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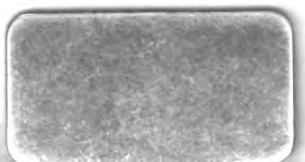
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**EXCURSIONS IN THE  
ABRUZZI.**

**VOL. I.**

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*Synthesized from an original drawing by W. H. Rouse, A.K.A.*

ST GERMANO AND MONASTERY OF MONTE CASINO.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

**EXCURSIONS**  
**IN**  
**T H E A B R U Z Z I**  
**AND**  
**NORTHERN PROVINCES OF NAPLES.**

**BY THE HON. KEPPEL CRAVEN,**

**AUTHOR OF**

**"A TOUR THROUGH SOUTHERN NAPLES."**

**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

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# EXCURSIONS

IN

## THE ABRUZZI.

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### CHAPTER I.

*Set out for Caserta.—Royal Palace of Sto. Leucio.—The Voltorno.—Roman Remains.—Calatia.—Piedimonte.—Gaetano Family.—Villages of Castello and S. Gregorio.—Lake of the Matise.—Town of Alife.—Manufactures of Piedimonte.—Village of St. Angelo.—La Pietra.*

THERE is perhaps no occupation which, in the maturer, not to call them declining, days of human existence, so entirely carries back the mind to the sensations and enjoyments of an earlier period, as the act of exploring for the first time a beautiful and interesting tract of country. Whether the succession of picturesque and varied landscapes which arrests a traveller's attention assumes the vague but brilliant tints that colour the yet untrodden paths

of life, or whether the investigation of new regions is pursued with the same eager security which marks the more adventurous pursuits of youth, it is not here attempted to determine; but, in the hope that the majority of his readers may in a greater or less degree have experienced the same feeling, the Author trusts they will not consider as exaggerated the pleasurable excitement produced by the opening of his journey, in a ride from Caserta to Cajazzo, during the fresh hours of a spring morning in one of the finest of European climates.

The course I followed was that of the valley extending between the Tifatian mountains circumscribing the plain of Naples behind Capua, and the more distant range which, rising beyond the Voltorno, is known (under the name of *Matese*) as one of the highest among the southern Apennines.

On quitting Caserta, a spot too well known to require description, and where I had passed the preceding night, I skirted the park-wall surrounding the whole of the royal domain: and, after passing under the arch or gallery through which the carriage-road is conducted beneath

the entire breadth of the pleasure-grounds and the stream flowing from the cascade, I soon reached the little palace of Belvedere, better known by the name of S<sup>o</sup> Leucio, where the luxuries of a royal residence are, singularly enough, blended with the labours of a silk manufactory.

The situation, however, as well as the temperature it enjoys, is infinitely preferable to that of Caserta, and it may rank as the most desirable among the many country-seats possessed by the sovereign of these realms.

The finely-shaped hill rising behind it is entirely covered with a forest of evergreens, and walled round in its whole circumference to preserve from exterior depredation the game of all kinds which it contains.

The road is carried along a steep acclivity, between the park-wall and a deep ravine, through a pass sufficiently tortuous to conceal its course from the plain.

This defile, as wild as it is beautiful, divides the mountains Tifati and Callicola: the former presents a bare and not extensive range, which rises below the valley of Cajazzo, and severs its



western extremity from the plains of Capua and Calvi ; the latter consists of an equally limited ridge of hills stretching behind Caserta as far as Madaloni.

The abrupt descent, known by the name of Gradillo, which follows, brings the traveller somewhat unexpectedly to the edge of a plain, or rather vale, of considerable extent ; and, shortly after, turning to the right, he reaches the brink of the river Voltorno, which is seen meandering from the foot of the hill on which the town of Cajazzo stands, at the distance of about six miles, through the whole of this flat.

By turning to the left on quitting the defile of S<sup>to</sup> Leucio, and keeping along the bank of the river, one may go to S<sup>a</sup> Maria di Capua by a good carriage-road, which, skirting the base of the Tifatian mountain to the spot where it sinks into the plain, and winding round its roots, leads to that town, the unworthy successor of the far-famed capital of Campania.

The site of the ancient city preserves nevertheless many respectable vestiges of its former splendour, among which the noted Campanian amphitheatre holds a justly distinguished rank.

Another line of communication with the Roman road, and one little known even to the natives, may be found by crossing the Voltorno at a ferry called di Formicola (from a cluster of small villages so named), and joining the track which leads from Cajazzo to the modern Capua along the right bank of the river: this enters the main road about half-a-mile beyond the last-mentioned city, thereby avoiding the necessity of a passage through it.

Some remains of ancient buildings are visible in this district, more particularly two brick arches of a Roman bridge, on the left shore of the stream opposite a ferry; and here, also, are a few houses, scarcely deserving the name of a village, which it nevertheless bears, as Triflisco. This was one of the three bridges mentioned as existing over the Voltorno in Roman times, of which one only, that at the modern Capua, anciently Casilinum, is now extant.

Triflisco consists of several mills, erected along the short course of some sulphureous streams rising at the foot of a rock a few hundred yards from the river itself, which has here forced its way through a very narrow cleft in

the hills, leaving space only for a road on either side.

The clearness and rapidity of these rills, the fine trees that shade them, and the peculiar style of the buildings, combine in giving much picturesque effect to this spot.

A town called Sicopolis, built by the Lombards in honour of one of their princes, but shortly afterwards destroyed by fire, is said to have existed on the site of Triflisco.

But, to return to my own line of progress: The Voltorno is crossed at another ferry, called di Cajazzo, where many excellent springs gushing from the rocks mingle with the water of the river, which, as in the days of Virgil and Horace, rolls a turbid stream in a deep and sandy bed.

Beyond it is a substantial building, now a tavern, but originally erected for the purpose of a royal relay or station, when this road was first planned and made for the sole purpose of opening a convenient communication between Caserta and the numerous chaces or preserves which then existed in the vicinity, both on this and the other side of Cajazzo.

These are no longer in being; but the road has been kept up, and even extended far beyond its original limits, for the use and advantage of several contiguous towns.

The vale of the Voltorno offers more interest to the agriculturist than to the painter; its surface being almost entirely cultivated with wheat and maize, and intersected by deep ditches for the purpose of draining and irrigation. Of trees, or any other vegetation than the above, it is entirely devoid: the northern range of hills that bound the plain is, however, clothed with olives; while the windings of the river, and the very striking position of Cajazzo, give it a particular character and originality of feature.

The ascent to this last place, which is long and somewhat tedious, was shaded by trees of northern growth (among which the thorn and oak predominate), furnished at this season with additional attractions by a multitude of nightingales in full song.

Two towns bearing the appellation of Calatia stand within no very great distance of each other, and they have so frequently been mentioned by ancient authors that they might easily

have been confounded, had not the epithet *transvulturnensis* marked their respective positions with indisputable precision: the site of the other, which stood in Campania, has been recognised by antiquaries at a place called Le Galazze, near Madaloni; while this city, which ranked higher in size and importance, belonged to one of the divisions of the Samnite domains.

Some interesting remains of its former grandeur still exist in the line of polygonal walls easily to be traced in unequal degrees of preservation round the whole circuit of the modern town, which, with its adjacent Casali, boasts of about five thousand inhabitants.

The interior offers little that is remarkable in its more recent constructions; but several inscriptions are collected in the market-place, and it moreover contains an antique structure worth notice, in the form of a large subterranean cistern, divided in two portions, which to this day furnishes the natives with the only supply of water they possess.

When at the close of every autumnal season this reservoir is cleaned out, the names of the duumviri who repaired it, and furnished its

apertures with the marble parapets that still surround them, become visible on the tablet on which they are inscribed below the ordinary level of the water.

From each front of the baronial castle, which, as was customary in feudal times, occupies the highest position in the town, and belongs to the Florentine family of Corsi, an extensive and beautiful view of the surrounding country is enjoyed.

Two of these, in a diametrically opposite direction to each other, display the devious windings of the same river ; for the Voltorno, always remarkable for the sinuosity of course which, according to some authors, gave it the name it bears, after running in a south-east line from the plain of Venafrò to the hills of Cajazzo, takes a sudden sweep all round their base, and then flows nearly due west towards Capua, the cupolas and bastions of which show themselves through the narrow gap that admits the stream from one plain to another.

Looking to the east, the prospect is not less interesting, with the addition of the Calore issuing from the valley of Benevento, where it

has received the Sabato. Its waters are then united to those of the Voltorno, under the finely-shaped and darkly-wooded mountain Taburnus, near the little town of Solipaca; which place, in the distance, together with Limatola, and Sant' Agata de' Goti, form striking features in the picture.

To the north, however, a still more attractive landscape is unfolded, in which the Voltorno continues to hold the foremost station: it runs through a valley of longer extent than that of Cajazzo, embellished by all that gives animation and variety to a rural prospect: bold crags crowned with thick woods, or sinking into softly undulated knolls,—large portions of forest scenery through which villages and ruined towers show themselves in the happiest positions,—green meads, and the richest vegetation gracing the immediate banks of the river,—and, lastly, the snow-capped peaks of Matese rising majestically above the town of Piedimonte,—form a succession of objects over which, when illumined by the peculiar tints of a southern atmosphere, the traveller's eye can long wander with renewed pleasure.

While my horses baited at Cajazzo, I breakfasted on an excellent *costata arrostita*, Anglicè a beef-steak, and a pint of *asprinia*, a very light white wine resembling weak Rhenish ; and then resumed my way through a series of scenery stamped with a character as British as that of the dish of which I had eaten. Inclosures of quick hedges, with elms and oaks springing from their verdant lines, — numerous brooks trickling along the road-side, from which narrow green lanes frequently emerged, leading to adjacent villages, — created an illusion which was only destroyed by the appearance of vines trailing over mulberry-trees. The road is almost one continued, but not very steep, descent of about eight miles to the edge of the Voltorno, running under a bank clothed with thickets in which much charcoal is made.

The stream is here as much reduced in breadth as it is improved in colour and transparency ; so much so, indeed, as to render the existence of the ferry-boat established at this spot only indispensable in the winter months. The distance of about four miles more, through a comparatively bare, but not unfertile, tract



of land, brings one to Piedimonte, a mile before which a road to the left leads to Alife, the ancient *Alifæ*, situated in a swampy and consequently unhealthy hollow, while the former town, placed on a much higher level on the lower declivities of the Matese, enjoys a more salubrious air.

I had heard so much of the beauty of Piedimonte, that at first, as it usually happens, I was somewhat disappointed ; for its aspect, though in some degree striking, was deficient in the general picturesque effect I had anticipated ; but a closer investigation of its interior localities convinced me that the sketches they had furnished to artists were not exaggerated.

Piedimonte is a town of no antiquity, and has risen but of late years into importance and population, in consequence of the numerous manufactures of various kinds which an abundant supply of water has afforded the means of establishing. It is composed of two divisions, one of which, from the comparative lowness of its situation, is denominated *La Vallata* ; the joint amount of the inhabitants is estimated at ten thousand, whose industrious appearance,

clean and substantial attire, and extremely courteous manner, create on a first impression a strong prepossession in their favour. The streets are wide, though neither regular nor well paved, but they contain many good houses; among which must be ranked as a palace that of the Duke of Laurenzana, formerly the feudal possessor of Piedimonte, and to this day proprietor of its title, together with a large portion of territory within and round the town.

This mansion, in a central and elevated, but not very accessible position, is built and laid out very much after the fashion of the Roman villas of the seventeenth century, (the probable date of its construction,) when the prevailing taste was displayed more in the interior ornaments and distribution than in the form of external architecture which is observable in the buildings of an earlier period. Here, large vaulted apartments with appropriate paintings in fresco, opening to a pensile garden commanding a fine view of the plain, and laid out in terraces beautified by orange and lemon trees in *espaliers*, appear to render it peculiarly

#### 14 DUKE OF LAURENZANA'S PALACE.

adapted for a summer residence, while numerous fountains in the formal, though puerile, style of the age, corroborate that character; but few Neapolitans that can afford it choose that season for a *villegiatura*, preferring, and not unfrequently with reason, the spring and autumn.

There is likewise a theatre attached to this palace, and a hall or gallery of more than ordinary dimensions, which is now used as a vestibule of entrance, and which is filled with a chronological series of all the feudal lords of the Gaetano family ever since the year 800, —the period to which the foundation of their lineage from a Duke of *Gaeta* is referred.

A less remote, but at the same time better authenticated, genealogy may justly be granted to them, as descendants of the family of Pope Boniface VIII, in the very beginning of the fourteenth century, when they undoubtedly were rich and powerful in the vicinity of the city of Anagni: that pontiff's violent and haughty disposition, his altercations with Philip the Fair of France, and, above all, his extraordinary downfall and death, render his cha-

acter one of the most remarkable of that æra ; since which, the family, divided into several branches, have held distinguished rank both in the Roman and Neapolitan domains.

The election of the anti-Pope Clement VII, from which originated, in the year 1378, the deplorable schism which afflicted the Roman church for so long a space of time, may be considered as entirely due to the intrigues and influence of a nobleman of this race ; Onorato Gaetano received the disaffected cardinals in the town of Fondi, of which he was feudal possessor, and so successfully protected them from all external interference, that they were enabled to proceed to the nomination of the pontiff they meant to oppose to Urban VI, whose violent and overbearing conduct had disgusted the greater portion of the sacred college. The Dukes of Sermoneta, of the same name, are still extensive landed proprietors in the papal states ; and it was from this branch that Charles III. purchased the feudal rights and territory of Caserta, which conferred upon it the title of prince.

The present flourishing condition of Piedi-

monte is attributable to the abundance and power of the river Torano, which, rising immediately behind it on a much higher level, is susceptible of being easily subdivided, and conducted through all parts of the town, so as to act on the machinery of a variety of manufactories, and keep them in constant activity.

The source of this stream presents by far the most curious spectacle of which the place can boast. It springs about half a mile from the last habitations of the town, which, placed on either side of a narrow opening in the rocks, gradually become less frequent as the ravine contracts, till at last it only leaves space for the course of the river, and a path which leads to its origin, at the foot of the precipitous mass of rocks which form the substruction of the Matese.

Here the Torano gushes from under a very low natural arch; and after forming a pool of the most limpid purity, surrounding a little island shaded by fine poplars, it dashes away between the lateral rocks overhung with rich vegetation and wild flowers, with all the impetuosity of a true northern stream.

Another and less copious brook, thence called Torano Piccolo, rises about a mile distant, in the lower region, denominated Vallata, and, after likewise giving motion to several wheels, directs a portion of its supplies towards the town of Alife, while the remainder is united with the larger stream, which, thus enriched, is again reduced, divided, and conducted into the subjacent plain for the purposes of irrigation, after which it finally discharges itself into the Voltorno.

The advantages derived from a favourable exposition and climate, thus assisted by the most efficient means of fertilization, render the territory of Piedimonte abundantly productive of every esculent vegetable, mostly excellent in its kind : among these, however, the fruit and wine claim pre-eminence ; the latter, particularly, is held in high estimation, being strong-bodied and well-flavoured, but perhaps a little too sweet to please a northern palate.

On one of the hills that overhang the ravine of the Torano, a convent, called S. Pasquale, is placed in a very romantic and sequestered position, a tedious and fatiguing journey to

which is amply compensated by the magnificent prospect which it enjoys.

On the other side, at a less degree of elevation, stands a village, reckoned one of the divisions of the town itself, and distinguished by the name of Castello: through this is conducted the road, or rather path, leading over the Matese into the adjoining province of *Molise*, which is practicable for mules, and much frequented in the summer season, as affording the shortest line of communication with that district, and its capital Campobasso.

I followed this track rather beyond half the distance to the highest peak, which is called Monte Miletto, for the purpose of visiting a lake from which tradition says that the Torano's stream is supplied through subterraneous channels.

Besides the above-mentioned village of Castello, the way lies through another, named S. Gregorio, the aspect and position of which threw a chill over even the temperature of May, notwithstanding some good vineyards that grow beneath it; and the only remarkable object within its precincts is a handsome mansion of

good architecture, recently built by the richest proprietor of the place, who has a large family of daughters grown up, not one of whom had ever gone a quarter of a mile from their birth-place. Beyond this all cultivation ceases, and no symptoms of vegetation are apparent, except a few stunted sloe-bushes, and the puny weeds that grow in the crevices of the rocks ; but on reaching a steep ridge, and looking over into the dell which opens beneath, a different scene discloses itself in the prospect of the lake, surrounded by thick forests of beech clothing all the encircling hills.

Though the upper half of the mountain was still covered with the winter snow, which rendered it impassable, the lake had nearly attained its highest level ; and in that state I should reckon it to be about two miles in length, and about one and a half in its widest part, with a woody islet in the centre.

It has a broad margin of marshy soil on the north side, which is sown with oats, and a narrower border of pasturage extends all round the shore, literally enamelled, at the period of my visit, with heartsease and anemones.



The extremities of the basin containing the lake join other dells and Alpine valleys, which afford fresh and abundant pasture to the cattle after the month of June ; the huts of the shepherds, and the extensive sheds for the animals, were therefore as yet unoccupied ; but these wild recesses were occasionally enlivened by the passage of numerous groups of peasants of both sexes, clad in their best attire, returning from the celebration of the jubilee at Monte Casino. The lake of the Matese, like most similar reservoirs in mountainous districts, is supposed to be fathomless in its centre, where native traditions have moreover placed an abyss or whirlpool, through which its waters are said to find their way to the Torano ; the fact admits of much discussion, but its probability rests in some measure on the circumstance of the entrance of several streams into the pool, without any visible outlet. Its only produce consists of tench, the right of fishery being shared between the township of Piedimonte and the Duke of Laurenzana, and farmed annually for the very moderate sum of eighty ducats.

The town of Alife is situated about three miles from Piedimonte, nearer the centre of the valley, and the Voltorno, which runs through it. The vicinity of this river, and other streams that surround it in all directions, render the atmosphere so unhealthy during a great portion of the year, as to have reduced it to the lowest state of depopulation and misery: from the rank of a very considerable town, which it held under the Roman empire, and even to a later period of the middle ages, it has fallen to the most abject condition of any among those that still bear the name, and claim the privileges, of a city.

It still covers a considerable extent of ground, being surrounded by its ancient walls, well preserved in many parts: it exhibits, besides these, numerous vestiges of antiquity, such as an amphitheatre, baths, and several portions of large edifices; while votive altars, fragments of sculpture, and a great number of inscriptions, have been discovered at different times, and are still scattered along its untenanted streets.

It is moreover the seat of episcopal dignity, though its occupant, together with most of the

accompanying clergy, resides at Piedimonte, from whence it is easy for them to attend to the discharge of their functions in the cathedral, seminary, and other ecclesiastical establishments, which continue to exist within its circuit. The first time I visited Piedimonte (in 1824), I was most hospitably received by the proprietor of the largest of all the manufactories in the town: this gentleman, a Swiss by birth, has long resided there, and by his industry and perseverance brought his establishment to a scale of perfection which does him great credit; and in consequence of that, and the advantages it confers upon the population at large, he is much respected. It is to be lamented that the difficulty of effecting general and continued sales of the finer articles in cotton and linen, which his ingenuity and capacity fully enable him to produce, limits the result of his labours to objects of a more homely, though as useful, quality.

I have frequently since that period visited this spot, and always with interest and satisfaction; but have merely made it a resting-place between Caserta and the residence of

some friends at a village called St. Angelo, five miles farther to the westward on the prolongation of the roots of the Matese: the road to this place is carried from Alife along the side of those slopes, gradually ascending through an open forest of fine oaks growing above portions of corn-land. This hilly district is less populous than that extending on the left of Piedimonte along the curves of the mountain which accompany those of the Voltorno, and is perhaps less beautiful in its details; but the village of St. Angelo, from its elevated situation at nearly the extremity of the valley, not only commands a much greater expanse of prospect, but reaches into the rich and varied country round the town of Teano, and only terminates with the sea itself, which with the rock of Mondragone, the ancient Mount Massicus, completes the view in the happiest manner.

This village, which the kindness of the above-mentioned friends has induced me to visit several times, contains not more than one thousand inhabitants, and is remarkable for the number of those whose easy circum-

stances enable them to reside there in a state nearly amounting to affluence.

Except this particularity, and its cheerful and healthy position, St. Angelo boasts of nothing worth notice ; it is distinguished from the multitude of other places (always in mountainous positions) bearing the same name, by the adjunct of *Raviscanina*, which is that of another village, about a mile farther up the hill to the north-west.

A bad road leads down to a ferry on the Voltorno ; and, after crossing it, to the large village of Pietra Vairana, placed on an isolated eminence that appears detached from the mass of the Matese by the river which flows between them.

La Pietra, as it is usually denominated, contains three thousand inhabitants, and, though reputed to suffer from malaria, is a flourishing place ; it faces the south, while the smaller village of Vairana, from which it is named, is placed on the reverse of the same hill looking to the north, and the prolongation, in that direction, of the chain of the Matese.

An ancient castle, now in ruins, perched

on the highest peak, commands the two valleys.

Following the same road, which improves considerably after passing La Pietra,\* three miles more bring it to a junction with that which leads from the capital into the provinces of Abruzzo, at a tavern called, from a neighbouring village, *di Cajaniello*. As it is not probable that travellers will in general pursue the circuitous route I have described, by Piedimonte, I trust no apology will be necessary for the following account of the country intervening between Capua and this spot, along the course of the post-road; which affords a shorter and more satisfactory mode of communication with either the northern regions, or those of Monte Casino and Sora.

\* It is now completed, and establishes a direct and short line of communication between Piedimonte and the great road from the capital to the Abruzzi.

## CHAPTER II.

*Road from Capua.—Calvi.—Notices of the ancient Town.—  
Teano and its Antiquities.—Marino Marzano, Duke of  
Sessa.—San Germano.—Remains and Architecture of the  
old City.—Varro's Villa.—High Character of the Convent.  
—The Church.—Abode of St. Benedict.—Decline of the  
Establishment.*

LEAVING Capua by the bridge over the Volturno and the adjoining fortified gates, and following the high-road, the traveller will find, about three miles farther, that it branches off to the left towards Sparanisi, the next post-station leading to Mola di Gaeta. This track, familiar to most foreigners as that which conducts to Rome, pursues, with little deviation, the same line as the famed Appian way.

