an inferior body of French troops, obliging their Sovereign to seek an asylum among his subjects  
—AT PALERMO!

FINIS.

T. Gillet, Printer, Salisbury Square.

*Interesting Books lately published by R. PHILLIPS.*

I.—In two Volumes Octavo, price 14s. in Boards,

## LETTERS FROM ITALY,

*Between the Years 1792 and 1798;*

Containing a View of the REVOLUTIONS in that Country, from the Capture of NICE by the French Republic to the Expulsion of PIUS VI. from the Ecclesiastical State; likewise pointing out the matchless Works of Art which still embellish PISA, FLORENCE, SIENA, ROME, NAPLES, BOLOGNA, VENICE, &c. &c. with Instructions for the Use of Invalids and Families who may not choose to incur the expence attendant upon travelling with a Courier.

By MARIANA STARKE,

Author of the "The Widow of Malabar," "The Tournament," &c.

II.—A new Edition, in two elegant Volumes, foolscap 8vo. price 9s. (Embellished with two Vignette Titles, and with Fac Similes of the Hand-writings of Mr. Gray and Mr. Walpole)

## WALPOLIANA,

Consisting of original Bon Mots, Apophthegms, Observations on Life and Literature, with Extracts from unpublished Letters of the late HORACE WALPOLE, EARL OF ORFORD.

These Volumes are the Production of a Gentleman for many years in habits of intimacy with Mr. Walpole. The articles are none of them selected from any published Works, but are partly drawn up from a Collection of Bon Mots, &c. in Mr. Walpole's own hand-writing; partly from Anecdotes written down with his approbation, after long conversations, in which he would display those treasures of Anecdote with which his Rank, Wit, and Opportunities had replenished his memory; and partly from his unpublished Letters to the Compiler, on subjects of Taste and Literature.—Prefixed is an original Memoir of the Earl of Orford.

III.—In one Volume Duodecimo, price 3s. or in post Octavo, superbly printed by Bensley, with proof impressions of the Frontispiece, designed by Burney and engraved by Fittler, 7s. 6d. bds.