If, instead of this route, he keeps that which continues the straight course in a nearly northern direction, his progress will be parallel with

the *Via Latina*, which joined the *Appia* at *Capua*; and after traversing a fertile but not very attractive portion of country, strongly impressed with a volcanic character, he will, near the twenty-third milestone, arrive at the remains of the city of *Cales* or *Calenum*, now represented by the few edifices that constitute the modern episcopal town of *Calvi*.

A cathedral, a seminary, three taverns, and the ruins of a Gothic castle of small dimensions, are the only component parts of the representative of one of the principal cities of *Ausonia*; which, together with *Minturnæ*, *Vescia*, and another, named itself *Ausonia*, yielded to the victorious sway of the Romans in the year of the republic 419, and was afterwards incorporated in the territory of *Campania*. It appears to have retained, even after that period, some claims to importance, derived perhaps as much from its natural productions as the remains of its former grandeur.

*Horace*, who may be considered as a competent judge, refers more than once to the excellence of its wines, which, from the vicinity of the district that produced them to that of the



Falernian, may probably have partaken of the same qualities.

Cæcubum et prælo domitam Caleno  
Tu bibes uvam, &c.

While Pliny, with the discrimination of a naturalist, mentions the inebriating nature of an acidulous spring, which is likewise recorded by Vitruvius and Valerius Maximus, and is still supposed to exist near Francolisi on the Roman road.

It was also noted for a manufactory of agricultural implements, and for another of fictile vases, peculiarly favourable to the preservation of wine. It is perhaps not unworthy of remark that some recent excavations in these regions have brought to light a very extensive and varied collection of articles of terra-cotta of good taste and execution, which may serve to corroborate this assertion.

The series of wars and invasions which marked the calamitous times that succeeded the downfall of the Roman empire, degraded Cales to a station from which it seems never to have recovered under its modern denomination, and which is probably due to the insalubrity of the

air. Its see, united to that of the neighbouring Teano, still boasts of a bishop, who resides at the village of Pignataro, two miles distant. The vestiges of antiquity which distinguish it, are, nevertheless, sufficiently numerous to arrest the observation of the traveller: they consist of several masses of brick constructions, faced with opus reticulatum, two of which, from the traces of lateral columns, are supposed to have been temples. The dilapidated remains of an amphitheatre, and those of a theatre in a less deteriorated condition, are also visible; as well as several arches and some sepulchres, which, when opened, have furnished the funereal articles usually found in similar receptacles.

But the most interesting, perhaps I should say the most picturesque object, is a small fountain formed of a marble slab, bearing on its surface a very well executed bas-relief of elegant design, composed of festoons of vine-leaves and grapes with a mask in the centre. This relic, bearing every appearance of originality of position, and supplying the surrounding inhabitants with the only good water to which they have access, is placed against the

base of a steep but not very elevated rock covered with creepers, forming one side of a singular little volcanic glen, bearing in its whole extension the marks of innumerable conduits, or pipes, probably for the purpose of supplying baths, or thermæ. Besides these, many traces of pavement of the *Via Latina* are apparent; and, near the church, the shafts of granite columns, some marble capitals, and fragments of sculpture and inscriptions, have been collected, attesting the importance and size of the ancient city, which has likewise been illustrated by the discovery of numerous and valuable coins.

The situation of Calvi is such as to render the unwholesomeness of its atmosphere doubly to be deplored; between two well-formed hills at the entrance of one of the most fertile plains in the world, and close to a small but picturesque rivulet, it possesses attractions and advantages of various kinds, all of which are annihilated by that fatal scourge.

Two miles beyond this, a tavern called *La Torricella* forms the post-station between *Capua* and *Venafræ*; and a good carriage-road

breaks off to the left, leading in a north-western direction to the town of Teano, placed about three miles from this point of junction, which is looked upon by antiquaries as that which united the respective territories of the Ausonii and Sidicini: if we credit Strabo, it may likewise be considered as the spot where two temples of Fortune were erected, one on either side of the Via Latina, which follows the same line as that leading to Teano. This last place contains in its immediate environs, principally on the eastern side, some considerable ruins, among which those of the Circus and theatre are the most remarkable, and in point of size and preservation much superior to the relics at Calvi.

On the other side of the town, two hundred, or more yards, of the Roman road point out the commencement of that which now conducts to Rocca Monfina, anciently *Aurunca*, through which the Itinerary tables inform us that the Via Latina passed between Teanum and Casinum.

The site of *Aurunca*, in a very elevated position, to the north of Sessa, the ancient *Spessa*

Aurunca, claims the investigation of the geologist as well as of the antiquary, being designated by Breislak as the largest and probably the most formidable of the numerous craters that are crowded together in this part of Campania. The ancient Teanum, distinguished, by the addition of Sidicinum, from another town of the same name in Apulia, was the capital, and, indeed, the only city of the Sidicini; a circumstance which, while it speaks favourably of its magnitude and consequence, gives so limited a notion of the national territory to which it belonged, that no surprise is created by the assertion of Livy, that it yielded to the Romans after a single battle,—*uno prælio*.

Strabo observes, that in his days Capua and Teanum were the only places in all Campania that could be considered of any importance. The last boasted, as well as Cales, of an acidulous spring, now identified with one that rises in a beautiful glen about half a mile from the modern town to the left of the road which leads into the main track towards Abruzzo.

This water, now called *Acqua delle Cantarelle*, is strongly impregnated with fixed air

and a chalybeate taste, by no means unpleasant, and its virtues as a tonic are highly extolled by the natives. It gushes abundantly from the roots of some ancient oaks within a few yards of a wild brook, into which it flows : this rivulet, after running under Teano and receiving a few others, becomes dignified in the plain, as the *Savone*, with the name of river, and there it has been designated by Statius as *piger* or lazy,—an epithet by no means applicable to the earlier period of its course.

It is crossed by the road leading from Torricella to Teano, and again, near Francolisi, by that which conducts from Naples to Rome ; after this it finds its way into the plain, and, subdivided into numerous branches, surrounds and intersects the swampy and pestilential district of Mondragone, falling into the Mediterranean just below it, very near the mouth of the Voltorno. The Pons Campanus, which carried the Appian road across its waters, and is cited as one of the stations in the Pentingerian Tables, must have existed not very far from this last-mentioned spot.

To return to Teano : The modern town en-

joys the advantages of a fine situation and an excellent air: it is, like most of those built on an eminence, composed of steep, narrow, and dark streets, which offer nothing attractive or interesting; but a wide causeway or terrace recently constructed, and winding nearly round the whole of its extension, adds great magnificence to its exterior aspect and approach: this, on the south side, is heightened by the addition of some fine houses looking over it behind some extensive orange-gardens; and it affords to the inhabitants, four thousand in number, the convenience of a good carriage-road or drive, conducted judiciously along a gentle slope from the lower extremity and gate to the upper one. Near this last an abundant fountain is placed, the waters of which are afterwards conveyed into the interior, where they supply many others.

The elevation on which Teano stands furnishes it with extensive and agreeable views in every direction.

Towards the south and the Mediterranean the descent is gradual, and most pleasingly diversified by a succession of inequalities of

ground carefully cultivated, and relieved occasionally by masses of olive-trees and oaks, or habitations. Beyond which, on the other side of the Roman road, the prospect extends over the woods of Mondragone to the sea.

In every other quarter the town is surrounded by hills of a bolder character, thickly clothed with rich forests, among which many villages show themselves in the most favourable points of view.

The cathedral, seminary, and other churches, offer nothing worthy of remark, except the sepulchral effigy, in the rudest style of sculpture, of a personage celebrated in the fifteenth century as one of the principal leaders of a powerful faction against the rule or tyranny of Ferdinand I, of Aragon.

This is in the cloisters of a suppressed convent, and is said to represent Marino Marzano, Duke of Sessa, and possessor of all the surrounding feudal tenures, among which Teano bore a primary rank.

This nobleman's hatred to his sovereign (whose sister he had married) induced him to give the most influential support to John of



Anjou, who had come to dispute, after the example of his ancestors, the rights which the Aragonese dynasty had successfully established over the possession of this kingdom. Marino Marzano received him openly in his castle of Sessa in the most splendid style of feudal grandeur, and gave him all the assistance which riches and the obedience of his numerous vassals could afford. Their united efforts were, however, unsuccessful in obtaining the desired result ; and the French prince was finally compelled to quit the country, and leave his ally to make the best terms with the king which circumstances might admit of. But the subdued temper of the Duke of Sessa led him to carry on an open or at best ill-disguised warfare with his brother-in-law for a considerable space of time. Some native historians have preserved a most singular and interesting narrative of an interview he contrived to obtain from Ferdinand, on a lonely spot between Teano and Carinola, in which it had been his resolution to have murdered him ; but Ferdinand's presence of mind and personal courage defeated his plan. This last, after a long series of reconciliations

and renewals of strife, was sufficiently dexterous to seize the person of his adversary, and cast him for the remainder of his existence into the dungeons of the Castel Nuovo, where tradition says he died, or was strangled, at an advanced age.

The existence of his monument seems incompatible with either of these modes of death; but as his son was, in a subsequent reign, restored to his title and a portion of his paternal domains, it is possible he might in after-years have thus honoured the memory of his father.

The magnitude and solidity that characterize the remains of the baronial castle at Teano, attest the power and opulence of their original founder, who was this very individual.

The stables, which are in the best state of preservation, are spacious enough to contain three hundred horses; and every corresponding portion of the fabric was upon the same scale.

From Teano it is not necessary to return to Torricella, to meet the high-road, a very good one having been constructed, which runs

under the wooded hills forming the district of Cajaniello, and the numerous villages which enliven them.

At a tavern so called, it falls into the principal branch ; and at this spot, four miles from Torricella, that which I have described as leading from Piedimonte and St. Angelo, likewise reaches it. The Abruzzo road is quit-  
ted at a tavern, called Il Pagliarone, situated about a mile farther ; the track to San Germano, which is now followed, deviates to the left, under the little town of Presenzano, placed most picturesquely at the base of the range of hills that flank the western side of the wide valley of the Voltorno, extending as far as Venafro.

This road runs through a dell, sufficiently wide and wooded to have deserved the name of Bosco di Presenzano, and rather ill-famed, as the occasional resort of banditti, for which the uncultivated and deserted shades through which it winds seem perfectly suited.

There is no scarcity of habitations and villages on the adjoining mountains, particularly on the left, among which Marzano and Toro

show themselves above the fine forests that clothe them; but the immediate borders of the road, even in the plain, afford nothing more reviving in the shape of human abodes than a few dreary taverns, placed at a considerable distance from each other. This is the case along the extension of thirty-four miles between Capua and San Germano; for the relics of Calvi cannot be looked upon as an exception, and the village of Mignano, the only one situated within reach of the traveller in the wilds above mentioned, has an appearance of gloom and desolation, which rather increases than suppresses the sensation of loneliness which a transit through them must naturally create;—the wretched cottages that compose it, as well as the ruins of extensive fortifications and dismantled towers scattered among them, bearing the aspect of having been blackened by smoke. The ridge on the right is of greater elevation, and its steep surface has been cleared of its native timber to make room for plantations of olives, which seem to thrive.

On this are likewise placed the large villages

of S. Pietro-in-Fine and Cervaro, with a good carriage-road leading to each.

The monastery of Monte Cassino does not show itself till the meandering direction of the road is exchanged for a straighter course, and the valley widens ; when its stately mass, crowning the highest pinnacle of the hill which terminates this plain, breaks on the eye with a very imposing effect.

A nearer approach discloses the town of San Germano at its feet, while the objects which surround it add variety to the landscape.

Several little brooks run across the flat, and discharge themselves into the river Rapido, which is crossed at the entrance of the town, and shortly afterwards receives a great addition of water from many springs gushing from the roots of Monte Cassino just beyond San Germano.

A higher crest of mountains stretches to the right of the monastery, called *Le Mainarde*, and beyond these, Monte Cairo, a still more elevated peak, succeeds. The first time I visited these regions, in the month of June 1826, a snow-storm in the space of a very

few minutes, changed its black and indistinct surface into one of dazzling whiteness and brilliancy, producing a most singular and striking effect. San Germano reaches a considerable way up the side of Monte Cassino, and, like all other towns in similar situations, its upper divisions are inaccessible to carriages from the steepness of the communications. The houses in the lowest part are the best; and among these must be ranked the *hospice* belonging to the convent, with a handsome garden reaching to the river.

This abode is inhabited by such of the community whose health requires a milder temperature, and by the abbot almost constantly. The view from, and towards San Germano, is equally pleasing, and its position cannot fail to strike a stranger as highly eligible for a rural residence.

A belt of oak-woods extends on either side of the town, along the roots of the mountain, enlivened by villas, convents, and farms, looking over the plain. Beneath these, copious springs of the clearest water have their sources in the rock, and wander among some gardens

which they fertilize, forming a kind of oblong island between them and the broader stream of the Rapido, into which they finally discharge themselves. A fine ruin of the feudal castle stands above the town, and is itself overtopped by the venerable fabric of the convent.

With all these advantages, and a proportionate share of industry and ease, if not affluence, San Germano is considered by all strangers, and many of its own inhabitants, as being far from a desirable place of abode at all seasons, in consequence of the insalubrity of the atmosphere, arising probably more from superabundant damp than actual malaria. The copious supplies of water which run in front of the town, besides those furnished by the Rapido, occasion heavy fogs in the evening; these last the whole night, and, in still weather, are seldom dispersed the next day until the sun overtops Monte Cassino, which from its situation, is not very early, so that Silius Italicus used no poetical licence when he wrote of the *nebulosi rura Casini*.

Of the ancient city of the Volsci which bore that name, considerable and interesting remains

are still extant. A portion of it, recorded by the distinct appellation of *Forum Casini*, was contained within the precincts of the modern San Germano, at a spot which, from the number of columns which have there been found, has been considered as the site of a forum and basilica: these fragments, together with other vestiges of sculpture, and several inscriptions, have been placed in many of the modern churches. Among these a colossal stone vase is engraved with a votive offering to Hercules, who has, in consequence, been regarded as one of the tutelary deities of the place.

But the most remarkable objects of this nature are just outside of the gates, to the right of the road to Sora, on the lower slope of the mountain, beginning with the amphitheatre, the whole circuit of which is standing, though the interior seats are destroyed: it had six arched entrances faced with large square blocks of stone, most of which are still in their places, the walls being covered with opus reticulatum. This edifice, as well as a temple, was constructed by Ummidia Quadratilla, who is mentioned in the younger Pliny's letters as



a rich matron of this city who greatly delighted in games, dramatic performances, and the pantomimic art. The inscription which attests this act of munificence is preserved in the museum of the monastery; and the columns supposed to have belonged to the temple are to be seen in one of its quadrangles. A little above this are the very indistinct traces of a theatre, a large portion of a paved road with a raised footway on either side, a few other constructions, and some parts of a polygon wall.

But the most remarkable and perfect of these monuments is what appears to have been a sepulchre, to judge of it by its form and position, now converted into a chapel.

It consists interiorly of a circular chamber of very moderate dimensions, with an arch or niche on every one of its four sides, one of which is the present entrance; the construction is extremely substantial, being formed of immense blocks of travertino closely connected without any cement.

The upper vault is of the same materials cut and placed in a very ingenious manner, so as to form a cupola similar to that of the Tower

of the Winds at Athens, which on a smaller scale it somewhat resembles.

It receives but a very insufficient portion of light through four horizontal apertures like loop-holes above the arches, three of which are surrounded and covered by the hill against which it is placed, leaving only the fourth accessible from without, and this faced, or rather masked, by the modern addition of an awkward porch of stucco, in the very worst taste, so that it is impossible to guess from its exterior aspect that it is anything but a common votive chapel.

Besides these, there are other relics of Roman buildings in the flat, now converted into gardens, and on the island surrounded by the rills above mentioned. The principal among these are considered as having belonged to Varro, who gives a very minute description of the villa he possessed at Casinum, and all the appendages he had added to it; among which he mentions a museum, an aviary, and several bridges over the streams, which were then embanked with stone, the position of which, near the river Vinnius, now the Rapido,

perfectly coincides with that of these remains ; —a circumstance which adds no inconsiderable share of interest to the investigation which their picturesque details alone call for.

Casinum was a city of the Volsci, of no great consequence or celebrity under either their or the Roman rule, when it became mournfully noted from having been sacked and devastated during two days by Hannibal's troops on their way from Capua to Rome.

If the immediate vicinity of San Germano offers these attractions to the amateur of remote and classic antiquity, a taste for such researches as illustrate the dark and middle ages may be likewise amply gratified by a visit to the venerable monastery, which in our days has attained the highest celebrity for learning as well as piety ; and of which it may not be too much to say, that, under whatever point of view it is regarded, it holds the primary rank among all religious institutions.

The road which leads to it from the town was constructed with much care in the most flourishing days of the establishment, and is carried in a zigzag line of such slight acclivity as to

have rendered it at that period practicable for carriages; but the neglect of many years has reduced it to the condition of a mountain path, which is however neither tedious nor difficult, as the distance, with the deviations above mentioned, does not amount to more than two miles.

Some good modern villas, amidst clumps of trees, adorn the base of the hill just above the town; but the surface is in general bare and rocky, differing greatly therefore from the wooded approach to La Cava and Monte Vergine. Near the summit are erected by the road-side several vaulted buildings, adapted to the worship of some saint, and likewise to the shelter of the wayfarers during the sudden impetuous tempests peculiar to these regions, and which are more probably derived from atmospheric causes than their degree of elevation.

I was rendered most feelingly alive to the utility of these asylums during a descent from the convent, when the space of a very few minutes brought on so rapid a change of season and temperature as to baffle all description.

A collection of dark clouds, apparently rolling down from the mountain peak, completely shut out the sunshine and all its genial appendages, and enveloped me and my companions in a warfare of snows, hurricanes, and thunder-bolts, one of which struck the trunk of a tree at so small a distance as to communicate a very strong, and by no means pleasing, electrical shock to the whole party.

The architecture of the convent offers no claims to regularity, nor can it be said to be impressed with any characteristic suitable to a monastic establishment. But the magnitude and simplicity of its mass stamp it with an aspect of dignity, which is nevertheless very imposing.

At a distance it only appears like a huge fabric surmounted by a line of machicolations, forming a kind of cornice under the roof; but a nearer investigation shows some projections and recesses broken by arches and buttresses, which relieve the interminable succession of windows that occupy every front. The building covers the whole upper platform of the detached mountain on which it stands: the ground

slopes from the walls on all sides; some of the adjoining borders being converted into enclosed gardens and furnished with fruit-trees and timber of larger growth, among which are some very fine pines. It is, perhaps, to be regretted that these have not been laid out in a more ornamental style, as it is evident that the elevation of the spot is not such as to check the vegetation, especially on the south and east sides. The construction is of small stones covered with a reddish-grey stucco of a sober yet not dull hue.

It would be difficult to dignify either of the façades with the title of front from any exterior mark or distinction, except that which admits the entrance from the road through a mean archway in one corner, which is far from imposing, as the first ten yards of ingress run under a natural rocky vault, left in its primitive state in honour of the sainted founder.

This is succeeded by an ascent on an inclined plane under handsome stone arches, leading to a second gate, opening to a large court, followed by two of equal dimensions communicating with each other through open arcades.

The middle division is provided with a large cistern ; and from one of its extremities a handsome flight of steps, occupying the whole width of this area, ascends to the quadrangle before the church, on a much higher level. A cloister runs all round, this last, the arches of which are sustained by fine granite columns brought from the ruins of Casinum. Under these, in niches in the wall, are placed the marble statues of all the most illustrious benefactors of the community, including numerous pontiffs and sovereigns.

Over the principal door of the church, which faces the ascent to this noble atrium, a marble inscription records its architectural history from the epoch of its first foundation, on the site of a temple of Apollo, by St. Benedict in 529, to the date of its last restoration in the year 1649 ; during which lapse of centuries it had to suffer from the devastations of the Lombards soon after its first foundation, from the attacks of Saracens in 884, and from repeated hostile inroads and the shocks of earthquakes at various periods.

The interior of the church, which it would

be tedious to attempt describing in detail, is perfectly regular, and profusely decorated with the richest and most varied marbles, which likewise compose the pavement, and enrich all the lateral chapels.

The great altar rests on a basement of steps under the cupola, and divides the lower portion of the church from the choir. On each side a handsome sepulchral monument is placed: one to the memory of Vido Ferramosca, Baron of Mignano; and the other erected in honour of Pietro de' Medici, the very unworthy and degenerate son of the magnificent Lorenzo, who was drowned in the river Garigliano, after the defeat of the French army, (in which he served,) by the great captain Gonsalvo di Cordova, in 1508.

This last is one of the finest works of Giuliano di San Gallo, and was executed by order of Cosmo, the first Grand-duke of Florence.

The ceiling, which is vaulted and divided into compartments, painted in fresco by Luca Giordano, is ornamented with a broad gilt frieze which adds singular magnificence to the general effect: but an immense painting, likewise in fresco, over the door of entrance, and filling



up the whole of that side of the church, is undoubtedly the most remarkable work of art which it contains, and is probably the *chef d'œuvre* of that very prolific artist. It represents the consecration of the church and monastery by Pope Alexander II, in 1071.

The lateral chapels are all dedicated to saints, popes, or distinguished abbots of the convent : among the former is numbered Carloman, brother of Pepin father to Charlemagne, who had retired to Monte Cassino. These receptacles are adorned in the same style of splendour as the rest of the edifice, and mostly contain fine paintings by various of the Neapolitan masters ; among which are some by Mazzaroppi, an artist born at San Germano, and less known than his merits deserve.

The organ is reckoned, with justice, the finest in Italy, but is inferior to many in the northern parts of Europe : it had been much deteriorated by damp and neglect, but has recently been put into a complete state of repair. The grand appearance of this church, and the splendour displayed in its details, are much enhanced by the exquisite cleanliness which it exhibits, and

which is equalled by that of no other sacred edifice except St. Peter at Rome.

The doors, which are of bronze, present on their outward surface authentic demonstration of the power and opulence of the establishment in the year 1077, when they were manufactured at Constantinople.

They contain, in small divisions, a catalogue, expressed in silver inlaid letters, of all the tenures, castles, fiefs, and lands possessed by the abbey at that period.

The seats in the choir are of walnut and oak-wood, carved in the minute and ingenious manner which characterizes the most valuable works of that nature.

The rest of the monastery corresponds in dimensions and dignity with the church, but in no part advances pretensions to the same scale of magnificence, being disposed in a style of simplicity which does honour to the taste of a community composed of the highest born, as well as the most learned, among ecclesiastics : a distinction which has been endeavoured to be preserved through all the vicissitudes to which it has been subjected.

The only ornament of the refectory is an immense painting by Bassano, in excellent preservation.

The library is not equal in size to the remainder of the appendages, yet is rich in rare and valuable works; but the archives which adjoin it contain a collection of manuscripts, diplomas, chronicles, and records, which justly constitute the proudest boast of the establishment.

Among these, besides innumerable documents illustrative of the early history of these realms under the Lombards and Normans, are to be noted the original copies of Leo Ostiensis and Richard of San Germano, as well as rare manuscripts of the works of Homer, Virgil, and Dante, and, lastly, the celebrated vision of Albericus, a monk of this fraternity, from which that poet is supposed to have taken the first idea of the *Divina Commedia*.

In this apartment is likewise preserved a singular antique chair of Rosso antico, of the most exquisite workmanship, found at the thermæ of *Sujo*, near the Garigliano.

Under the arches of the cloisters, near the

archives, a numerous assemblage of Latin inscriptions found at Casinum, and mostly relating to local circumstances, has been collected.

A set of small chambers on the ground-floor are said to represent the actual abode first inhabited by St. Benedict in the infancy of the foundation ; they now contain a tolerably numerous selection of paintings, among which a few good ones are to be remarked, especially one by the *Monrealese*, an artist little known out of his native Sicily.

A long range of spacious and commodious apartments is adapted, according to the rules of the convent, to the reception and habitation of strangers ; and here, as well as in the church, females are allowed to enter. During both the first visits which I paid to this sanctuary, I was entertained with what the hospitable monks called a breakfast, but which, in any country, would have passed current for a substantial and excellently dressed dinner, apparently served at a very short notice ; the honours of which were done by two of the principal functionaries with a degree of courtesy and unaffected ease that

might have graced the highest secular rank : but it is customary, when male visitors remain more than one day, for them to partake of the meals of the community in the refectory.

This establishment, magnificent as it still appears to a stranger, is nevertheless wofully fallen off from its original scale of grandeur and opulence when the abbot held the rank of first baron of the realm, and never went out but in a coach and six. The grants of land and feudal prerogatives, which rendered it a kind of little sovereignty, were suppressed by the French, who nevertheless respected the religious order.

King Ferdinand, after his return from Sicily, restored to it some portion of its ancient possessions, and replaced it on a more respectable footing ; but still the revenue is diminished from more than one hundred thousand to twenty-four thousand ducats a year, and the number of monks from fifty to fifteen, with every other reduction in the same proportion ; so that they are compelled to observe the strictest economy in keeping up the customary appendages to the establishment, such as the seminary attached to the see of San Ger-

mano, of which the abbot is bishop during the existence of his spiritual rule, limited to six years.

At the expiration of his superior functions he re-enters the class of monks, retaining the privilege of wearing the cross, and a station of precedence in great religious ceremonies.

The view from the monastery, rarely to be enjoyed in consequence of the frequent mists, is more extensive than picturesque. The front of the building above San Germano, which faces the east, looks down upon the roofs of the town, and commands a prospect of the whole plain beyond it, and of the meanderings of the river Rapido as far as its junction with the *Liris*, which only then exchanges its classical and melodious name for that of *Gargigliano*.

The south and west fronts look to the broad valley watered by that river, presenting a landscape of soft fertility, bounded by a ridge of wooded hills on its right bank, and the more fantastic range that rises in the Roman territory, of which it there forms the boundary. In this valley are to be seen the

towns of Ponte Corvo, Ceperano, Aquino, Arce, and Arpino. To the north façade of the building is opposed the high and singularly gloomy Monte Cairo.

The reader will, I trust, forgive this account of Monte Cassino, which may perhaps be deemed too minute after disclaiming all intention of details ; but, although these may bear great similarity to the principal features of almost every great monastic establishment, the reflection that this one may be considered as the source from which nearly all the monkish orders in Europe under different modifications derived their origin, will, I hope, create sufficient interest to compensate the tedium of description.

## CHAPTER III.

*Lago di Carea. — Road to Atina. — Early history of the Town. — Beauty of its Women. — Road to Mola di Gaeta. — Village of Pignataro. — Fishing town of Sperlonga. — Birth-place of Juvenal. — Ruins of Aquinum. — Ponte Corvo. — Town of Rocca Secca. — Town of Isola. — Castle of the Dukes of Sora.*

ABOUT three miles from San Germano, the inhabitants show the stranger a pond, five hundred yards in circumference, which is dignified by the title of Lago di Carea, the name of a poor hamlet which probably derives it from Monte Cairo.

The walk to it along the base of Monte Cassino is pleasant; but the pool itself offers nothing curious, except the tradition of its somewhat marvellous origin, said to have occurred in the year 1724, when, after some heavy and continued rains, the earth suddenly fell in, forming a basin, at the bottom of



which appeared eighteen springs, which shortly filled up the cavity to its present level. It was stocked with eels; and the right of fishing has afforded the natives of San Germano and Carea a wide field for protracted litigation. Another longer, but more interesting excursion, may be undertaken to Atina, a town in the mountains, to which a carriage-road has recently been constructed, which it is intended to complete as far as Sora.

It runs for some distance, in a northern direction, along and between the various ramifications of the Rapido, one of which issues from a secondary valley, at the entrance of which is situated the populous and industrious village of Sant' Elia, where several manufactures are established.

The main stream is crossed at a ford, which appears likely to present obstacles, if not dangers, in the winter months; the way, after this, quits the flat cultivated ground, and, slightly deviating to the left, is carried along an uninterrupted ascent of at least five miles to Atina.

This is not only tedious, but extremely

dreary; the lateral mountains being mostly bare, with very rare portions of scanty cultivation at their lower extremities.

A dilapidated village, misnamed Belmonte, is passed about three miles before one reaches Atina, the first aspect of which town is sufficiently imposing to recall to the spectator's memory the epithet *potens* conferred upon it by Virgil.

It is placed at the extremity of the fore-mentioned acclivity, surrounded by high and bleak mountains; but overlooking a broad and well cultivated valley, which, with the river Melfa running through it, separates its territory from that of Alvito, another large town, in appearance its twin companion, situated exactly opposite. The Melfa, enriched by the waters of the smaller stream, Molinaro, flows in a wide gravelly bed, which gives it the aspect of greater dimensions than it actually possesses, and testifies at the same time the sudden increases to which it is subject, and the ravages they occasion.

Atina, and its adjacent casali, is said to contain eight thousand inhabitants, but it can

boast of nothing except its position, and the antiquities it retains ; for the interior is dirty, the streets tortuous and dark, and among its modern edifices, sacred and profane, there is not one worth noticing.

Notwithstanding its elevated situation, a ridge of still higher mountains to the south oppose the genial influence of the sun during the winter months ; its climate is consequently extremely rigid at that season, and cool at all times, but reckoned likewise very healthy.

The view from it, though extensive, is impressed with a character of dreariness, which injures its general effect.

At the distance of about three miles to the north-east, the little town of Picimisco shows itself, perched in a chilly nook above the gloomy ravines through which the Melfa breaks into the valley. It boasts of an iron-foundry, the neighbouring mountains furnishing the ore ; among these, the fantastic peaks of one, called Meta, are remarkable for their form and elevation.

This spot, whenever it has been named by the natives, has been noted as one of the cold-

est in the whole kingdom, and peculiar, moreover, as producing the largest proportion of *zampognari*, or bag-pipe players, whose wild attire, antic dancing, and alpine music, are familiar to most strangers who visit the capital about Christmas time.

To the north, the village of San Donato stands on a still higher elevation; and to the westward, beyond Alvito, rises Vicalvi, above the unseen lake of La Posta, the source of the Fibrenus; while, farther still in the same line, the castle of Sora is visible under the magnificent chain of hills that shuts in the horizon.

With all these requisites for what is generally termed a fine view, the tone of wintry colouring which characterizes it, gives the whole an effect far from pleasing, and from which the eye turns without regret to the examination of the relics of antiquity that present themselves in no scanty number.

They principally consist of detached portions of very ancient polygon walls, the formation of which offers nothing very remarkable as to the size of the materials, except on a hill

above the modern town, which was probably the citadel. There the blocks are large, and the whole line of walls may be traced without interruption.

The other fragments are in lower situations, as well as the substruction of a temple said to have been dedicated to Saturn, now a church, and the shell of another, sacred to Jupiter, and faced with opus reticulatum. A much superior specimen of Roman architecture is to be found in the pier of one of the city gates, with a basement of masonry composed of regular square masses, which still preserves the name of Porta Aurea. Numerous Latin inscriptions have been collected, and are preserved in the walls of several churches and other buildings, two of which record the existence of the statues of Junia Gratilla and Junia Aria Rufina, which were found at Atina, and conveyed to Naples to adorn the palace of its feudal lord, Diomed Carafa, Count of Madaloni.

Some traces of the antique paved road are evident in some of the streets, to the examination of which I was ceremoniously conducted by nearly the whole juvenile portion of the

population, who evinced a degree of curiosity at the appearance of strangers, which proved that it was not an event of common occurrence; this was, however, unattended by any symptom savouring of rudeness or ill-will, from which we were moreover protected by the assistance of a *galantuomo* of the place, who voluntarily assumed the office of cicerone, of which he acquitted himself very creditably, and for the performance of which he only demanded as a reward that we should take up our abode in his house for some days: this, as it was very early, we of course declined, notwithstanding the eager suggestions of our numerous retinue, who extolled in very high-flown terms the splendour of his palazzo, and the excellent fare it would afford us.

In Roman history Atina is first alluded to as a city of the Volsci: it was subdued by the arms of the republic in the year 441, at the same time with Nola and Calatia; after which it appears to have fallen under the domination of the Samnites, and as such sacked by the Romans nineteen years afterwards: it then was reduced to the condition of a prefecture,

and in that state mentioned by Cicero; but afterwards admitted to the rank of a municipium, and noted as the birth-place of Munatius Plancus.

Ughelli, in his "*Italia Sacra*," has published a chronicle of Atina, in which its original foundation is ascribed to no less a personage than Saturn, whose sepulchre (with a Latin inscription) is gravely asserted to have been discovered within its precincts.

It would be unfair to take leave of this spot without some reference to a distinction which I have heard conferred upon it by the unanimous assent of all Neapolitans, including the authority of their late sovereign, King Ferdinand I.; and that is, the beauty of its women, which, nevertheless, I afterwards found to be overrated: it must, however, be admitted that a very superior height of stature, straightness of limb, and regularity of feature, were frequently observable, to which was added a striking, though dark, brilliancy of complexion.

But these advantages appeared to be possessed only by such of the softer sex as had already passed the age of thirty, and who there-

fore, in these latitudes, had already outstepped the maturity of beauty ; for whatever might be the cause, which I had not leisure to investigate, no female of tenderer years was stamped with the same attractive character.

It may perhaps not be uninteresting to the amateurs of horticulture to learn, that the only yellow double roses I ever saw blooming in a state of entire perfection were growing under a range of polygon walls in a neglected vineyard at Atina.

It is possible to go from San Germano to Mola di Gaeta, the distance in a direct line being about eighteen miles ; but the road, or rather way, is so very impracticable that I cannot recommend it to even the most persevering investigator of interior topography. Having, however, undertaken this excursion in ignorance of its difficulties, I shall venture to offer the following account of it. As far as the Garigliano, the obstacles are not very formidable ; and the country, well cultivated, wooded, and watered by numerous streams, renders the ride very agreeable,—Monte Casino and San Germano breaking occasionally through the



masses of forest scenery in the most favourable points of view.

The path is conducted through the large village of Pignataro, where several antiquities have been found; and which, moreover, is recorded as the spot assigned by the abbots of the monastery to the residence of the stipendiary corps of Normans which they took into pay in the early part of the eleventh century, shortly after their first appearance in these regions.

This warlike troop had fortified Pignataro, and from their stronghold watched over the vast domains appertaining to the abbey, and protected them from the predatory incursions of their rapacious neighbours the Counts of Aquino and others.

The Garigliano is crossed in a ferry-boat at San Giorgio, a village placed on its banks, in a marshy, and, consequently, unhealthy position, but surrounded by rich cultivation.

From this place the town of Ponte Corvo has a very imposing aspect; and in front, Rocca Guglielma, on an apparently inaccessible rock, amidst frightful precipices and gloomy forests,

produces a very extraordinary and picturesque effect.

The track, if the stony bed of a torrent can be so called, ascends the mountain in its steepest parts, and either to mounted or pedestrian travellers imposes a task so laborious, that I consider it by far the most fatiguing undertaking I ever achieved. After passing under the little dreary village of Castelnuovo, we halted beneath another, named Le Fratte,—both appellations of frequent recurrence in this kingdom.

Here, under the vaulted porch of a miserable tavern, we halted; and, though our appetite obtained but scanty refecton from a meagre repast of eggs and cheese, our exertions seemed quite overpaid by the luxury of snow to cool our wine: it is only on such occasions, after the toils of such a journey in the midsummer temperature of latitude 42°, that the full value of such an article of refreshment can be duly appreciated.

We resumed our progress; and, a little farther, were cheered by the prospect (through a gap in the mountains) of smoother regions


near the sea, and the promontory of Mon-dragone, or Mount Massicus. A gentle descent, on an amended path, led us southwards to a little secluded plain shaded by olive-trees, the principal vegetation in this district; and to a church, once belonging to a ruined monastery of which I could never learn the name. The interior, which had been renewed and whitewashed, to the utter destruction of all appearance of venerable antiquity, has, nevertheless, retained some tombs of the fifteenth century, bearing inscriptions that prove it to have been at that period a sanctuary of great renown and resort.

After this, the declivity increases, and the path crosses a stream of such icy coldness, that it was impossible to keep the hand in it for more than half a minute: I take it to be the Ausente, which, after reaching the flat country, waters a plain that bears its name, and flows into the Garigliano under the town of Fraetto. Between this and the sea-shore, to which we were rapidly descending, large portions of an ancient Roman road were frequently visible; and, after passing the village of Castel

Onorato on the right, we observed very considerable masses of fine masonry, composed of square blocks, apparently the substructions of higher fabrics, many of which were regularly disposed in straight rows.

These, which might have belonged to the ruins of Ausona, a city mentioned by Livy, were scattered among thickets, bowers, and shady avenues of myrtle, far exceeding in height and luxuriance those that form what are termed *macchie* on the coast of the Adriatic. From these balmy recesses, the prospect of the Gulf of Gaeta, far surpassing in every respect that of the Bay of Naples, was delicious: the path enters the highroad to the capital about three miles to the east of Mola, where I rested after the fatigues of this very laborious day's journey.

The road I had followed is, with all its difficulties, the most frequented line of communication between the interior of the province and the sea, and the only one which affords to the inland proprietors the opportunity of disposing of the produce of their land, chiefly consisting of grain.



A much readier, and more natural, mode of conveyance offers itself in the course of the Garigliano, flowing in sufficient depth through the very districts that furnish these supplies; but, above the bridge which exists near the ancient Minturnæ, no boats have ever been constructed that would admit the means of safe and commodious transportation; the only vessels in use being flat-bottomed punts, called *sandali*, of such awkward and weak fabrication, that the farmers, who have attempted to make use of them, have found the risk and expense to outweigh all the disadvantages and delays of land-carriage.

About eight miles to the west of Gaeta, stands *Zperlonga*, dignified by the name of town; but containing little more than eight hundred inhabitants, mostly fishermen: it stands on a little sandy cape projecting into the sea, with anchorage on either side, according to the prevailing wind, for the boats used by the natives.

I went to it by water, as the quickest mode of communication from Gaeta: the coast, though by no means flat, offers nothing very

attractive or remarkable after the stupendous bulwark of perpendicular rocks that guard the above-mentioned town on the sea-side.

Sperlonga was anciently called Speluncæ, a name easily accounted for by the numerous natural caves that exist in its vicinity: one of these claims some notice, and was indeed the only object of my visit, as having been mentioned both by Tacitus and Suetonius, who record an event that happened there, which had nearly proved fatal to the Emperor Tiberius, who possessed a villa on the spot, of which this grotto formed one of the appendages. During a supper, which he gave in it, several large stones fell in from the vault amidst the guests, some of whom were injured by the accident; but Sejanus extended his arms over his master, and interposed his whole person to protect him from the impending peril; which action is supposed to have established the foundation of the long continuance of favour afterwards enjoyed by this unworthy favourite.

In its present state, it offers the remains of seats, divisions, and relics of ornaments in stucco on the face of the grotto, which is a crumb-

ling breccia. The path that leads to it from the village, and which is about half a mile long by the water-side, is likewise bordered with Roman remains, which point out the direction of the Via Flacca, leading from Terracina to Gaeta.

In less remote times, the existence of Sperlonga was called from the obscurity in which it had naturally sunk, by the temporary residence of the anti-pope Clement VII, who retired to it after his election at Fondi, and affixed its name to the date of several bulls of censure and excommunication, which, previous to his removing to Avignon, he vainly fulminated against his antagonist, and the powers that upheld him.

About three centuries back it was visited by a much more formidable and successful personage. The noted Hayradin Barbarossa effected a descent at Sperlonga in 1534, and made it a resting-place for one night, previous to attacking the town of Fondi, with the especial charge (if we are to believe contemporaries) of carrying away the widow of its feudal lord, Julia Gonzaga. This lady, esteemed the most

beautiful of her day, had only time to escape on horseback from the castle, in a dishabille the most unfitted to galloping over a mountain ; but the inhabitants, having made an ineffectual attempt to resist, were massacred without mercy, and the town given up to pillage ; after which the Africans withdrew to their galleys, and put to sea again with the booty they had collected in this singular expedition.

In its present state, Sperlonga, though it more than once was honoured by the abode of the late King Ferdinand on some of his sporting expeditions, must offer but a comfortless residence. The view from it to the north-west is however not without some interesting features ; commanding, as it does, the Islands of Ponza and Ventotene, the Lake of Fondi, Monte Circello, and the well-known picturesque rock of Terracina.

Returning to the Abruzzo road, to which it is hoped the above digression will not be deemed too foreign, I shall proceed to describe that leading from San Germano to Sora along the plain of the Liris ; which river, though flowing in a broader stream than it does nearer its junc-



tion with the sea, is seldom visible from a level but little raised above its own.

The land is well cultivated ; first with wheat growing under fine oaks, scattered so plentifully throughout this whole region that they may be looked upon as the peculiar features of the flatter districts in the Terra di Lavoro, except within a certain distance of the capital, where the advantages derived from a more mixed system of cultivation had probably caused their removal. To these succeed vines, trained on pollared fruit-trees, as in the valley of Foligno, which this tract much resembles.

The mountains on the right are bare at their summits, but well wooded, and not scantily provided with villages or small towns at their base : of these, as nearest the plain, though placed on acclivities, Villa, Piedimonte, Palazzo, Colle, and Caprile, are the most conspicuous ; the few that are on the left of the road are not visible, either from the flatness of their situation or the trees that surround them.

About four miles from San Germano, and

shortly after passing Piedimonte, a track turns off to the left near a large square tower, called of San Gregorio, probably of Lombard structure, but rising from a Roman foundation, and having many Latin inscriptions among the stones in its walls.

Following the same path, through open fields, the distance of about two miles brings one to an ancient and dilapidated church, called Santa Maria della Libera, within the precincts of Aquinum, a city of considerable importance when possessed by the Volsci, and their conquerors the Romans.

The city of Aquinum was, under the Romans, noted as the birth-place of the poet Juvenal and the short-reigned Emperor Pescennius Niger; and became in Christian times no less celebrated for that of Saint Thomas, the son of one of its counts, whose united knowledge and piety obtained for him, in after ages, the name of the Angelic Doctor, and the reputation of being the most sanctified of the learned, and the most learned of the saints.

This church, of which the outward walls and steeple only are extant, is apparently of Nor-

man architecture. The buttresses, porches, recesses, and carved windows, which still adorn it, and which are executed with no ordinary skill, give it a very picturesque aspect ; but it advances higher claims to the notice of the antiquary, as standing on the site, and showing the exact dimensions, of a temple of Hercules. This is proved by an inscription, as well as by the lower tier of masonry forming the basement of the more modern walls, and still retaining its original form and position.

Above these, the upper ranges, though evidently of antique cut and probably furnished by ancient buildings, are connected with less regularity, and interspersed, as usual, with Latin inscriptions, sometimes reversed. At one extremity of this edifice an excavation had lately been dug, and the base of a large Doric column found, probably one of those that formed the portico ; and, at the other end, a long flight of steps, descending to a lower level, preserves the same character of identity, with a large marble pavement above it, in front of the doorway of the church, which platform must likewise have belonged to the temple. In

some garden-grounds adjoining these remains stands another relic of antiquity, no less remarkable, and much better preserved.

This is an arch or gateway of no very considerable dimensions, exhibiting great elegance of design and good execution.

The columns placed at each exterior angle are surmounted with capitals of an ornate and composite order, while the shorter pillars sustaining the arch are Ionic.