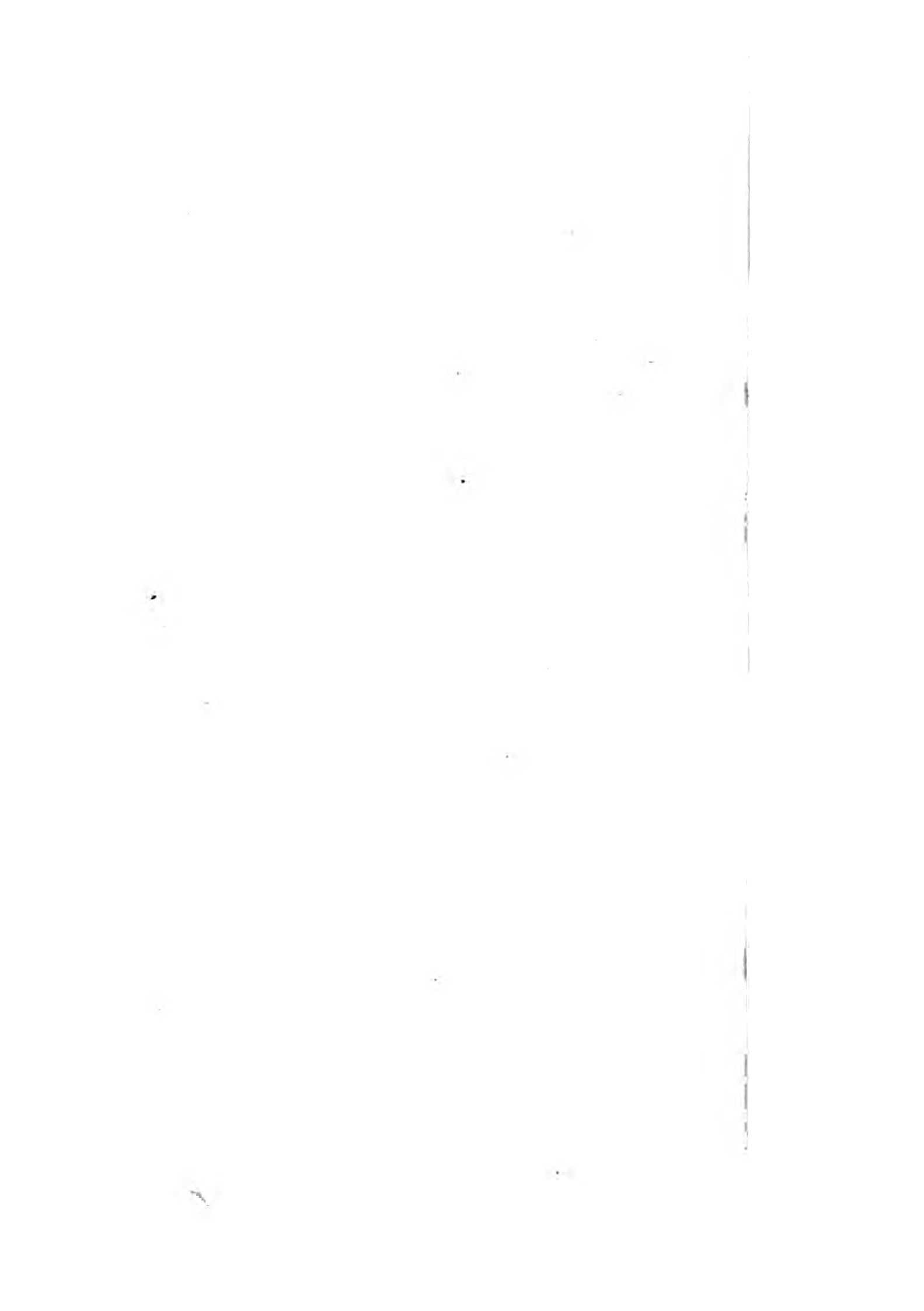
## THE SORROWS OF WERTER,

Translated from the German of Göethe by WILL. RENDER, D.D.

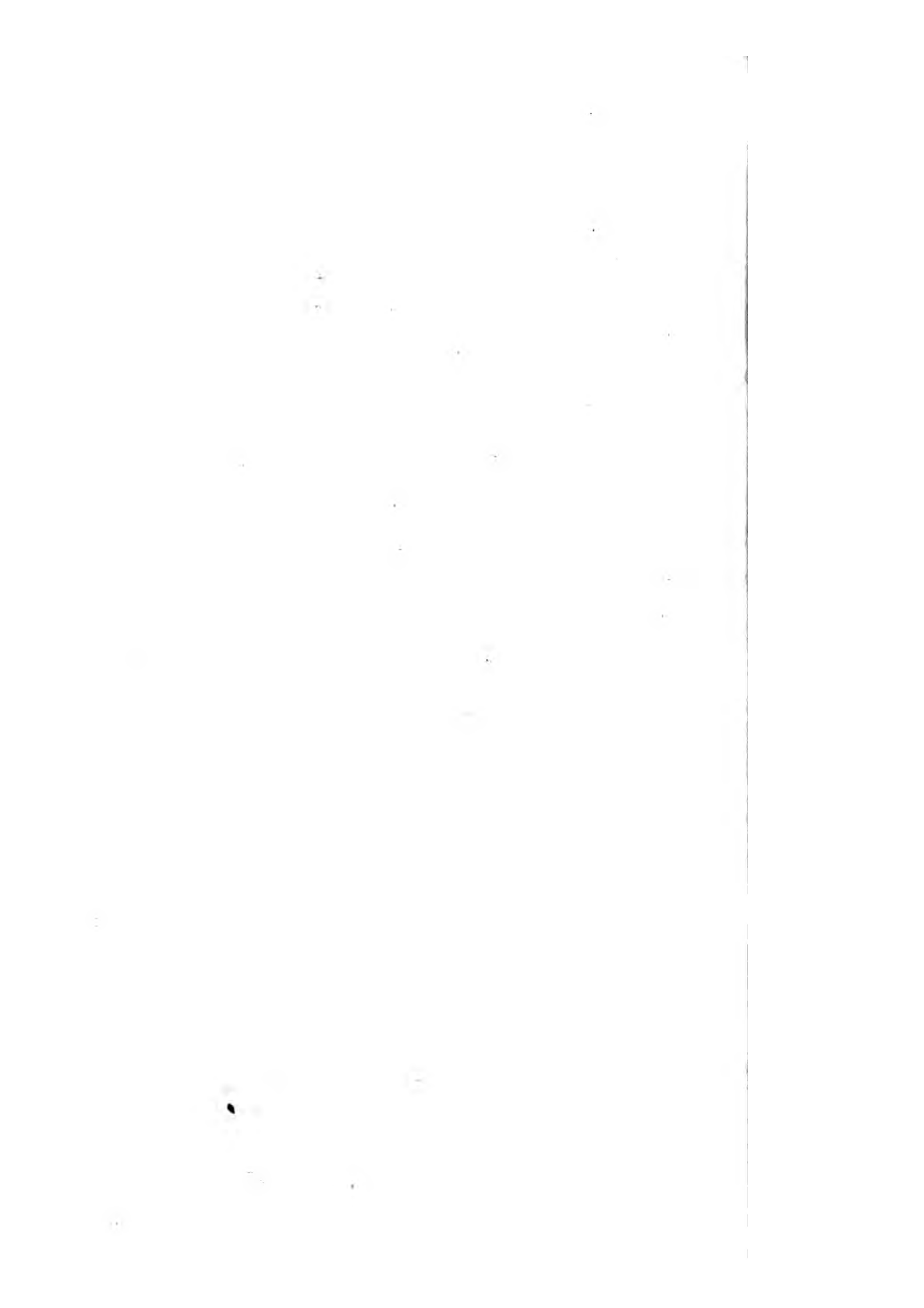
This is the first and only Translation of this interesting story from the original language in which it was written; and Dr. Render was the Friend and Fellow-student of Werter, and was intimately acquainted with the Family of Charlotte.











140.

90.

80.

37

40.

15.

3.

407.