A water-course, now purposely directed under this as the shortest line to a mill which it works, precludes the investigation of the interior; while the rank vegetation springing from the banks has acquired an elevation and density which prevent a correct estimate of its proportions being formed.

This stream (which, after turning the mill, falls into the original river from which it is withdrawn some hundred yards above,) was mistaken by Strabo, who, alluding to Aquinum, says that the Melfa flows near or through it: but that river is four miles distant to the north-west; and this brook, now called by the natives Songie or Sogne, rises at a spot called

Capo d'Acqua, near Palazzolo. Its united waters, on leaving the mill, pass under a fine Roman bridge of one arch, over which the pavement of Via Latina, with a raised footway on each side, is carried in a straight line for a considerable distance, as far as a gateway of grandiose but simple construction, which probably formed the principal entrance to the city of Aquinum.

A range of walls of large blocks laid in regular courses has its commencement from this gateway, and continues to be visible for the space of half a mile. On quitting the interior of the city, the ruins of a circus and a theatre present themselves to the right; they are much dilapidated, and the remains of the former are composed of ignoble brick-work, while the latter is all of travertino.

Beyond these are four masses of masonry, at nearly equal distances from each other, of which two were temples, probably of Ceres Helvina, and Diana, (mentioned by Juvenal,) and the two others square sepulchral monuments.

The largest of the former consists of the whole wall that rose at the back, in its entire

dimensions, surmounted with a cornice, entablature, triglyphs, and guttæ ; but so shaken by earthquakes that the light is seen through the interstices of the stones.

The base of the lateral wall is likewise discernible, as well as portions of the columns of the portico in front ; while a double row of pillars, of which fragments still remain in their original position, appears to have formed an approach to it.

The second temple is much smaller, and only remarkable from having a curved niche at the back protruding exteriorly. One of the tombs is constructed of immense blocks of unhewn stone placed in an unconnected manner, while the symmetrical regularity which characterises the other bespeaks a less remote mode of fabrication.

The modern Aquino is situated, not unpleasantly, about a quarter of a mile from the site of the ancient town, on a bank overlooking a well-cultivated tract of land ; but war and pestilence in ancient times, and the no less destructive effects of malaria at a more recent period, have reduced the population to about six hundred inhabitants.

It was, from the solidity of its fortifications rather than its local position, always considered a place of considerable strength ; and its castaldi and counts ranked high, during the middle ages, among the number of petty tyrants of this province, who, though nominally under the vassalage of the princes of Capua, asserted an independence which was mainly supported by a continued state of warfare and depredation among each other.

A characteristic instance of the wild barbarity of that æra is recorded in one of these contests in the tenth century, when Athenulfus, castaldus of Aquino, effected a forcible entrance into the monastery of Monte Cassino ; and, after committing every species of sacrilegious outrage, carried away the abbot for the purpose of sewing him in a bear's skin, to be hooted by his soldiers and worried by his dogs.

About one hundred years after this, and subsequently to the Norman invasion, Aquino became remarkable for the reconciliation between Robert Guiscard and Gregory VII, who at the same time granted to the former the investiture of the duchies of Apulia and Calabria.

Its episcopal see, now united to that of Sora, where the bishop resides, extends its jurisdiction over a considerable portion of the province. The town of Pontecorvo,\* divided in two portions by the Liris, and subject, with some intervals of exception, to the sway of the Pope ever since the year 1463, stands about four miles from Aquino. Like Benevento, it is entirely surrounded by the Neapolitan territory; but at so short a distance from the Roman frontier, that it is a matter of surprise that no arrangement has ever been entered into by the parties concerned to place it in immediate contact with the state to which it belongs.

Its counts were powerful vassals in the middle ages; and through one of those singular political vicissitudes which have marked the beginning of the present century, the last sovereign of Pontecorvo stepped from the possession of its insignificant principality, upon one of the thrones of Scandinavia.

Aquino is not more than a mile from the high-road between San Germano and Sora,

\* A good carriage-road has now been established (1835) from that leading to Sora and Pontecorvo.



though the narrow track which I had been directed to take more than doubled the distance. These ways are, however, impracticable for a carriage in winter ; and difficult, as I experienced, even in summer, if any recent rains have fallen, and have left pools which soon become sloughs.

The river Melfa, a wild ungovernable mountain torrent, is crossed about four miles beyond Aquino over a handsome bridge, which, as well as a large substantial inn near it, is of recent construction.

This stream, which I have before had occasion to mention, rises in the higher regions of the Apennines, nearly at the foot of the mountain called La Meta, and, after a devious course of about twenty miles, finally enters the plain of the Liris near Rocca Secca, two miles above the bridge, and discharges itself into that river between Ceprano and Pontecorvo. The little town of Rocca Secca, united to its adjoining villages or casali, named Villa and Caprile, contains about three thousand inhabitants.

It was originally built by an abbot of Monte

Cassino, but soon became attached to the domains of the counts of Aquino.

At two different periods of the fifteenth century, the plain that stretches before it along the Melfa became the scene of hostile encounters; first, between the contending armies of Ladislas King of Naples (of the Durazzo line) and Louis of Anjou; and later, in 1458, between the papal forces allied to Ferdinand of Aragon, and those of René of Anjou, who disputed his possession of the Neapolitan throne.

In modern times it has attached its name to a powder said to be found, but probably manufactured, there; which has acquired much celebrity as an efficacious medicine, or rather preservative, against intermittent fevers. Beyond the Melfa, the hills gradually close in upon the valley, giving additional effect to the picturesque tract of forest scenery which follows.

The little town of Arce, and Rocca d'Arce at no great distance, on the right of the road, are passed about four miles from the river: the last of these two is looked upon as the representative of the ancient *Arx*, a name sufficiently

expressive in itself of the extraordinary position which it occupies; it is, indeed, difficult to imagine a spot apparently so well formed by nature to withstand the efforts of a besieging army.

On this account it was ever considered in the light of a stronghold, especially during the middle ages, when the portion of the kingdom in which it is placed was so repeatedly subjected to the irruptions of invading armies. Nevertheless, this apparently impregnable fortress was frequently carried by assault, even before the introduction of artillery, and has lost all its importance in the eyes of modern engineers.

It retains vestiges of its antique origin, in the shape of polygon walls; and near it, at a spot called Fontana Buona, there exist some brick ruins which point out the site of a villa belonging to Quintus Tullius, the brother of the orator, who has in one of his letters described the merits of this habitation with some detail. Many inscriptions relative to the Tullian family have likewise been excavated in the neighbourhood.

From the road to Sora, another, branching

off to the left, brought to its completion in the year 1831, leads to Ceprano, on the right bank of the Liris,—a town usually designated as the point of boundary between the two states. But the Roman frontier extends for at least half a mile to the left of the river. Nothing can, indeed, be more irregularly, not to say capriciously, delineated than these limits, which come in contact with the Liris near Monte San Giovanni, a Roman town a few miles above Ceprano; follow its banks for a short distance; cross them, as above described, to enclose a scanty portion of territory without even one habitation upon it; and are finally carried back to the other shore to recede from it altogether. From the bridge of Ceprano, which, as one of the few on the Liris, has always been considered as an influential military post in all invading expeditions, a road to Rome has long existed by the towns of Frosinone, Ferentino, Agnani, and Valmontone, the whole extension of which offers a much nearer channel of communication between the two capitals than the usual one along the Pontine marshes. But the ancient track between Arce and the Liris

was barely practicable for carriages during the summer months : and the inconveniences, and even perils, attending the passage of the Melfa previous to the construction of the present bridge, deterred most travellers from undertaking the expedition. Now that these obstacles are removed, and that better accommodation as to horses and inns may be looked to as the consequence, it is not unreasonable to expect that the line of the Via Latina will excite the interest and awaken the curiosity of travellers, who will find some trifling difficulties amply compensated by the reduction of distance along a level and excellent road, by the beauty of the scenery, and by the numerous objects of notice presented by such spots as Calvi, Monte Cassino, Aquino, and the towns scattered along the valley of the Hernici in the Roman states. About two miles below Ceprano, along a tolerable carriage-road, stands *Isoletta*, a wretched village of about two hundred inhabitants feebly struggling against poverty and malaria : it belongs to the Neapolitan territory ; and I visited it during a residence in the neighbourhood, in the hope of finding some

vestiges of antiquity. These exist, consisting of the remains of two bridges rather more than a mile distant from one another; the arches are destroyed, but the structure of the piers on each side, though fallen, is visible; and that of the second bridge, on the left bank of the stream, is united to a square basement of fine masonry, probably the foundation of a gate, or watch-tower, which preserves its original station and symmetry.

The river Tolero or Sacco, anciently the Trerus, flows into the Liris between these bridges; and, as the town of Fregellæ was situated on the banks of this last, they might be those which Livy tells us were destroyed by the inhabitants to obstruct the progress of Hannibal from Capua to Rome.

Fregellæ was, in Strabo's time, reduced to the condition of a village (*vicus*); but it is mentioned as one of the stations of the Via Latina, in the Antonine Itinerary. Some more remains of ancient buildings strewn between the river and the modern town of San Giovanni in Carico, about two miles distant, seem to corroborate this supposition.

This last place stands in a most beautiful position, on an eminence, under some higher hills, overlooking the fertile, varied, and well-cultivated bank which extends along the right shore of the Liris from Ceprano to Pontecorvo.

This digression has led me from the main road: this, a little way beyond Arce, is brought very near the bed of the river, which nevertheless remains concealed by the trees and intervening cultivation. A stream of remarkable transparency and rapidity crosses the road, emitting a strong odour of sulphur. This rises below the village of Fontana, placed on an insulated hill two miles to the right, and is formed by a collection of acidulated, saline, chalybeate, and hot springs gushing from the earth near the vestiges of some ancient thermæ.

Tradition has, naturally enough, preserved the memory of an extinct volcano in this vicinity, but the fact has never been accurately investigated. The brook, notwithstanding these peculiarities, is said to produce excellent trout.

The country after this, can no longer be called a valley, for, though the road runs in a parallel line with the Liris, its hitherto level course

is changed, and a considerable ascent brings it to a point where another branches off to the right, leading to Arpino, and from which the little Roman town of Monte San Giovanni, already mentioned, shows itself on the opposite bank.

The declivity which succeeds carries the road to the immediate banks of the river, which is seen of a thick clay-coloured hue, swiftly flowing in a deep channel overhung with alders and other aquatic plants. A little farther it assumes a more picturesque aspect from a series of low cataracts, which it forms near an island called San Paolo, between two branches of the stream.

This is accessible by means of a ferry, and measures about six moggia, or acres, partly cultivated, and partly clothed with the most luxuriant wild vegetation. This spot, which possesses the charm of verdure and freshness so rare in meridional latitudes, has two mills upon it; and offers an object of greater interest in a fine Roman arch, apparently the relic of a bridge which crossed the river here: it has withstood the ravages of time and the fury of



the stream, and may probably have originally caused the formation of the island itself by checking the progress of the stones, wood, and other solid substances rolled along by the river, which collected and increased till they assumed their present shape.

Shortly after passing this, the high platform that rises above the town of Isola is visible, with the numerous houses, villas, and manufactories, that are scattered over its surface; and the village of Castelluccio, on an eminence on the other bank of the Liris: half an hour more brings one in view of the town itself, and the striking features that distinguish it.

The picturesque celebrity of this spot has barely travelled beyond the boundaries of Campania, though it is entitled to an equal rank with that of Tivoli, Terni, or any of those regions which derive their peculiar charms from waterfalls and their various accompaniments. I was, nevertheless, more struck by the singularity than the actual beauty of its position.

The town, which is but small, is contained in the flat space surrounded by two branches of the Liris, which give it the name it bears, each

of which is derived from a cascade of considerable height, springing from a point where an huge rock opposing itself to the course of the stream, causes their division : one of these falls is perpendicular, about ninety-six feet high, and seen from the road ; the other, fully as abundant of water, rushes down an inclined plane about six hundred palms in extent, but yields to the other in effect.

On the upper extremity of the mass which thus checks and divides the river in two portions, is placed a castle, once the abode of the dukes of Sora, the solid construction of which, though not strictly Gothic, is so broken into projections, turrets, arches, terraces, and pinnacles, that the whole fabric, rising as if by magic from the spray of the cascade, and varying in light, shade, and colouring, from the incessant action of its vapours, presents a picture which has few, if any parallels.

This building, purchased some time back from the feudal possessor by the Neapolitan government, is now let to serve as a cloth manufactory, and has therefore lost all its claims to interior notice. The bridge leading

to the back of it from the left bank of the river has been destroyed, and there is now no access to it from the upper level,—the only way being to descend to the town below, traverse its streets, and the two bridges of entrance and egress, and then ascend again along the edge of the second or inclined cascade: this leads into what was the garden, from which a wooden foot-bridge, temporarily erected over the narrow channel conducting the surplus of the waters of the first to the second cataract, gives admission into the portal and inner court of the mansion.

This garden, neglected and overgrown with weeds, still retained, in the year 1826, some vestiges of the taste which had designed it; fountains, marble pedestals, and vases, avenues of fine trees, thickets of flowering shrubs, and architectural alcoves still shaded by jessamine and honeysuckle, attested the care and expense bestowed upon its original formation. It extends in a line from the mansion and the two cascades, along the margin of the upper level of the river, which here glides smoothly in that

sullen majesty of depth, so well characterised by the lines of Horace :

Non rura quæ Liris, quietà  
Mordet aquâ, taciturnus amnis :

An aspect singularly contrasted by that which the impetuosity of the waterfall gives to it but a few paces farther.

These grounds, filling up the whole space between the stream and a precipitous wooded bank, that rises on the opposite side and excludes all distant view, appeared at that period gifted with a charm of solitude and tranquillity which I had never seen so strongly impressed on any other spot. But during the last visit I paid to scenes so attractive, they had lost even these faint remains of their former existence, and presented no other appearance than that of a wasted and swampy flat.

To return to the town of Isola : it contains about three thousand inhabitants, almost all of whom are positively, or indirectly, interested in the labours of the various manufactures of cloth, paper, or iron wire, which owe their activity to the existence of the Liris.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Departure from Isola.—Scenery of the Liris.—Feudal tenure of Isola.—Cicero's Villa.—The River Fibrenus.—Town of Arpino.—Convent at Veroli.—Town of Sora.—Mountain Cascades.—Civita D'Antina.—Its antiquity.—Source of the Liris.—History of the Fucine Lake.—Gladiatorial Spectacle.—Scene of Corradino's defeat.—View from Mount Salviano.*

LEAVING Isola to the left, the road ascends a gentle slope, the termination of which brings it on a level with the castle, while the right bank is adorned by a succession of villas commanding views of the town, and the windings of the river below it. The last of these is a handsome dwelling-house, attached to a large and flourishing paper manufactory, shaded by magnificent lime-trees, under which the residue of the streams that work its machinery forms a very picturesque cascade in its descent to the Liris.

In one of the habitations of this district,

which is called Santa Maria delle Forme, I was fortunate enough to secure a residence the first time I visited those rural scenes : and the hospitable reception I then received from its owner, a rich retired merchant of Arpino, established the foundation of an intercourse of amicable relations which I have ever since enjoyed. His villa is one of the prettiest in the vicinity, and is, moreover, fitted up in a style of comfort which recalls the habits of our native abodes.

The soil of this valley is clayey, and the least rain makes it so soft and slippery as to render the act of walking very unpleasant at such times ; a circumstance unfavourable to it as a winter dwelling : it is nevertheless fertile, and peculiarly favourable to the vegetables and fruits of colder climates.

The features of the country are well defined, and it is sufficiently wooded and cultivated to justify in a great measure the pre-eminence for beauty which has generally been allowed to it.

If one follows the immediate banks of the Liris, nothing can surpass the varied details

of romantic scenery which its course presents; but the moment one withdraws from it, all those charms are lost; as from not one of the villas above mentioned can the river be seen, running, as it does, in a deep ravine, over-shadowed by trees, considerably below the general level. Another drawback upon the landscape is owing to the formality of the style of cultivation, the vines being trained upon elms, planted at regular distances, and all pollared very low in the most ungraceful manner.

The adjoining hills have almost all been despoiled of the timber which probably clothed them, to make room for olives, whose slow growth and dull foliage entirely fail in adding any attraction to the prospect.

The foundation of Isola di Sora cannot be traced to any very remote period of antiquity, and probably does not reach beyond the beginning of the eleventh century, during which it is alluded to in some records and diplomas as *Insula filiorum Petri*, which Petrus was a *castaldus*, or governor of the district.

Some antiquaries, misled, naturally enough, by the peculiarity of the situation, have looked

upon it as the representative of the Interamna *Lirinas*, mentioned by Livy, Cicero, and Strabo; but the authority of these writers is conclusive of a contrary hypothesis, placing it on the Via Latina,—consequently, at some distance from this spot. Strabo positively says, that Interamna was situated at the confluence of the river from Casinum, (the Vinnius or Rapido,) with the Liris; and Romanelli has identified its site with that of some ruins between the former stream and the *Sogne* that flows from Aquino. No vestiges of antiquity have ever been found within the precincts, or in the immediate vicinity, of the modern Isola; all which circumstances combine to divest it of any archæologic interest. The castle, or ducal palace, built by its feudal possessors, who with justice preferred the situation to that of Sora, probably gave it some importance, and was the means of increase to its population after the middle ages; but the comparative prosperity it now enjoys is undoubtedly due to the manufactures which have been established there. These advantages have nevertheless been occasionally counterbalanced by the calamitous occurrences to



which its immediate contact with the Roman states has subjected it. At more than one period in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, it was devastated by small troops of brigands, one of which, under a celebrated commander surnamed Papone, used to levy taxes, and assume all the privileges of a feudal sovereign.

On the first entrance of the French armies in 1798, it underwent disasters of a similar nature, which were unfortunately too frequently repeated in consequence of the unsubmitting disposition of the natives.

The feudal tenure of Isola once belonged to the family of the *Cantelmi*, celebrated in the annals of the kingdom for their large possessions in its northern district, the influence it conferred upon them, and the overbearing and turbulent manner in which they exerted it.

After the memorable conspiracy of the barons against Ferdinand, who not only defeated their machinations, but struck the feudal power a blow which it never recovered, the *Cantelmi* were subdued, together with the other unsuccessful aspirants to independence, and

deprived of their extensive domains in this part of the realm, which were bestowed upon other families.

In the course of time, however, the dispersed portions of this property were re-united, at the end of the sixteenth century, under the sway of Giacomo Buoncompagno, son of Gregory XIII, (before his accession to the papal chair,) who became Duke of Sora and proprietor of all the surrounding country on the banks of the Liris. The last possessor, father of the present Prince of Piombino, (Buoncompagno Ladovisi,) resigned this principality, and all the privileges attached to it, to the Neapolitan government for a stated sum, which was afterwards commuted to the grant of other estates; and it has ever since formed part of the public domains.

Some of the older inhabitants of Isola still remember, with feelings of gratitude, the magnificence and princely hospitality displayed by these Roman lords during their periodical visits to their Neapolitan possessions. On these occasions they brought with them a numerous assortment of illustrious guests, including princesses and prelates, from the Roman capital;

together with a large retinue of attendants and domestics, who all came by a road from Ferentino through Veroli, now impracticable for carriages.

The higher classes among the residents in the neighbouring towns of Sora and Arpino were usually invited to the banquets and entertainments which formed an essential part of the *villegiatura*; among which last, dramatic performances by a company of comedians expressly brought from Rome were frequently exhibited: concerts by the musical amateurs of Arpino were likewise executed, the expenses of which, as well as those attending the conveyance of the visitors from their respective dwellings, were defrayed by the noble proprietor, who carried his munificence, in this respect, so far as likewise to supply all the losses incurred at the gaming-table by the gentlemen of Isola. All these glories have passed away; and it is to be hoped that a more equal distribution of ease and humble affluence among all ranks of inhabitants, attending on the diffusion of industry and manufactures, has long since amply compensated whatever sensations

of regret may be blended with these splendid recollections.

A mile beyond the spot where I was so hospitably received, the river Fibreno, after crossing the road to Sora, which runs along the left bank of the Liris, rushes into this last stream, from the right, near an ancient church dedicated to S. Dominico, and which has been considered as standing on the site of one of Cicero's most favourite villas.

The detailed account he gives of it, in his work *De Lege*, and the peculiarity of its position on a spot contained between two branches of the Fibrenus, appear to favour this supposition; but the claims to this honour have been successfully disputed by another island, situated very little higher up on the same river: in both, vestiges of Roman buildings are to be seen, and, among those still existing, together with some inscriptions, at the above-mentioned church, a fragment of a bas-relief, representing a battle, is remarkable from its style of execution.

The other and more distant islet now bears the name of *Carnello*, and contains a paper ma-

nufactory dependent on that at *Le Forme*. The course of the Fibrenus receives no tributary stream in the whole of its limited extension ; a circumstance which, while it secures to it unimpaired coldness and transparency, divests it likewise of the means of sudden increase or inundation ; and is supposed to impart superior excellence of flavour to the varieties of fish which it produces : among these the trout hold the first rank, and certainly greatly surpass those (nevertheless very good) furnished by the Liris.

The waters of this beautiful stream rise about four miles from Isola, under the village of *La Posta*, from a little lake abounding with wild fowl. It is of moderate size, but immense depth ; and so clear, that the copious springs which supply it may be seen bubbling out of apparently fathomless caverns at the bottom.

The spot is wild and worthy of notice, and the ride to it from Isola one of the pleasantest in the neighbourhood.

The finest view of Isola and all its interesting appendages is obtained from a hill, called *San Giovenale*, facing the town, on the

other side of the road; this is of sufficient altitude to command, not only both cascades in their full dimensions, but likewise the previous meanderings of the river, and a fine reach of the upper valley as far as the city of Sora, backed by the mountains of Abruzzo.

The effect of such a landscape, glowing, as I viewed it, with the tints of a midsummer sunset, was greatly enhanced by the group which distinguished the foreground.

On a limestone bank of the richest hue, beneath one of the fine oaks that shade the whole mountain, sat a stripling goatherd, of about sixteen, holding a nest with two wood-pigeons in it, while a large white Abruzzese dog lay at his feet, guarding the flock of goats confided to his keeping.

The lad's sister shortly joined him from a pagliara, or straw hut, in the adjoining thicket, with a pail, which, being exchanged for the nest in his hand, was soon used to collect the evening supplies furnished by the shaggy herd. Both children were handsome and healthy, and their attire was of that nature which, in these climates only, invests poverty with a pictu-

resque charm; and the scene was an animated representation of those which Virgil's eclogues have taught us to dream of, but which the artificial habits and ungenial temperature of our regions can never exhibit.

A horse-road, once practicable for carriages, leads from Isola to Arpino, distant about three miles; but that which communicates from this town with the capital, falls into the San Germano track, about four miles from Isola, rendering the journey that way longer by rather more than that distance.

Arpino is situated on a very high hill, with a more extensive than gratifying view over the surrounding country: it has, for a long series of years, been noted for its manufactures of woollen cloths, as the best in the kingdom, but which have lately encountered successful competition from those established at Isola.

To the classical scholar it recommends itself in a more interesting light, as the birth-place of three of the most celebrated persons in Roman history,—C. Marius, M. T. Cicero, and M. Agrippa, son-in-law to Augustus.

In modern times it has produced Giuseppe

Cesari, a painter of some renown, better known as the Cavaliere D'Arpino; and Egiziello, a soprano singer of great reputation in the last century. The natives of this place are famous for their aptitude to the musical art, and all strangers who visit it are usually entertained with an amateur concert of both vocal and instrumental music, which, though got up extempore, would not be misplaced in the most accomplished capital of Europe.

This town, first belonging to the Volsci, next to the Samnites, and lastly to the Romans, contains at the present day about ten thousand inhabitants. Its elevated position, on several different levels, does not admit of much regularity in the streets, which are consequently narrow and tortuous; but the houses are generally well built, and it exhibits an air of ease and prosperity which is very satisfactory.

The remains of antiquity that are still extant, are to be seen at the very highest extremity of the mountain on which the city is placed, which retains the distinctive appellation of Civita Vecchia: these consist principally of walls, composed of immense blocks of stone



connected without cement, but with a certain regularity, therefore not deserving the name of Cyclopian or polygonal : these stretch from the lower regions of the town to the extreme point above mentioned, and unite at a very sharp angle behind a large square tower erected in the middle ages, and said to have served as a residence for King Ladislas.

Near this is a very curious gateway, having at a distance the appearance of a pointed arch, but composed in reality of stones reaching over each other till they meet and produce this effect, which is heightened by the interior of the mass being artificially shaped to a slight curvature.

The peculiar construction of this monument proves it to be of much more remote date than the walls themselves.

A fine Roman arch, situated much lower down, now serves as one of the modern city gates. The same district contains, moreover, a little church, called Santa Maria di Civita, under the porch of which a dedicatory inscription to Mercurius Lanarius was found, corroborative of a tradition which existed of its being

the site of a temple dedicated to this deity, and that, consequently, the art of manufacturing woollen textures is of very ancient date at Arpino.

This supposition has received additional validity from another inscription, recording the erection of *turres fullonicae*, in which the cloths underwent the operation of cleansing, refining, and dyeing. Several other spots are shown as venerable in antiquity, among which is the site of Cicero's native dwelling.

The Volscian towns were all emulous of proclaiming Saturn as their original founder; and Arpino, as well as Atina, has advanced a similar claim, as likewise that of possessing the sepulchral monument of this venerable personage.

A certain Clavelli has recorded the discovery of an urn full of ashes, bearing a *Latin* inscription which removes all doubts on the subject.

There is but one fountain at Arpino, and the want of water to assist the machinery of the manufactures, may probably in time depress its commercial importance below that of Isola.

Two sovereigns, Charles III. and his son Ferdinand, have made Arpino their temporary

residence at two very different periods; the former, in 1744, when he was on his way to oppose the Austrians; the second, in 1798, with an army meant to withstand the invasion of the revolutionary French forces.

The houses inhabited by these monarchs are distinguished by having a massive iron chain fixed between the stone posts on each side of the gateway; a custom of ancient origin in this country, and probably intended to record the honour conferred by such illustrious guests.

It has also been regarded as an indication that, after such a distinction, no other visitors should be admitted; but the emblem used is susceptible of other interpretations, rather more humiliating to the hospitality of the proprietors.

Both at Arpino and Isola the women are distinguished for their good looks,—with this difference, that at the last place they preserve the dark and animated character common to the generality of the southern race, while those of Arpino vie in fairness and delicacy of complexion with the natives of our colder regions.

Several agreeable and interesting excursions

may be undertaken from Isola ; one of which is to Casa Mari, a name which, added to some indistinct vestiges of ancient constructions, has obtained for the spot the reputation of being the site of a villa belonging to Marius. It is placed at the distance of four miles from Isola, on a road leading to Veroli, (a good Roman town,) which, though much deteriorated, will admit the use of a small or light carriage. The place at present is only remarkable for a convent, which has existed ever since the year 1005 ; and which, after passing under the different rules of various monastic orders, was finally subjected to that of La Trappe in 1717, to the rigid severity of which it still adheres. The building is large, and offers some curious specimens of ancient Gothic architecture ; but the locality has nothing else to recommend it.

The episcopal town of Sora, retaining its ancient name and situation, is about three miles distant from Isola, along an excellent road, which terminates with the valley itself at its gates. Here, the Liris, flowing from a glen of narrower dimensions but considerable length, forms a bend round the city, and is crossed to

gain admittance to it. The place is consequently in a flat, but not unpleasant position; one whole flank being watered by the river, and the hinder extremity resting against an insulated rocky hill, on which are seen the ruins of its Gothic castle, and those of its still more ancient walls.

The dwellings are large, the streets wide and well paved, and the population, apparently easy and industrious, amounts to seven thousand souls. In front of the church a number of inscriptions and sculptural fragments are collected, which attest the identity of the spot, and offer some interest to the antiquary.

It was, like most others in this district, of Volscian origin, but very soon fell under the government of the Samnites, from which it was frequently wrested by the Romans, but to which its inhabitants returned with a pertinacity marked by peculiar inveteracy of hatred against their conquerors. It ended, however, by sharing the fate of all its companions, but continued to retain an importance to which its position and resources justly entitled it.

In modern times it was likewise considered

as a military station and feudal tenure of such consequence as to have been granted successively to powerful families, such as the Cantelini, Piccolomini, and Buoncompagni, and has generally borne a conspicuous part in the repeated wars of invasion which afflicted these regions.

Cardinal Baronius, whose ecclesiastical annals are considered as one of the bulwarks of pontifical power, was born in this city.

I went through Sora on my way to the Lago Fucino, and leaving the town by a showy modern gateway, a succession of well cultivated gardens, orchards, and wooded grounds brought me to a second bridge, and to the entrance of the above-mentioned valley, known by the name of Val di Roveto.

This, in general, is narrow, having the stream of the Liris reduced in compass, but improved in quality, flowing in the centre, with some cultivation on either edge, and a ridge of mountains beyond it. This increases in height and irregularity of outline as we advance; the left, or western range, being the most elevated and wooded.

Sometimes a series of fine meadows shaded by spreading oaks recalls English scenery to the recollection of the traveller.

The road is tolerably wide, and, keeping close to the river, is in no part rendered laborious by inequality of level; but the track is very often execrable, especially when any degree of amelioration has been attempted by casting loose stones of considerable size upon a bed of clay, where they stick without being absolutely fixed. The Liris, as well as the numerous brooks which it receives, is crossed so frequently, as to render this operation, whether performed at a ford, or over a rustic bridge, extremely irksome.

There are many mills along the path, and two or three taverns; but all the villages that show themselves are on the heights, and generally two or three miles, and sometimes more, distant from the road. Those on the left, which are the nearest, are Roccavivi, Rendinara, Morino, Civita di Roveto, Canistro, and Pesco Canale: on the right stand, in the following succession, Balzorano, which calls itself a town, San Giovanni, San Vincenzo, Morea, Civita

d'Antina, and lastly Capistrello. The province of Abruzzo Seconda is entered just under Balzorano, about four miles from Sora.

We stopped to rest our horses, and relieve our own hunger, at a miserable tavern called Morino, from the vicinity of a village of that name, which has an iron foundery worked by a copious stream called Romito, falling into the Liris at the spot where we halted. It forms a fine cascade in the mountains; the distant aspect of which tempted me to undertake the labour of a nearer investigation, which amply repaid the fatigue of a walk of six miles. The path is not arduous, being almost close to the edge of the rivulet on a gradual acclivity. It passes under the hill on which Morino is situated, among some gardens and cultivated grounds; and soon after enters a thick forest of oaks of venerable growth, mixed with a great variety of deciduous trees among which much beech is visible.

The ridge of mountains recedes into a vast amphitheatre, the upper line of which is clothed with firs, the whole scene having an aspect of peculiar solemnity and solitude.



The principal waterfall, called *Schioppo*, a name which is very generally given to the river itself, is of very considerable height, probably superior to that of Terni, which it much resembles in its snowy appearance, but which it yields to in beauty and abundance of water: it springs from the edge of the rock with great force, forming a considerable curve, and falling at such a distance from the base as to admit a free passage behind it.

There is another cascade near it, of similar form, and competing with it in elevation, but the stream is much less, and indeed the altitude of both produces some deficiency of aspect and effect in that respect; yet they are both so remarkable, that it was a matter of surprise that their existence had never been mentioned till I came into the immediate vicinity.

The second time I traversed these regions, and the only one that I visited the falls, I found the day so far advanced in consequence of this excursion, that, deeming it impossible to arrive at my intended destination before dark, I resolved to seek a night's lodging, and trust to chance for securing it, at some place

in the neighbourhood. The tavern-keeper assured us that Civita d'Antina would afford us this accommodation; and, having despatched our guide a short time before us, we accordingly bent our way towards that village, visible as it was from the banks of the Liris, which it was requisite to cross before we began our journey.

A very steep and rugged path, strewn with rolling stones, brought us to it after three miles of a most toilsome ascent.

Placed at a very considerable elevation on the line of hills that forms the eastern flank of the Val di Roveto, Civita d'Antina ought to enjoy a magnificent view of its whole extension; but most of the houses being built on the side of a ravine facing another more distant and still higher range, they are debarred from this advantage, with the exception of the parish church, and the very dwelling in which we found an asylum for the night.

The place itself presents the appearance of the worst Greek village, composed of mean habitations scattered among masses of rock and sloe-bushes, over the bare and dreary surface of

the bleakest of mountains: among them, or rather before them, stands a well-built modern church, together with a large mansion, the original construction of which, as well as the later additions made to it, attested considerable expense and attention. This was our abode for the night, much superior, as may be imagined, to that I had expected; as the description given by the tavernaro had prepared me for the idea of, at best, a galantuomo's moderate residence, where accommodation might be obtained by paying for it.

Instead of this, we found the proprietor, a Signor Ferrante, apparently accustomed to, and much pleased at, receiving strangers, whom he greeted with the cordiality of an old acquaintance. Immense suites of apartments were displayed, furnished with so much expense and even luxury, that we could not help wondering how marble chimney-pieces, inlaid tables, pictures in handsome gilt frames, and all the less showy, but more useful appendages of carved bedsteads, walnut door-cases, and brass locks, had ever found the means of conveyance to such inaccessible regions.

An interminable series of bed-chambers was opened for our choice, of which we selected the least removed from our host's habitual apartment, composed of a well-furnished drawing-room, and small library adjoining, filled with a respectable collection of books, in which he seemed to take great interest, and from which his conversation proved that he had derived no slender portion of information and profit.

Here, after we declined the refreshments which our recent meal at the tavern rendered superfluous, he ordered a large fire to be lighted ; and the surprise which this command excited in travellers who had been toiling up the western flank of a steep mountain on the first of June, was not a little augmented when he added that he found it a most necessary precaution in these elevated regions until the season was farther advanced.

We found, as the evening closed in, that the measure was most salutary, and, on retiring to rest, wished that it had been extended to our apartments, where the beds, placed in rich alcoves at a considerable distance from the windows, and which had neither been occupied, nor

aired for several years, were alarmingly damp, though we rose from them without any unpleasant result.

Antina was a Roman colony, but is supposed to have existed under the same name, at a more remote period, as one of the cities of the Marsi; for Pliny mentions, among the various tribes that composed that nation, the *Atinates*, the letter N having probably been erroneously omitted in the copies of that author.

It retains vestiges of its ancient origin in several portions of polygonal walls, some of which still preserve the form of an entrance or gateway, and serve as such to the modern village, under the appellation of *Porta Campanile*.

The numerous Latin inscriptions which have been found on the spot, have been all collected by the successive members of Signor Ferrante's family and himself, and are to be seen in excellent preservation in the vestibules of his house, or the garden adjoining it.

They are not without interest, proving that Antina was a place of some importance: this is

exemplified by an inscription raised by the corporated institutions of Centonari, Dendrofori, and Armamentari, who united in dedicating this record to Novius Felix, patron of the municipium of Antina. The traces of a no less curious monument are to be seen on a rock just outside the village, where the outline, but nothing more, of an inscription is visible: a copy of this, taken previously to its having become illegible, is to be found in the collection of the antiquities of Antina, published some years back by a canonico de Sanctis.

It proves to be a sepulchral inscription, in Latin, to a female named Varia Montana by her surviving parents, the tenor of which is elegant and impressive. A mosaic pavement, of very coarse execution, had recently been discovered among some ruins that might be those of some baths.

We quitted the place on the following morning, much pleased with our host's unaffected and instructive conversation, and equally impressed with gratitude for the hospitable treatment we had experienced, after a breakfast

which proved that the merits of good cookery had not been overlooked among the desiderata of his establishment, which, in such a situation, almost appears a problem.

This gentleman was possessed of extensive territorial possessions in the vicinity, as well as at Antina; and the inhabitants of the village appeared to regard him with feelings of submissive respect, which might have led one to believe in the continued existence of vassalage and servitude: the trifling orders which we happened to see him give to some of the natives, though issued in anything but an authoritative tone, were received with a show of almost idolatrous obedience, and executed with a readiness and minuteness that evinced the unqualified habits of submission contracted towards him whom they evidently considered as their master.

A feeling so generally diffused is easily accounted for in a population entirely engrossed by agricultural pursuits, and who see, in the only landed possessor they know, the individual to whom alone they can look for employment, reward, chastisement, or charity.

The impression made upon us was of that nature to induce the belief, that the last-mentioned quality had acted in the most forcible manner on the minds of these people : and I afterwards had the opportunity of learning that the higher authorities of the province apply with greater confidence to the interference of this person for the execution of all municipal regulations, measures of police, and, above all, the exact payment of the taxes, than to any of the salaried and local magistrates.

The view from Mr. Ferrante's house, (the only dwelling in the place that enjoys one,) is very extensive : it embraces, on one side, the whole valley as far as Balzorano, to which, as well as to Sora, a horse-road leads along the side of the mountains, and which probably is better than that I had taken by the river's edge. A magnificent prospect of the rocky amphitheatre round the cascade of Morino, and the fall itself, has much more attractions ; but in every other respect it is difficult for the imagination to conceive a more dreary and melancholy position than that of Civita d'Antina.

A smooth path, gradually descending under



some fine oaks along the slope of the hill, led us back to the banks of the Liris, just opposite the village of Civita di Roveto; and an hour's ride more brought us to the extremity of the valley of that name, which terminates in a ravine, but wide enough to admit the contracted channel of the river and a path by its side, which soon opens to another glen of more limited dimensions, called Val di Nerfa, in which the Liris has its origin.

On one side of this defile stands Pesco Canale; and on the other, the larger village of Capistrello, perched on the summit of the mountain bank, which it is necessary to climb in order to reach it, and emerge from the valley in which we had been journeying.

The mouth of the emissary built by Claudius for the dispersion of the waters of the Fucine Lake stands nearly at the top of this acclivity, and just under the village. It presents itself, from the surface of a rock projecting over the river, in the form of a high narrow arch of Roman brickwork, faced with opus reticulatum.

Here we stopped, for the purpose of viewing the interior, in which operation we were accom-

panied and assisted by the chief engineer employed by the government, for whom we had a letter of introduction. A reference to, and some account of, the Lacus Fucinus at this period of my journey, will not, it is hoped, be deemed an ill-timed anticipation, connected, as it naturally must be, with a description of the emissary itself, and I shall therefore offer no apology for the following retrospective digression.

The territory possessed by the Marsi was remarkable in the most remote periods of history, as it is now, for containing the largest lake existing in the southern division of the peninsula, round which a mountainous tract, little favoured by climate or fertility, extends to a limited distance.

After it had become a Roman province, the Emperor Claudius, with that extravagant taste for gigantic enterprises which characterised his reign, but which in this instance might have been directed to some public advantage, undertook to construct an emissary, or channel, which, by carrying off the increasing volume of waters in the lake, might rescue the adjoining

lands from permanent submersion, and restore to cultivation those which had already been inundated.

It appears, from Strabo, Julius Obsequens, and Cicero, that, independently of its gradual and continued augmentation, the lake had been occasionally subject to sudden temporary swells, one of which, under the consulate of M. Emilius and C. Hostilius, absorbed five miles of the surrounding country.

The inhabitants had urged the execution of such a project under the respective reigns of J. Cæsar and Augustus, and had offered to defray the expenses attending it, if the rescued territory was allotted to their use : a consideration of this nature, if we believe Suetonius, seems to have been the principal incentive to Claudius when he finally yielded to their entreaties.

It is difficult to ascertain from the authors who have recorded the event, whether it was intended to drain it entirely, or merely restrain the waters below a certain level ; but many modern writers are inclined to believe the former to have been the plan, notwithstanding its im-

probability: be that as it may, the labours which it necessitated were carried on by thirty thousand men constantly at work during eleven consecutive years, and finally brought to a termination in the thirteenth of Claudius's reign.

Dion Cassius says, that the first scheme had been to conduct the waters into the Tiber, which is not so impracticable as it may at first appear to be: a canal would, in that case, have been cut, from the northern extremity of the lake, into the river Telonius, (now Imele or Salto,) which rises at no great distance; and, after assuming a direction which brings it still nearer to the Fucinus, takes a sudden bend, and flows through a valley of forty miles into the Velino, near Rieti. This last, as is well known, after uniting its waters with those of the Nera at the celebrated cascade of Terni, falls into the Tiber.

We are not informed what obstacle presented itself to the execution of this plan, which, from the soft quality of the intervening soil, might have been easier than the other. As it was, the labour consisted of an aqueduct, exca-

vated in the rock, for the space of three miles through a mountain now called Salviano, and running in nearly a straight line to the edge of the Liris under the present Capistrello.

Claudius was so proud of his work, that he determined the epoch which marked its successful completion should be inaugurated in that style of barbaric splendour of which the annals of the first Roman emperors only have furnished examples.

The blood of nineteen thousand gladiators, shed in the hitherto unsullied waters of the lake, was destined to illustrate this memorable event; and Suetonius has recorded their application for mercy, and the mistaken interpretation of the stupid tyrant's reply, which induced them to believe it granted; but he forced them to begin the sanguinary sports, under the semblance of a naval engagement between the Rhodian and Sicilian fleets, the signal for which was given by an artificial Triton who issued from the waves and sounded a silver trumpet.

After this extraordinary exhibition, which was witnessed by myriads of spectators from all

the provinces, collected on the shore and the mountains, the emperor, and his wife Agrippina, clad in the most sumptuous attire, ordered the last impediments to the egress of the waters to be removed; but, either from the first portion of the channel being too shallow, or some other cause which is not specified, the effect did not answer the expectations raised, and the enterprise, in fact, failed.

The works were however resumed; another entrance, on a lower level, was effected; and, after a second gladiatorial feast on the plan of the first, the accumulated mass of waters rushed with such impetuosity into the mouth of the emissary, that it upset all the surrounding objects and boats, shook the adjacent hills by the concussion, and filled the assistants with such dismay as to cause their precipitate flight in all directions: among these, the sovereigns, seated at a banquet on a large wooden platform, had great difficulty in escaping.

This appropriate *denouement* to such a spectacle, with which the narrative of Tacitus concludes, has induced many to suppose that the emissary became useless from that period: but

subsequent authors indicate clearly, in several passages, that it was completed, and answered the purpose intended.

Nero, indeed, seems to have regarded it with indifference ; but some of his successors attended to the restoration which this neglect rendered requisite, and an inscription preserved at Avezzano attests that Trajan had been thus employed : Spartian, moreover, mentions in the most unequivocal manner, that Adrian ordered it to be re-opened and cleaned, which fact is likewise recorded by an inscription. During the dark æra which succeeded to the downfall of the Empire, it is not surprising that it was abandoned to its fate, and that it became impervious to the stream ; but a document exists, by which it appears that Frederick of Hohen Stauffen, Emperor of Germany and King of the Two Sicilies, a prince far in advance of his contemporaries in genius and enterprise, ordered it, by a special diploma, to be restored to its original destination, by cleansing it of all the earth and rubbish which the lapse of years had caused to accumulate. Since that period, however, no indication is extant of any later-

improvement; and it is only under the reign of Ferdinand I, of Bourbon, that the government has turned its attention towards the possibility of amelioration. Some years back, a certain Canonico *Lolli* submitted to the administration a project for cleaning out the passage of the ancient Claudian emissary, and some advance was even made towards this operation; but it was given up, having met with much opposition and counter-plans of new labours in other parts, among which, one recommended the construction of a large navigable canal uniting with the Adriatic: these were, however, in turn abandoned as wild, impracticable theories, or too expensive in their execution; and the plan of re-opening the Roman emissary has been finally approved and adopted.

The works necessary to achieve this undertaking were commenced as far back as the year 1826, when I first visited these regions; the second time, in 1831, they were considerably advanced, considering the paucity of hands employed, and the absence of efficient machinery.

It is but justice to observe, that, although no



great efforts of ingenuity or invention have been requisite to carry them on successfully, considerable judgment and sagacity have been displayed in the operation, and there is every reason to look forward to a favourable result.

Nearly half of the whole length of the emissary has been cleared of the earth and loose materials which had fallen in through the numerous shafts or air-holes, in the shape of circular wells, which mark exteriorly the whole line of the channel; which substances had, by degrees, extended and choked up the passage. The interior construction retains its original form and solidity; it consists in most parts of an arch, excavated in the live rock, about ten feet high and six wide: whenever the stone has failed, which is but rarely, a brick vault of substantial fabrication supplies its place; this had only given way in one instance, and has been replaced by modern masonry in the same manner.

The bottom of the channel is somewhat raised in the centre, to allow the water when not very abundant to be carried off in two streams; but this had been covered, during

the recent labours, by a wooden platform, laid along the whole of the hitherto excavated extension, for the purpose of facilitating the labours and the progress of the sledges used in removing the materials. It also serves to keep the workmen above the level of a rapid stream which fills the lower part of the cavity to the height of about two feet; and, having always been seen to issue from the arch above the Liris, had led to a surmise (apparently not unfounded) that, notwithstanding the obstructions existing in the body of the canal, some portion of the waters of the lake were still able to penetrate through it, and thus found an egress.

The formation of this rill is, however, now obviously to be referred to the abundant filtrations that exude from the rock itself; and in a still greater degree to a fine spring which has been discovered nearly at the termination of the existing labours, which, issuing from the lateral vault into a small reservoir rudely hewn in the limestone at the time of the original construction, bears the marks of having flowed in the same line ever since that period.

Fifteen shafts or air-holes have already been passed ; and, whenever a fresh one is attained, it is rendered subservient to the progress of the work, by becoming the channel through which the rubbish is drawn up in buckets or baskets.

These apertures are likewise highly advantageous in admitting light ; and, when each is rendered useless by the discovery of the next, it is grated above, or vaulted below, to prevent any fresh intrusion of soil or stones.

Besides these, two wide cuniculi, or passages, have been found, extending to the right and left of the channel, furnished with stone steps which have likewise become serviceable outlets in the prosecution of the undertaking : the dimensions of the arch are apparently larger than necessary for the mere carrying off the superfluities of the lake ; but they vary both in height and breadth, and so does the course of the emissary, which not unfrequently takes a strongly marked curve.

The recurrence of numbers carved in the rock might lead one to look for a scale of measurement in Roman feet ; but these are

not at regular intervals of distance from each other, and seem engraved at random; the number 'two hundred' being frequently repeated.

Such was the state of the labours in the year 1881; they have been carried on ever since, and are now far advanced towards their final completion.

After quitting the emissary, and passing through the skirts of Capistrello, we entered a high valley, parallel to that of Roveto, but of a very different aspect and nature; being merely a hollow of no very great depth, but considerable breadth, between two sloping banks of such gradual ascent and unbroken surface as to look artificial.

They are, nevertheless, of sufficient elevation to preclude all prospect on either side, which, added to the unbroken monotony of their line, renders the ride of three miles across this flat one of the dullest I ever met with.

The soil, a thin crust of clay on an uneven rocky base, furnishes but scanty encouragement to any kind of cultivation, which consists of meagre crops of thinly sown wheat, while the

sides produce nothing but thistles and a dwarf sort of heath; the only objects that catch the eye being the spiracula, or air-holes, of the emissary, the course of which is clearly to be traced during the whole of the way.

This dreary region may, however, offer a degree of historical interest, being the extremity of the plain known by the name of Piano di San Valentino, or Campi Palentini, stretching some miles to the north as far as Tagliacozzo, on which the sanguinary engagement was fought which deprived the ill-fated Corradino of his crown, and subsequently of his existence. On ascending the opposite bank, I was surprised by the view of the whole expanse of the Fucine Lake, at the foot of the mountain (Salviano) on which I stood. The prospect is impressive; more so, perhaps, from the unexpected way in which it developes itself, than from any intrinsic beauty attached to it.

I must, however, admit the peculiar limpid brightness of its waters, which well deserve the epithet conferred upon them by Virgil:

*Te nemus Angitiæ, vitreâ te Fucinus undâ,  
Te liquidi flevere lacus \* \**

The general form of this inland sea is oval, with considerable breaks and irregularities in its outline; and it is entirely surrounded by high limestone hills, presenting a bleak and barren surface: nearer the shores some patches of wood and vegetation are visible.

A second range of mountains rising beyond that which borders the lake to the east, is that of the *Maiella*, reputed one of the highest in the kingdom, and at this period (June) still covered with snow.

The nearer prospect was more satisfactory: a little to the left, under my feet, stood the town of Avezzano, about a mile from the water's edge, at the extremity of a wide valley that stretches towards Rieti and the Roman states; beyond it, following the sinuosities of the margin, are several villages in rural and cheerful positions, and the town of Celano, from which the lake has derived its modern name.

Behind Avezzano, a well-defined and detached mass, shaded by trees and adorned by cultivation, is surmounted by the little village of *Alba*, the representative of the ancient *Alba*

*Fucensis*, whose ruins appear from a great distance, under the two weather-worn and shadowy peaks of the majestic Velino, bearing the second rank in elevation among the Apennines.

## CHAPTER V.

*Town and Vicinity of Avezzano.—Remains of Alba Fucensis.—Church of Alba.—Origin and Territory of the Marsi.—Snake Charmers.—Dimensions and Water of the Fucine Lake.—Temperature of the Vicinity.—History of Celano.—Lake Boats.—Excursion on the Fucine Lake.—Village of Luco.—Reputed site of Argitia.—Village of Trasacco.—The Ancient Archippe.—Probable site of Maruvium.—Corradino and Charles of Anjou.—Conduct of Clement IV.—Aland de St. Valery.—Rout of Corradino's Army.—Church and Monastery to commemorate the Victory.—Town of Tagliacozzo.—Course of the Imele.*

A WINDING and tedious descent brought us to the edge of the lake, and shortly afterwards to the gate of Avezzano, where we found good accommodation in a house, which, though bearing neither the name nor outward sign of an inn, afforded all we could wish.

The town contains three thousand inhabitants, and is not very large; but being seated on a perfect flat, with wide streets and large well-built dwellings, its interior has a respectable appearance.



An ancient substantial building, standing just outside the entrance, recalls to the mind of the spectator the existence of powerful feudality: it belonged to the Colonna family, from which it passed by inheritance to that of the Barberini, both which possess large territories in this district: this mansion, surrounded by a moat, now converted into gardens, and flanked by bulky circular towers, is now inhabited by the agent of the present proprietor.

Besides the Claudian emissary, the neighbourhood of Avezzano offers other objects of interest to the antiquary, in the ruins of Alba, which are easily accessible.

The modern village, which only contains three hundred inhabitants, is on the summit of one of the two peaks which crown the hill; while the remains of the ancient city stand on another, together with a church dedicated to St. Peter.

Alba Fucensis originally belonged to the Marsi; but, after their subjection to the Roman power, it became a place of importance from the natural advantages of its position, and the great strength of its fortifications.

These qualifications induced the Romans to fix upon it as the most eligible residence, or rather prison, for such captives as their tyrannical line of policy doomed to eternal confinement. Among these are numbered Bituitus, sovereign of the Alvernei; Syphax, king of Numidia; and Perseus, king of Macedonia, who, as well as his son Alexander, terminated his days there, after many years of seclusion.

The existing ruins consist of a triple line of walls, each rising above the other, round what was probably the citadel. These are not only of great extent, but constructed in such a manner as to resist with equal success the efforts of man and the ravages of time: the materials in grain and colour are equal to the finest marble; and the blocks, though immensely large and irregular, are so well connected, that they present one of the most perfect specimens of those constructions termed polygonal or Cycloplan.

There are, besides, the basements and openings of three gateways, and a very large substruction, apparently a cistern, or perhaps cloaca; near which were found numerous in-

scriptions, fragments of pavements, and architectural sculptures, and the statues of Scipio and Hannibal, which are to be seen in the Colonna garden at Rome; but previously to these discoveries, a great portion of the marbles of Alba had been employed by Charles of Anjou in the fabrication of a monastery, which he erected at Scurcola, in this vicinity, to commemorate his victory over Corradino.

The church at Alba, above mentioned, occupies the site of a temple which rose from a semicircular base built in the same style, and with the same ponderous materials as the walls.

The interior offers a still more interesting spectacle in the original colonnade, composed of two rows of eight pillars ending in a double portico of four to each, which four are more than half concealed in the lateral walls; the last eight being, moreover, buried in great part by the raised pavement which sustains the choir and altar at this extremity of the edifice; all which circumstances prove that these columns occupy their primæval position.

The building contains, besides, some curious relics of that species of gilt and variegated

mosaic work which has been called Saracenic, Greek, or Norman; a screen, composed of small spiral pillars incrustcd with this material, divides the nave from the choir; and a white marble pulpit, fancifully adorned with the same, and enriched with slabs of porphyry and serpentine, present very brilliant specimens of this minute and not inelegant kind of labour.

The nation of the Marsi, whose origin seems to have been enveloped in even a thicker cloud of fabulous obscurity than that of any of the adjacent states, was most likely derived from the Sabines; it would therefore be superfluous, as well as tedious, to enter into a detail of the learned controversies which have taken place, to establish their descendancy from Marsius, the son of Circe, from whom they inherited the arts of divination and magic,—from Tyrhenus, the brother of Lydus, who here established a colony of Asiatics,—or from Marsyas, also a Lydian.

Records of a less questionable nature show them at a less remote period arrayed in hostility against the Romans, somewhat later than the neighbouring federations; then conquered

by them ; again relapsing into enmity, followed by a second alliance, during which they proved as strenuous friends as they had been inveterate foes.

The Social War, a contest which, combining the united efforts of all the nations who had successively bent to the Roman yoke, threatened to shake to its foundation the power of the republic, was likewise called Marsian, from having been excited by this restless and warlike tribe ; who were esteemed equally formidable from their bodily strength, their valour, and their perseverance.

The tract of country which they inhabited, and which bore their name, offers the only example of the ancient denomination being retained in common use to this very day ; while the same limits which bound the district they possessed in the early æra of the Roman commonwealth are observed as those of the Marsian territory in the nineteenth century.

While the feudal lords of the middle ages assumed the title of some individual town, castle, or territory, the possessors of this portion of the kingdom styled themselves, first

Castaldi, and afterwards Counts of the *Marsi*, a rank still enjoyed by the Colonna family. It would appear affected in any one to talk of going into Samnium or Lucania; but an excursion *ne i Marsi*, is a proper, and even common-place, mode of expression.

Their towns are distinguished by the same adjunct; and the bishop, who resides at Pescina, instead of deriving the name of his diocese from this town, signs himself *Vescovo de Marsi*.

I hope it will not be deemed a frivolous stretch in favour of identity, to observe, that the present inhabitants of these regions pretend to possess the same occult powers which distinguished their forefathers, in charming venomous reptiles, and rendering them innoxious. In most parts of the Neapolitan dominions they are occasionally to be met with, carrying boxes full of serpents of all sizes and colours, which they display to the gazing multitude; offering at the same time, for a very trifling remuneration, to render the spectators invulnerable as themselves.

I have frequently seen these individuals, in the early days of spring, sitting at Naples on

a sunny parapet, near the sea, exhibiting their collection of reptiles, and collecting apparently no inconsiderable contribution from the curiosity or credulity of the bystanders.

The operation requisite to secure them against the poison of the snake in future, is performed by slightly scratching the hand or arm with a viper's tooth divested of its venom; then applying a mysterious stone to the puncture; and finally furnishing the patient with an image of, and a prayer to, San Domenico di Cocullo, a village among the Marsian hills, where a celebrated sanctuary is every year thronged by pilgrims from all parts of the province; modern devotion having transferred to a sanctified being the attributes which ancient superstition ascribed to dealers in necromancy and divination.

This ceremony is called *ingermare*, a word from which it would be absurd, as some have sought, to derive our expression, "to charm," which undoubtedly springs from *carmen*, a verse or song; but which may more properly be rendered by inoculate, insert, or engraft.

The lake of Celano, or Fucino, is supposed

to measure thirty miles in circumference, and about eight across in its widest part; dimensions which I consider somewhat exaggerated, and to which its utmost general depth, fifty feet, bears no adequate proportion.

Few villages adorn its shores; among which, Ortucchio, placed at the southern extremity, has been the most exposed to the changes and damage caused by inundation,—the spot on which it stands having been, within the memory of man, more than once converted into an island.

Avezzano, at the opposite end, has apprehended the same fate; but though the gradual augmentation of the waters is not to be disputed, there have been periods when a contrary phenomenon has been observed; and when I first visited it in the year 1826, a considerable portion of land had been recovered and restored to cultivation by the proprietors, since which—that is, during five years,—it has been in a decreasing state, so much so as to excite doubts in the minds of the natives whether the expenses bestowed on the cleansing of the emissary might not be more usefully directed.



The water is remarkably clear, and was esteemed by the ancients, as it is now, not only excellent to drink, but salutary in the cure of many disorders.

This may account for an opinion they entertained, that it was under the special protection of a local divinity; a supposition corroborated by the discovery of a votive inscription found at a spot where the river Giovenco discharges itself into the lake, and dedicated to the *Fucinus* as a genius or tutelary deity.

A flat belt, or border, runs along the bank in nearly the whole of its extension, usually of no great breadth; but, being either marshy or covered with shingles, it injures the effect in a picturesque point of view.

Behind this stretches a range of high and precipitous mountains, broken only at the northern extremity by the wide valley behind Avezzano, and on the south-west side by a smaller plain between the villages of Luco and Trasacco.

Beyond this last, the ridge extends its roots into the very waters, and opposes an impediment to the course of pedestrians and horses,

which, but for this, might be carried along the immediate edge of the lake in its whole circuit. The temperature of the flat grounds adjoining the banks is, as may be imagined, much less rigid in winter than that of the surrounding mountains; so that, although the inhabitants of Albe are confined to the interior of their habitations by the snow and frost for several consecutive days, such an occurrence is unknown at Avezzano, only two miles distant, and the lake is seldom frozen beyond its immediate margin: nevertheless, records exist of its having been entirely congealed in the years 1167, 1226, 1595, 1683, and 1726.

The highest mountains rise at the two narrowest extremities: behind Avezzano, the double peak of Velino ranks among the most elevated points of the Apennines; and that of Monte Corbo, and Monte Turchio, on the opposite side, yield but little to it in altitude and fantastic outline. The western range is somewhat flatter; and that which forms the eastern boundary, and divides the Marsi from the valley of Solmona, is not only considerably

lower than the others, but rises at a much greater distance from the water, leaving an intermediate surface of well-cultivated and peopled territory on an inclined plane.

Avezzano, Celano, and Pescina are the principal places, and the only ones claiming the name of towns; the former, though not the most peopled, having the first rank, as Capo Luogo, and the residence of the Sott' Intendente.

Celano is pleasantly situated on a hill which forms one of the buttresses of Mount Velino, about three miles from the lake, of which it commands the whole extent. This elevated position secures to it the advantages of a clearer and more salubrious air; its population is estimated at three thousand souls.

Little is known of its origin; but it has been considered as placed on the site of an ancient town called Cliternia.

The power of its feudal possessors showed itself in an hostile shape against the rule of the Swabian dynasty, whose resentment was testified by Frederick II. in the most formidable manner in the year 1223. This prince not

only sacked and destroyed the town, but sent forth its inhabitants to colonise distant districts in Calabria, Sicily, and even as far as Malta. He established a new population in its ruined walls, and afterwards endeavoured to restore it to the consequence of a town under the name of Cesarea; this, however, in the lapse of years, yielded to the resumption of its original appellation, which in modern times has been attached to the lake.

After this epoch, Celano was considered as a fief of great importance, and successively granted, as such, to several powerful families. It belonged for a considerable space of time to one whose patronymic made way for the title; the heiress of which, Giovanna, or Covella, of Celano, is quoted by Neapolitan historians as a person mournfully celebrated for the vicissitudes of fortune. She had been originally married to a nephew of Pope Martin V. (of the house of Colonna), who wished, through this alliance, to secure to his kinsman the influence and wealth attached to her inheritance.

This union was speedily dissolved by her quitting her husband, without any apparent

reason, and marrying her own nephew, Leonello Acclocciamuro, without waiting for the dispensation of the Holy See. This marriage was productive of a son, Rugerotta, who, when arrived at the age of manhood, persecuted his mother with the most unnatural hostility.

He sided with the Angevine faction, opposed to the Aragonese family who protected the countess; and, succeeded, after a long siege, in making himself master of the town and castle of Celano, in which she had strenuously defended herself for several months. She was cast into a dungeon, and there immured for a series of years; while her son took possession of all her domains, the enjoyment of which was confirmed to him. In the course of time, however, a reverse of fortune restored her to liberty, through the interference of Pope Pius II. (Eneas Silvius); and, after her death, the county of Celano and all its dependencies were conferred on the Piccolomini family, closely related to that pontiff, and greatly favoured by the Aragonese dynasty, who likewise created its head, Antonio, duke of Amalfi. This race possessed it, until its extinction, when the property reverted to the crown.

Mazzella, an author who has written a discursive, but not uninteresting, account of the kingdom, says that Celano gave birth to a monk; whom he denominates Il Beato Tommaso, who, he adds, was the author of those well-known and impressive Leonine verses, sometimes called *Sequentia mortuorum*, but better designated from their opening lines as *Dies iræ, Dies illa*.

The notice which, of late years, has been bestowed on this portion of the Roman liturgy by several authors, and the felicitous use made of it by Goëthe in his *Faust*, may render the discovery of its original author a matter of literary interest; but I have never been able to ascertain the grounds of Mazzella's assertion.\*

To return to the banks of the Fucinus: Pescina, three miles from its shore, on the eastern side, has three thousand inhabitants, and is the

\* Since writing the above, I perceive that the Count C. de Montalembert, whose researches in the study of the ascetic poetry of the middle ages render his opinion of great weight, repeats this assertion in his "Introduction à l'Histoire de Ste. Elizabeth de Hongrie," page lxxxiii; and I regret that the learned author has not thought proper to mention his authority.

residence of the bishop of the Marsi: it, moreover, advances a claim to having given birth to the celebrated Cardinal Mazzarini, whose family was supposed to have emigrated hither from Mazzara, in Sicily.

San Polino, Paterno, San Benedetto, Ortuchio, Trasacco, and Luco, which closes the list of the littoral villages, are all of very circumscribed limits and importance.

The Fucine lake is renowned for the quality of the fish it produces in abundance, but not variety,—consisting of barbel, eels, crayfish, and tench; the first and last sorts grow to an enormous size. Nothing strikes a stranger more forcibly, especially an Englishman, than the scarcity and defective nature of the boats which are in use on all the lakes of the south; and in this respect, the Fucinus is even more unprovided than the lake of Perugia,—the only craft being flat-bottomed punts of different sizes, combining all the disadvantages attached to awkwardness of form and slowness of motion, with the dangers to which the slightest agitation of the waves is likely to expose them.

All these inconveniences I experienced during an excursion which I made round the lake; but which, nevertheless, proved far from deficient in interest and amusement.

Starting from Avezzano early, I embarked at the nearest point which affords the possibility of so doing; the shore is so flat that it was necessary to be carried on men's shoulders into our vessel. This was one of the largest in use, and was formed exactly like a common punt, with two sloping extremities, which served as seats; the perpendicular sides being composed of two planks above one another, so ill connected that the water oozed through the moss stuffed between the interstice whenever it rose above it. The bottom also admitted it so abundantly that it was requisite to bale it out every ten minutes; the rowers, four in number, were all standing up, three in a row on one side, and the fourth at the end on the other, whose paddle acted as a rudder.

Our first station was at the mouth of the emissary, which the gradual decrease of the waters has left uncovered. Having no exte-



rior mark to distinguish it, the mud and stones have covered it so as to render it no longer discernible.

Beyond it, in the flank of the hill, are three subterranean passages, rising one above another, which all lead by a gradual and gentle descent to the main channel of the emissary. These were cleared several years back, when the first attempt to re-establish the Roman works was made, but soon given up: lately, however, on the resumption of the labours at Capistrello, some were undertaken in this part also, which prove that the canal is much deeper and wider at this extremity than the other, but constructed exactly in the same manner. Little progress had been made; and the most interesting discovery that has attended it, is that of a large mass of stalactite formed by the trickling from the vault, which has produced a pillar of about fifteen feet high, and three in diameter, exhibiting in great perfection all the particularities appertaining to similar depositions of water.

It is in contemplation to cut it through at the top and bottom, and transport it, if pos-

sible, to Naples; its removal from its present station will indeed be a matter of necessity when the works are brought to the spot which it now occupies.

Following the banks of the lake, about two miles farther on the same side, stands the village of Luco, containing about fifteen hundred inhabitants, mostly subsisting on the labours of fishing.

Its situation, on a shelving bank, raised above the level of the water, and backed by a screen of jagged hills, is both picturesque and cheerful.

Previous to reaching it, we stopped in a small bight, to see what in the language of the country is called *Le Petogne*, that is, the mouth of a small subterraneous outlet into which the waters disgorge themselves with considerable violence; this has always been known to exist, but is now, from the lowness of the lake, visible on its immediate border.

The water is both seen and heard precipitating itself into this natural emissary, which does not, nevertheless, offer the aspect of a channel or receptacle; but seems to absorb it through

the medium of a coat of gravel and pebbles which fills a cavity of inconsiderable depth, and offers resistance to the hand, or even a stick forced into it, so that the effect produced is rather that of suction than a free fluency. A fanciful tradition is recorded by Pliny and Vibius Sequester, that a river, which entered the Fucinus on the eastern shore, flowed through its waters without mixing with them, precipitated itself into a fathomless abyss on the opposite side, and finally issued again in the Roman territory near Subiaco, where it forms the source of the Acqua Mania, esteemed the best in Rome.

The Abbate Romanelli, struck by the resemblance of the name *Piconius* or *Pitornius*, given by these authors to that river, to that of Petogne, now in use for this natural outlet, has, in his historical topography of the kingdom of Naples, endeavoured to identify them; and corroborates his assertion by a quotation from Lycophron, mentioning likewise a river of the same name in conjunction with the Fucine Lake.

I have not, however, been able to find in

any edition of that poet this name spelt otherwise than *Tithonius*; but the suggestion is to be admitted, especially as the largest among the streams that discharge themselves into the lake called Giovenco, enters it near S. Benedetto, nearly facing the spot called Le Petogne.

A little nearer to Luco, another similar natural emissary is said to exist, but concealed by a cluster of rocks projecting into the water: the noise it makes is, however, audible at some distance; and, when I visited it, the spot was rendered more remarkable by innumerable swarms of snakes that lay basking in the sun on the stones, and sprang into the water on our nearer approach: they could be seen swimming under the surface round our boat, and darting their tongues against it with all the appearance of wrath and violence.

It was impossible not to be reminded of the traditions relative to the charming powers of the ancient Marsi, and the numerous reptiles said to inhabit their country.

The locality also assisted this impression, as the name of Luco is supposed to be derived from the *Lucus Angitia*, the mystic grove in

which the inhabitants performed sacrifices in honour of Angitia, the sister of Circe, whom they looked upon as having first taught them the virtues of herbs and simples in healing the bites of serpents, and the power of charming them.

A town, bearing likewise the name of Angitia, is said to have existed here; and the remains of antiquity which are to be found, seem to corroborate the fact. These consist of polygon walls of good construction, and well preserved, under a Gothic church, standing on a pretty wooded bank at a short distance from the village. Below it, close to the water's edge, a line of substructions, composed of fine large blocks, stretches to some distance, having the appearance of a landing-place or quay, and probably serving for that purpose to the ancient city that rose above it, which, if called Angitia at a more remote æra, bore the name of Penna in the early centuries of Christianity. Several Latin inscriptions, found about this spot, have been collected in the village itself.

Trasacco, the next, but much inferior in

size and position, is situated about six miles farther, at the foot of the ridge of hills forming the boundary of a well-cultivated valley that extends in a south-east direction behind Balzorano and Sora: beyond this, as I have before observed, the cliffs rise almost perpendicularly out of the water, and preclude all communication that way between Trasacco and Ortucchio, which is therefore carried on by a path over the mountains.

The population of Trasacco does not exceed the number of seven hundred; and it has no claim to antiquity, though a large collection of inscriptions, friezes, cornices, and other fragments of Roman sculpture, indicate the existence of some ancient city in the vicinity. These are incrustated on the front of one of the best houses in the place, near the principal church; and another near it exhibits a modern inscription, which, by recording its proprietor's relationship (through females) to the celebrated Cardinal Baronius, author of the Ecclesiastical Annals, shows the estimation attached to this dignitary's character.

The only remarkable object in this village is

a very high round tower, growing out of a square one,—a work of the middle ages. A spot between Trasacco and Ortucchio, called Arciprete, has been looked upon by antiquaries as that on which stood *Archippe*, a very ancient city, founded, according to Pliny on the authority of Gellianus, by Marsyas, king or general of the Lydians, and engulfed in the lapse of time by the increasing waters of the lake.

The resemblance of names first gave probability to this surmise, which, however, Lucas Holstenius says has a better foundation in the remains of ancient edifices which are still to be seen on the edge and under the shallows of the water.

The advanced hour of the day, and the aspect of impending bad weather, compelled me to forego the opportunity of visiting it; and I proceeded across the lake straight from Trasacco to S. Benedetto on the opposite shore, an operation which employed two hours of stout rowing.

The view of the landscape behind Ortucchio is the finest (that of Celano excepted) which

presents itself along the whole extension of the margin.

A large forest of oaks appears to cover the whole of the gradual slope which intervenes between the bank and the mountains, and these rise in successive and fantastic ranges to a very considerable elevation; while from the ravines and glens that open from their base, several inconsiderable, but not unperceived streams, find their way to the lake through the trees and cultivated grounds. On the reverse of one of those pinnacles stands the little town of Gioia, above the source of the Sangro, whose inhabitants, above two thousand in number, have adopted the singular custom of emigrating during the winter months to a village called Mannaformo, four miles nearer the water, which, from its sheltered situation, affords them the possibility of getting through the rigid season with a degree of ease and comfort which the local position of their birth-place, from its extreme coldness, entirely precludes from its precincts.

S. Benedetto, where I landed, is a village of but few houses scattered along the eastern



bank, and irrigated by several streams drawn from the Giovenco, the most considerable of those that feed the lake. After passing close to the town of Pescina, two miles inland, it enters the Fucinus a little to the south of S. Benedetto, near a village called Venere.

The ancient city of Maruvium, one of the most eminent among the Marsi, according to Silius Italicus, is supposed to have existed at this spot.

It obtained in the early periods of Christianity, the appellation of Marsia, or Civitas Marsicana, and became the seat of the bishop, whose spiritual jurisdiction extended over the whole district. The remains of a church dedicated to Santa Sabina are those of its cathedral, the honour and title of which have been transferred to Pescina.

Near this ruin some inscriptions have been found of the time of Septimius Severus, and several shapeless masses of brick masonry indicate the existence of a Roman establishment, among which the very imperfect vestiges of a theatre may be traced.

Close to the water, others exist of a more

decided character; one of which might have been an arch, while another bears the aspect of a sepulchral monument of pyramidical form.

Here the wind had increased in so contrary a direction to our course homewards, and the swell occasioned by it was so strong, as to induce me to quit our clumsy, and, at the same time, frail vessel, and trust to our legs for our return to Avezzano.

We luckily met a countryman returning from market with some mules, who for a very trifling remuneration allowed us the use of them; an assistance which considerably alleviated the tediousness of a journey of eight miles through a flat uninteresting tract, the dull dreariness of which was by no means adequately compensated by a few heaps of brickwork denoting Roman monuments.

This is undoubtedly the ugliest portion of the country surrounding the lake; the plain is of considerable dimensions, and gradually rises towards the ridge which divides it from that of Solmona. A tolerable carriage-road leads to that last town from Avezzano, by the villages of Cerchio and Colle Armelo, previous

to ascending the chain of hills which it traverses at a pass called Forca Carosa.

The prospect of Celano proved of some relief to our wearied attention, beautifully placed as it is, about four miles from the shore, at the opening of a woody glen, on a height boldly detached from another picturesque insulated mountain, one of the roots of Velino.

The town of Tagliacozzo is placed about eight miles from Avezzano, in another valley called Piano di San Valentino, or Campi Palentini, in which the noted battle occurred which sealed the fate of the ill-fated Corradino in the year 1268.

E la da Tagliacozzo  
Ove senz' armi vinse il vecchio Alardo.

*Dante.*

No event in the annals of the middle ages has elicited more interest from posterity than this engagement, on which hung the destiny of the last scion of the Swabian race.

The majority of Charles of Anjou's subjects were already as wearied by his rapacious exactions, as they were galled by his iron sway; and the result of this contest, had it proved

favourable to the German prince, would probably have been followed by the voluntary submission of the whole kingdom to his rule.

The Norman line, to which the natives of the two Sicilies appear to have borne a great attachment, might be considered as extinct, and the contending rivals be looked upon as foreigners; but the younger aspirant had on his side a direct descendency from that warlike dynasty, and a more intimate connexion with that of Stauffen, a family who had wielded the sceptre of these realms with glory and success.

The right of inheritance was his; and it might even be contended that, although the Roman pontiff had lent the powerful sanction of investiture to the usurper's successful efforts, and had publicly deposed and excommunicated his former antagonist, the youth of the legitimate heir, and the comparative obscurity in which his earlier days had passed, had shed a kind of oblivion on his existence altogether, and screened him from any sign of papal reprobation, until he put forth his dormant claims, and marched towards the kingdom of

his ancestors to establish them by force of arms.

It should be observed that the pope who had invested Charles with the kingdom of Naples, was no longer in existence at this period, and that his successor, Clement IV, though on terms of the most friendly nature with him, appears rather to have acted the part of an indifferent and impartial spectator, than of an active and useful ally; for the pretended observation of the holy father, that he looked upon Corradino as a lamb going to the slaughter-house, is founded on no better authority than his reputed reply to Charles—*Vita Corradini mors Caroli*, &c.—which have both been cited by the Guelphic chronicles to vindicate the most iniquitous and inhuman sentence ever recorded in history. The youth of this prince, and his education in a remote and comparatively barbarous country, have disabled all contemporary authors from establishing any estimate, or leaving any authentic account of his character, or the promises it might have held forth.

Some German writers have recorded him as

the last of the Troubadours; which circumstance, together with the adventurous result of his expedition, and some affecting traits of magnanimity in the last hours of his limited existence, are all that has reached posterity: but it is not unfair to surmise that, had he been successful and restored to the throne of his forefathers, his submission to the holy see would in all probability have secured him its approbation and protection; and the re-establishment of the house of Swabia on the throne of Naples might, by extending a new and more enlightened influence in the peninsula, have entirely changed the internal organisation of its political system.

The military talents of Charles of Anjou were incontestably superior to those of his inexperienced antagonist; but it is evident nevertheless from contemporary authorities, that his forces were less numerous, and his position so perilous, that nothing but the support he expected from the city of Aquila enabled him to look forward with any degree of confidence to the chances of the impending contest.

There exists a curious account of a noctur-

nal expedition over the mountains, which he undertook from his own camp, in order to ascertain the fidelity of its inhabitants, which was promptly manifested, not only by their assurances, but by considerable supplies of provisions for his troops, which they transmitted to him along the same direct but difficult line of conveyance. Shortly after his return to the army, the hills above Alba were seen covered with women and children who had voluntarily imposed upon themselves the labours of beasts of burden, to relieve the scarcity which threatened destruction to the royal army.

The success of this eventful conflict has been ascribed by all contemporary records to the counsels and directions of an ancient French knight, named Alard de St. Valery, who had stopped at the court of Charles of Anjou on his way from Palestine to his native country. His hesitation in employing the resources of his military experience against Christian troops after fighting all his life against infidels, was overruled by the subtle reasoning of Charles and his followers, who argued that Corradino and his forces having all been excommunicated

could no longer be regarded within the pale of the Catholic church. A body of reserve, headed by the king himself and his venerable adviser, kept aloof from the remainder of the army, who speedily yielded to the superior strength and numbers of their Transalpine assailants; and while these last, after what they considered an easy and complete victory, were giving themselves up to the pillage of the camp, or disbanding themselves in an irregular pursuit of the vanquished, the former, by a judicious and unexpected attack, succeeded in routing them entirely after an immense slaughter, from which their prince escaped only by flight, accompanied by his cousin, Frederick of Austria, or rather Baden, and very few followers.

The circumstances of his seizure on the shore of the Pomptine marshes, his imprisonment, trial, and execution, are two well known to need detailed recapitulation.

To commemorate the favourable issue of this engagement, Charles erected, at Scurcola, near the spot where it had taken place, a church and monastery, under the appropriate invocation of Santa Maria della Vittoria, which he pro-



fusely endowed with extensive territories, and adorned with all the splendour and magnificence compatible with the architectural taste of the age he lived in. We are informed, moreover, that the massive fragments of elaborate sculpture, which in those days still existed in the neighbouring city of Alba, were torn from their original position to decorate this edifice ; which was submitted to the rule of the Cistercian order, then, and ever after, to be exclusively composed of monks of French name and birth.

The image which gave the monastery its title, and, according to the superstitious tenets of the age, constituted its most precious attribute, was likewise brought from France ; a circumstance which strongly illustrates the marked attachment which the conqueror bore to his native country, and the haughty disregard he had ever manifested towards those realms of which the chances of war and the fiat of a pontiff had rendered him the sovereign.

This monastery continued to be greatly favoured by the successors and descendants of Charles ; and in the course of time it became

no less noted for its extensive jurisdiction and princely revenue, than celebrated for the sanctity as well as the learning of its occupants, who had formed a collection of chronological manuscripts and other valuable literary records, which placed its archives on a par with those of Nonantola and Novalesse in Upper Italy, those of Farfa and Fossa Nova in the Roman States, and the venerable collections at Monte Cassino, La Cava, S<sup>ta</sup> Sofia of Benevento and S. Vincenzo ad Volturnum, in the Neapolitan domains. The downfall of this establishment is generally ascribed to an earthquake which occurred about the middle of the fifteenth century; but it is not improbable that, though the building might have suffered considerably at that time, it was only finally suppressed and reduced *ad commendam* when the successful and permanent establishment of the Hispan-Austrian line on the throne of Naples restored to all its institutions a more national character, and probably caused the dissolution of a community entirely composed of foreigners.

The ceaseless feuds of the Colonnas and Orsinis, which, though originating in their native

country, occasionally extended their influence into other parts of Italy, and raged with peculiar animosity in these regions, terminated, after many vicissitudes, by securing a great portion of the district to the first of these distinguished families. The consequence was, that its name has repeatedly figured in the catalogue of the abbots of Scurcola, and bishops of the Marsi. The monastery fell by degrees from desertion to dilapidation; and its more valuable ornaments were carried away to Rome, where it is surmised that the rare manuscripts, chronicles, and perhaps classical desiderata, contained in its archives, are now obscurely reposing in those belonging to that illustrious house.

The image from which the abbey took its name was deposited in a small chapel in the town of Scurcola; which afterwards obtained the same appellation, and where it may to this day be viewed in the identical wooden frame studded with golden *fleurs-de-lis* which formed its original receptacle.

A carriage-road, in many parts very unworthy of such a distinction, establishes a communication between Avezzano and Tagliacozzo;

it runs through a little village called Capelle, about two miles from the lake, and afterwards through Scurcola: this last is placed on the lower declivity of a steep hill with an old castle upon it; and its lower extremity, through which the road is conducted, exhibits some houses, the architecture of which, as well as the sculptured ornaments attached to them, are very remarkable: the country between it and Tagliacozzo is flat and ordinary, but well cultivated, and watered by the Imele; the produce consisting of aniseed in abundance, hemp, flax, potatoes, Indian corn, and beans, but no wheat.

The villages of Curcumela and Villa are seen on the slope of the opposite range of mountains which divides the Palentine fields from the Val di Nersa.

Tagliacozzo is a substantial and flourishing-looking town of about four thousand inhabitants, the lower skirts of which touch the plain, at the opening of a deep and precipitous gulley intersecting the hill on which the remaining portion is placed. The river Imele gushes out in a copious stream from this cleft, and after

irrigating all the gardens and orchards in front of the town, runs towards Villa; and then making a sudden curve, under the opposite hills, issues from the Campi Palentini, into the wider plain behind Avezzano, under Scurcola, near which it is crossed. Here, the general aspect of the land is such as to cause some surprise that it does not flow into the lake, which it approaches within little more than a mile; but, on the contrary, assuming another bend, it takes a north-west direction, and, after changing its name to that of *Salto* in the mountains of Cicolano, it finally falls into the Velino, above Rieti, after a course of about forty miles.

This stream has generally been looked upon by topographers and antiquaries as the ancient Telonus or Telonius, whose banks became celebrated in the Social War for the defeat and death of the Consul Rutilius and eight thousand of his troops.

Cluverius, however, has assigned this mournful honour to another river, the Torano, which rises not far from the first, near Carsoli, and,

observing a nearly parallel course, flows likewise into the Velino near Rieti.

Of the Imele, I hope it is not presumptuous to observe, that Virgil probably alluded to it in the following lines :

Qui Nomentum urbem, qui rosea rura Velini,  
 Qui Tetricæ horrentes rupes, montemque Severum,  
 Casperiamque colunt, Forulosque, et flumen *Himellæ*.

VIRGIL, lib. vii.

The line of country mentioned in these verses, beginning from the rosy glades of Velinus, would seem to identify the modern and ancient river, even without the assistance afforded by the similarity of names.

The whole of the district surrounding Tagliacozzo, including the banks of the lake, appertained once, as a portion does now, to the family of Colonna, whose chief bore the high-sounding titles of Duke of Tagliacozzo, Count of the Marsi, feudal Lord of Avezzano, Alba, Capistrello, &c. &c. &c. The same may be said of almost all the Marsian territory, which belongs to this day to the various patrician Roman houses of Barberini, Ceserini, and Bovadilla.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Phlegmatic Character of the Inhabitants of Abruzzo.—Otra di Verecchie.—Village of Cappadocia.—Sources and Course of the Liris.—District and Identity of Cicolano.—Return to Avizzano.—Castle of Celano.—Church of Valle Verde.—Rocca di Mezzo.—Monte Corno.—Ruins of Castle of Ocre.—City and Inhabitants of Aquila.*

AT Tagliacozzo I procured horses, an operation which the slow movements of the natives retarded in a most provoking manner. The inhabitants of Abruzzo, though considered a hard-working laborious race, appear totally insensible to that avidity towards gain which characterizes those of the southern districts, and which supplies in some degree the deficiency of better regulated habits of speculation and industry: this, I apprehend, is attributable to a constitutional slowness of organs, both physical and mental, which assimilates them to

some portions of our northern tribes, and renders an intercourse with them in the ordinary matters of life far from agreeable.

They seem indifferent to, or unable to comprehend, the casual advantages derivable from any bargain or labour to which they have not been daily accustomed.

Thus, although the market-place was full of horses and mules which had performed their diurnal office, and were probably destined to return to their respective residences in the neighbourhood in a short space of time, it was with the utmost difficulty that the owners could be persuaded to allow the use of two of them for a compensation far beyond the usual earning of a day's work; and when at last an agreement had been entered upon to that intent, the embarrassment, and even reluctance, testified by them in furnishing us with the necessary accoutrements for mounting the animals, obliged my servant to seek for and procure them without their farther assistance.

My object was to proceed to Cappadocia, a village about four miles distant from Tagliacozzo, situated in the most remote and inac-



cessible part of the chain of mountains confining the Roman territory. The path, as may be supposed, was extremely arduous, passing over a succession of rugged stony tracts offering no interest or attraction, excepting the singular wildness which characterized them, and some curious specimens of indigenous plants, among which, one, apparently of the orchis tribe, was very remarkable from its peculiar height, beautiful colour, and fragrant citric odour.

Whenever an inconsiderable space of vegetable soil shows itself among these rocky recesses, it is cultivated with great care and assiduity; and I observed some ploughmen so employed in spots whose situation rendered it a matter of wonder how the oxen and the implements they drew could ever have been brought there.

After reaching the summit of the slopes that rise behind Tagliacozzo, we began to descend on their reverse into a small valley of somewhat less desolate aspect, between strata of limestone that occasionally stretch to a considerable distance in the semblance of gigantic

but regular walls. The opposite bank is covered with fine forests, at the foot of which, in a pleasant Alpine situation, stands the village of Verecchie, of about three hundred inhabitants: here several springs, gushing from a mossy bank, form an abundant stream, which flows across the glen towards the steep rocky ridge I had descended; where, after a short course of less than a mile, it precipitates itself in a cataract of no great depth, into a broad low cavern, the subterraneous windings of which can be followed by the eye till the foaming flood tumbling through them is lost in darkness.

A belief has been established in the country that this is the same river which rises in the ravine of Tagliacozzo under the name of Imele, but I could never ascertain on what basis it has been founded; if so, its underground course must extend at least for three miles.

Leaving this spot, called Otra di Verecchie, to our left, we mounted a gentle acclivity, from the summit of which the prospect of the Val di Nerfa displayed itself suddenly under our feet, with the Liris, a narrow but copious

brook, tumbling in silver cascades on a rocky channel along the sinuosities of this beautiful dell; the commencement of which is formed by a semicircular assemblage of fantastical hills bounding a deep ravine, on one side of which stands the village of Petrella, and on the other, to the right, that of Cappadocia. This last place, whose Oriental appellation could never be accounted for, is situated at the most elevated extremity of a rocky projection which supports all its habitations; but is itself so detached from the mass of the mountain, so weather-worn at its base, and so overtopped at its apex, that its appearance from all points produces uneasiness, if not alarm. The population, consisting of about eighteen hundred, are poor, but healthy and good-looking; the territory producing nothing esculent but chestnuts, renders them dependent on remote districts for the principal means of subsistence, which they receive in exchange for cheese and other lacteal produce, which the fine pasturage in the surrounding mountains furnishes in great perfection and abundance: but the winters are long as well as rigid, and confine them for se-

veral months to the inner precincts of their walls.

A zigzag path down a perilous declivity brought me to the object of my day's journey, placed about a quarter of a mile below the village; and it amply compensated all past difficulties and fatigues.

Imagination can picture to itself nothing more beautiful than the humble and unknown sources of the Liris: they spring in several distinct founts from the precipitous side of a conical mass of limestone-rock, and unite at its base in a circular basin, hewn by the hand of Nature; which receives likewise a more considerable supply from a cascade of greater elevation, issuing from a cavity dividing the above-mentioned hill from another of exactly the same form: both these are covered with shrubs, and all the picturesque appendages of a damp but luxuriant vegetation, waving and trailing over the little recess which receives the united waters. These soon form another cataract of greater elevation and volume, precipitating itself with considerable force from a ridge of rocks in front of a deep cave, into which, like

that at Morino, it is easy to gain access, and stand behind the fall.

Both these appear to realise the brilliant fictions of Greek mythology,—the one as the residence, the other the bath, of the tutelary naiad of the mountain stream. This, after a short space of less rapid course, during which it furnishes large and well-flavoured trout, takes a sudden bend under Cappadocia, and, following the direction of the glen, runs in nearly a straight line to Capistrello, near which it forces itself through the narrow and precipitous defile which leads from the Val di Nerfa to that of Roveto.

A path of communication between the two villages, conducted along the immediate banks of the stream for the distance of about four miles, would prove, from Avezzano, a much shorter road than the one I had chosen; but I must have gone over a portion of beaten ground, and could not have used a carriage at all: as it was, I resumed my way to Tagliacozzo, and from thence to my resting-place.

The river Salto, or Imele, flows through a district which deserves more notice than its

remote situation has hitherto allowed antiquaries to bestow upon it till within a very short period back, when an inhabitant of the region itself, by name Martelli, has written a work upon it, and an English traveller thoroughly investigated it, with the intention (it was hoped) of communicating the result of his researches to the public.

The lamented death of this individual, Edward Dodwell, Esq. well known in the annals of archaiology, has probably removed to a distant epoch the communication of his valuable labours; and will possibly render my observations on the subject more acceptable, if not more worthy of approbation.

This tract is known by the name of Cicoli, or more commonly Cicolano: it extends for a considerable way along the banks, or within a short distance, of the above-mentioned stream in a north-western direction, and consists of several villages situated very near each other, and generally containing little more than three or four hundred inhabitants, forming in the whole a population of about thirteen thousand souls. The natives of these, like those of most

mountainous regions in these latitudes, are solely occupied with the labours relating to the management of cattle and their pasture.

The peculiar formation of the country, divided into long, narrow, but very steep ridges, offering in their openings parallel ravines, furnishes scarcely any portion of level surface adapted to the purpose of agriculture; while an universal clothing of thick forests oppose still greater impediments to any kind of cultivation: these consist chiefly of chestnut-trees, and to their produce the inhabitants look for the principal means of subsistence with a feeling of reliance and security which frequent failures in the crop prove to be ill-founded.

These glens unite with each other at spots where the slender rills that flow along them have worn a passage through the lateral boundary, and all finally pour themselves into the Salto; which seems, nevertheless, to derive but slight augmentation from these supplies, continuing to all appearance a very insignificant stream till within a very short distance of its junction with the Velino.

The villages are mostly placed on the sum-

mit of the hills, from which the surrounding prospects are agreeable though unvaried : the number of habitations that show themselves in all directions, embosomed in masses of trees shading slopes of the finest herbage, give to the whole district a pastoral aspect of considerable beauty. But, notwithstanding the proximity of these villages to each other, the communication between them is usually a tedious and even fatiguing operation, in consequence of the steepness of the gullies that intervene, and which it is always requisite to cross ; so that, after the first favourable impression produced by fine turf and umbrageous groves, the effect of a long ride through this interminable labyrinth of dell and forest is wearisome, and even oppressive to the mind and spirits.

The line of distance described by the course of the Salto from the point where it assumes a northern direction, to that of its junction with the Velino, measures about thirty miles ; but the deviations of the stream add at least one third more to it, and little more than half this space is strictly comprised in the district, or, as it is sometimes termed, the Vicariato of Cicoli,



the spiritual jurisdiction of which falls under the episcopal see of Rieti in the Roman states.

The commencement of this region may be fixed, on the south side, at the village of Sant' Anatolia, about eight miles from Avezzano; and here the first vestiges of Cyclopiian walls, which with other constructions of the same nature, are scattered through the whole extension of Cicolano, may be seen: these remains, so numerous, and so unvaried in their character, point it out as the seat of many populations of the most remote antiquity, under the different denominations of Aborigines, Siculi, and Equicoli.

The resemblance existing between the present name of *Cicoli* and the second of those appellations, has indeed afforded one of the principal grounds of identity between the ancient and modern locality; but there exist perhaps better authorities in the account of these faintly-remembered colonies transmitted to posterity by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

This author, alluding to the aboriginal occupiers of Italy, mentions a series of their cities, (nearly all destroyed when he wrote,)

extending from Rieti towards the Fucine Lake ; among which are enumerated Lista, considered as the capital, Palatium, Trebula, Vesbola, Suna, and Tora or Tiora.

The distance from Rieti to this last-mentioned place accords exactly with that to Sant' Anatolia ; and when, in corroboration of this coincidence, are added such names as Torano, Tora, and Castora, now attached to several adjoining spots, and finally the martyrdom of the saint herself, which, in various Martyrologia, is asserted to have occurred at Tyria, Thyrum, or Thora, it requires no great stretch of ingenuity to establish the fact of topographical identity.

Dionysius says that Tora was celebrated for an oracle of Mars, not very dissimilar to that of Dodona, which was delivered by a dove from an ancient oak ; whereas this proceeded from a woodpecker seated on a wooden column.

In a garden adjoining the church of Sant' Anatolia, placed below the village of the same name, there is a portion of finely executed polygon walls which might have belonged to the peribolus of the mystic fabric containing

the oracle; and a few hundred yards farther another is seen on an elevation, much inferior in size and materials, which might have appertained to the city itself.

About four miles distant, a larger village, called Borgo Colle Fegato, claims the distinction of capo luogo of this division of Cicolano; another, named Mercato, bearing the same rank in the second or northern part of the district: one is the residence of the inspector of police, the other that of the judge.

I had found no possibility of procuring any letters of recommendation at Avezzano, which might have ensured the accommodation and assistance requisite in an excursion to the glen of the Salto; and indeed could not even find any guide that had ever penetrated farther into it than Sant' Anatolia on that side, or I should undoubtedly have shaped my journey that way, which would have afforded more advantageous means of investigation than I obtained in a subsequent tour I made into Cicolano from Aquila.

I was therefore compelled to rest satisfied with a morning's ride to Sant' Anatolia, and

back; which however, independently of the antiquities above described, was by no means without attraction.

The road, which, for five miles northward of Avezzano, is smooth, and wide enough for a carriage, runs between Scurcola on one side, and the large well-situated village of Magliano on the right. This last is nearly under the hill of Alba, and is remarkable for its flourishing appearance and the number of large and even elegant villas that surround it.

The Salto, which in these parts is still called Imele, or sometimes Fiume di Tagliacozzo, flows near the road-side, and with it enters a defile which grows gradually narrower as the mountains seem to rise and crowd upon it, leaving however sufficient space for cultivation under some stately oaks, and one or two farm-houses; after which, nothing can be more solitary than the rest of the way, till, leaving the stream, and winding under the base of a rocky hill, the villages of Torano, S. Stefano, and Sant' Anatolia look down upon one from very elevated stations.

I returned by a straighter, but more uneven

route, which led over the mountain, and by a little village called Rosciolo, to Magliano, and so to my abode at Avezzano, which I was to quit the following morning.

This was not without regret; for the comfortable accommodations I had enjoyed in the house, which, for a second time, I inhabited in that town, and the satisfactory, though not entirely gratuitous attentions I received from its worthy proprietors, induced me to seek for plausible excuses for prolonging my stay: to these recommendations were added the general demeanour and apparent good-will of the inhabitants, and a feeling of placid tranquillity diffused over the adjacent locality, which gained singularly on the mind and habit during even the limited abode of a few days.

The immediate environs of the town are, nevertheless, far from offering any picturesque beauty; the situation being so low as scarcely to admit a view of the lake, except from the upper windows of the houses, and the country is entirely flat: but the vast expanse of turf, the green lanes bordered with honeysuckles, and other circumstances more easily felt than

described, probably recalled the scenery of less meridional regions, and brought with them the fresher impressions of life, tempting one to exclaim with Petrarch,

Sento l'aura mia antica, e i dolci colli  
Veggio apparir, &c.

The interior of Avezzano, though well built, has nothing remarkable, except, perhaps, the dress of the females, which is peculiarly neat and becoming.

I quitted it for Aquila, on horseback ; having sent back the carriage which had been procured from Solmona to convey me there. I preferred a shorter, though perhaps a more fatiguing journey, and took my way accordingly along the banks of the lake for about the distance of three miles ; when, leaving the main road, we struck into another to the left, leading to Celano, through cultivated grounds and cherry orchards, forming a little valley, inclosed by wooded banks, watered by a clear and copious mountain stream that runs into the lake.

The landscape is equal in beauty to any Italian scenery I ever saw, and its effect con-

siderably improved by the aspect of the town of Celano and its stately castle, crowning, as usual, the eminence on which it stands, with the whole expanse of the lake stretching in the background, and bound by its fantastic belt of mountains.

The castle of Celano, which had existed probably from the times of the Lombards, received considerable additions, and assumed its present shape, through the care and munificence of Leonello Acclocciamuro, who in right of his wife, the countess whom I have already alluded to, became possessed of the large domains attached to it.

It was in the year 1450 that this nobleman expended on its repairs and augmentations the sum of 600,000 ducats, which even in these days would seem exorbitant.

The Piccolomini family, who obtained a grant of the estates after their confiscation under the Aragonese dynasty, likewise added to this structure; and at subsequent periods it received garrisons from the different powers who by turns disputed the possession of these territories.

To the devotion and liberality of the same Leonello is due the foundation of a church and monastery, beautifully situated in the glen above mentioned, near a spring of limpid water, which had given the spot the appropriate name of Valle Verde, afterwards conferred on the convent, and which it still retains.

The Piccolomini likewise enriched and enlarged this community; and one of them, in the sixteenth century, bestowed upon it an invaluable gift, in an exquisite painting, by Giulio Romano, representing our Saviour's progress towards Calvary.

This nobleman, whose name was Inigo, brought that distinguished artist from Rome to Celano on purpose to adorn his family chapel in this church with the labours of his pencil, which are still to be seen in excellent preservation.

A great portion of these fiefs were sold by the Piccolomini to the Peretti family, from whom they were transferred in later years to the Sforza Bovadilla. The present possession of the castle is now disputed by this last, and the family of Torres of Aquila.



Leaving this lovely valley with all its attractive accompaniments, and turning our backs upon the lake, we ascended a narrow ravine, breaking into the mountains we were to traverse.

The village of Sant' Iona on the left, and that of San Potito on the right, might be considered as offering specimens of the worst situations that can be selected for human abodes, if that of Ovindoli, which follows, did not even surpass them in difficulty of access and dreariness of position.

It is stuck on the projection of a barren rock, over a narrow defile through which the path we followed leads to an extensive flat on the summit of this range.

The wind, that rushed with alarming violence and bitter intensity of coldness through this pass, gave a most feeling insight into the horrors of the wintry season in such a spot.

The plain that follows, though cultivated in some parts, offers an aspect of chilling nudity and poverty, resembling at the same time all those placed in similar localities, viz. the Simplon, Splügen, and Mont Cenis; the surround-

ing peaks being entirely covered with snow. The village of *Rovere* stands on the left ; and the next, called Rocca di Mezzo, was our resting-place after a tedious ride of about twelve miles : here, a tavern, which, from possessing two bedrooms in addition to the ordinary kitchen, deserved the title of *Locanda*, received us ; and we made a tolerable repast of some slices of veal, a meat for which this place is celebrated throughout the province.

It contains about eleven hundred inhabitants, and possesses the remains of walls, and a fortified castle, which, owing to its position in the mountain pass between *Aquila* and the lake, was considered in days of yore as a strong military hold ; the annals of the province record several obstinate attacks, and even sieges, which it successfully withstood. On quitting Rocca di Mezzo, another half of the melancholy plain must be travelled over ; leaving a village called Rocca di Cagno, the very counterpart of the former, on the left, about two miles farther.

After this, a woodland region is entered, interspersed with large masses of grey rock, lead-

ing. to the upper extremity of the range of hills that forms the western boundary of the plain of Aquila; and here, among the under-wood, I found large thickets of gooseberry bushes growing wild, loaded with fruit; and I was informed that in many other parts of Abruzzo they abound, and produce a variety of sorts of various flavour, size, and colour, which, however, are held in no estimation by the natives.

On reaching the crest of the hills, the whole plain and the city of Aquila were visible; and Monte Corno, probably derived from the *Cunarus* of the ancients, showed itself towering at a great elevation above the opposite chain, and adding a very imposing feature to a prospect which, though extensive, is neither attractive nor even striking. This mountain, the highest of the Apennines, is usually designated by the more classical, and as appropriate, name of Gran Sasso d'Italia. The road all the way from Avezzano to this point is so smooth and wide, that, except in two or three places, it would be quite practicable for a carriage; but the descent into the plain is along

a zigzag path, so steep, rugged, and in every other respect perilous, that I thought it advisable to trust to my own legs instead of my horse's, and performed it on foot.

Many rills rush down these declivities, and on approaching their base, several large well-built villages appeared, scattered along the whole line, many of which occupied very agreeable positions.

Among the many ruins of old castles which generally form an addition to most of them, the remains of that of *Ocra* are remarkable from the immense circuit of the encircling walls, and the number of towers with which they are furnished.

This adjunct distinguishes several of the neighbouring villages, such as S. Felice, S. Martino, and Santa Maria d'Ocra: from the former a carriage-road to Aquila has been constructed in the plain, through some meadows producing hay as fine and fragrant as in England. These are watered by different branches of the river Aterno, purposely divided and dammed up for the purpose of irrigation. Notwithstanding these rural advantages, and the

clusters of villages which render it, for its size, the best peopled district in the kingdom, the general aspect of the plain is dreary from the want of trees, and the bleak and bare surface of the encircling mountains.

About a mile and half from Aquila, which at that distance has a very imposing aspect, the Aterno is crossed, and the road I had followed joins that from the capital, which soon after is conducted up the hill on which the city is placed, which it enters by a handsome gate or rather archway.

The foundation of Aquila is attributed upon well authenticated grounds to the Emperor Frederick II. of the house of Swabia, who, by a diploma preserved in the collection known as Letters of Petrus de Vineis, ordained the construction of the city, and that it should be peopled by the inhabitants of no less than ninety small burghs, villages, and castles in the vicinity: among the former were comprised Amiternum and Furconium, places of great antiquity and some importance in the Sabine and Vestine territories, which had pre-

served their original names under the lower empire, and were honoured with episcopal rank.

The execution of Frederick's decree, which was promulgated but a few years before his death, appears not to have been completely fulfilled until the beginning of the reign of his son and successor, Conrad.

The intention of both sovereigns had evidently been influenced by the hope of opposing an effectual barrier to the rapacious and usurping pretensions of the Roman pontiffs, who persecuted the whole race of Stauffen with unrelenting animosity: but the new colony showed themselves animated with sentiments of a very different nature, and deserved the reproach of signal ingratitude by having, very early, sided with the papal party; and Manfred, who succeeded to Conrad, deemed it necessary to inflict a somewhat severe castigation upon them, by burning and devastating the city.

Charles of Anjou, however, notwithstanding his apparent submissiveness to the pontifical

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power, which had invested him with the kingdom he had conquered, very soon rebuilt Aquila, and favoured it by the grant of special privileges.

The interior of the city of Aquila recalls to the traveller's recollection some portions of Rome: many circumstances combine to corroborate this resemblance; but none more strikingly than the number of large churches, well-built palaces, and the depopulated and singularly lonesome aspect of its streets.

It contains at the present day about eleven thousand inhabitants, having once boasted of six times that number.

No town in the whole kingdom has suffered so repeatedly from the scourge of external war and intestine feuds ever since its first construction.

Its local position, contiguous to the Roman states, and on a road which forms one of the principal inlets into the realm, has generally rendered it one of the first points of attack for every invading enemy; and the valiant, but little known and fruitless resistance it has frequently opposed on such occasions, has, in the lapse of ages, greatly contributed to dimi-

nish its population. Another cause may be found in the emigration of the lower classes : but the principal losses to its numbers must be referred to the repeated shocks of earthquakes it has undergone ; the last of which, in the year 1707, overthrew a great portion of the city, and destroyed or dispersed a large quantity of the inhabitants, two thousand of which were crushed in one church alone.

Its name, as well as the eagle chosen as its crest, is supposed to denote its imperial origin ; though, perhaps, the elevated position in which it was constructed may be looked upon as suggesting both the one and the other.

Placed on an insulated eminence, rising from a plain already considerably above the level of the sea, it enjoys the advantages of a pure air, which barely compensate a variable state of atmosphere in the summer, and a winter of protracted duration.

The water, which abundantly supplies its numerous fountains, is brought by means of an aqueduct along a distance of four miles from a neighbouring mountain.

The streets in general are wide and well



paved; and the buildings display a style of architecture, and a scale of dimensions, which establish one of the points of similitude with Rome: they are mostly constructed of a fine white stone found in the vicinity, and adorned with sculptured door and window frames.

The churches, which are likewise spacious, bear exteriorly the same character, especially in their portals; which, having generally withstood the effects of the earthquake, offer in the clustered pillars supporting the arch, and the florid scroll-work which enriches its curve, very exquisite specimens of execution.

During those calamitous times when a misapplied notion of liberty subjected all the principal cities of Italy to the varying and oppressive rule of contending factions, none was more frequently or mournfully distinguished by the contests of the Guelphs and Ghibellines: and an opinion still exists among the natives that the former party had adopted, as an exterior symbol, the short stanchion which divides and sustains the small double arches constituting the gothic windows of the old houses; while the same arches, without this central support,

are supposed to have denoted the dwellings of their antagonists.

The places of worship, including monasteries, are seventy in number ; which, as may be imagined, are far beyond what may be required by so limited, however devout, a population.

There are several public buildings of a magnitude amounting to magnificence ; among which the ancient governor's palace and the citadel stand foremost, both erected in the reign of Charles V.

The former was the abode of his natural daughter, Margaret of Austria, who, after the death of her two husbands, Alexander of Medici, and Octavio Farnese, was appointed governess of these provinces, great portions of which had been granted to her and her descendants as personal property.

She divided her time between these domains and the city of Rome, where the Palazzo and Villa *Madama* still retain the name derived from this circumstance.

She died at Ortona, a sea-port on the Adriatic, which, on account of its milder temperature, she had selected as her winter residence,

and where she likewise had erected a princely dwelling.

Tradition has preserved a peculiar, but not very attractive, description of the disposition and person of this princess in maturer years, and an unfavourable recollection of her mode of governing: she is described as having been harsh in her manner, fidgetty in her habits, which led her to be always riding (not on a side-saddle) about the country, and masculine as well as ordinary in her form and visage; which aspect was considerably aggravated by a huge pair of bushy yellow mustachios.

The intendente, or governor's present habitation, on the point of completion while I was there, is a suppressed monastery, well adapted from its size and solidity to the dwelling of a public functionary; Aquila being the capital of the largest and most important of the three divisions comprehending the province of Abruzzo.

A very handsome theatre had been constructed in one part of this edifice when it was first converted to its present use, the por-

tion destined to the reception of the spectators being, like Palladio's Olympic theatre at Vicenza, semicircular and unprovided with boxes, which gives it a very striking and novel effect. The scenery was also painted, and the decorations and machinery organised in a style of execution not unworthy of the metropolis, when the bishop, in his zealous solicitude for the morals of his flock, discovered that a wall of very limited extension united this temple of profane amusement to the church which had originally appertained to the convent, and was still used for divine service. An immediate application was directed to the most influential department, and a supreme decree promptly issued to prohibit all dramatic performances; which has condemned it to useless repose, except occasionally for concerts or balls in the winter season; a smaller and not inelegant theatre having been substituted for the diversion of the inhabitants.

These bear a strong resemblance to the Romans in their general demeanour, manners, dress, and even language; which is not surpris-

ing, when it is considered that the majority of those in easy circumstances are usually educated at Rome.

Among the numerous churches existing at Aquila, the interior of which is stamped with a character of uniformity, some good paintings are to be found ; one in particular, representing the baptism of Constantine by St. Silvester, to whom the church is dedicated : it is by a Tuscan artist, named Baccio Ciarpì, not much known, but considered as the master of Pietro di Cortona. This picture is remarkable, not only from the excellence, but the peculiar style of its execution, which closely resembles that of Paolo Veronese. A work of the divine Raphael once graced this same building, having been placed there by a native of Aquila, named Branconi, who held the rank of one of the Cunicularii to Leo X, and bespoke it from the artist, at his own cost, for the purpose of placing it in his family chapel, as his epitaph still attests. One of the bishops of the city, during the misrule of the viceregal government, and himself a Spaniard, exerted a flagrant abuse of authority in withdrawing it from its posi-

tion, and sending it to the Escorial, where it was for a long while looked upon as one of the *chef-d'œuvres* of that celebrated collection.

The general belief is, that the King of Spain presented it to the Duke of Wellington, in whose possession it now remains. The subject was the Visitation, and a copy was executed to supply its place; but this is now so defaced, that it is difficult to recognise any vestige of its original merits.

The finest church in all its parts is that of S. Bernardino of Sienna, which, nevertheless, is not honoured with the title of cathedral: the front, which was executed by Cola dell' Amatrice, an eminent architect and painter, and a native of this province, presents a somewhat heterogeneous union of the Gothic with the Roman style, prevailing at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but blended with sufficient ingenuity and taste to produce a pleasing and even imposing effect. The interior presents architectural details of a more modern and less eccentric taste; and it is, moreover, enriched by a variety of fine marbles, the production of the neighbouring mountains, whose tints

and polish emulate the finest specimens of verd and giallo antico.

The most remarkable object, however, is the sepulchral monument erected to the patron saint, a structure which, from its magnitude, the character of its execution, and its excellent state of preservation, may vie with any work of the kind which Italy has produced: it was executed at the end of the fifteenth century at the expense of a private citizen of Aquila, by an individual named Silvestro Salviati, a native of a small village in the vicinity, called Arischia. The stone of which it is composed is nearly equal to marble in the fineness of its grain and lustre, and is susceptible of receiving the most minute and delicate tracery, which is lavished upon it in the style denominated arabesque, the details of which are evidently suggested by the most classical models; though its form, that of a large casket with a vaulted top, is somewhat clumsy: in the various panels are several statues in alto rilievo, of most exquisite design and sculpture, and the whole does great credit to the taste and powers of the sculptor.

This valuable specimen of art was broke

open during the first invasion of the French, in 1799, who, having met with some resistance in the town, wreaked their vengeance on the sacred edifices, and carried off from the interior of the shrine the massive silver chest containing the bones of the saint.

This costly vessel had been purposely manufactured with exquisite skill and labour by the order of Louis XI. of France, whose well-known devotion towards saints and their relics outstepped the ordinary limits of his economy on this occasion: it had, moreover, been submitted to the inspection and approbation of Sixtus IV. who filled the papal chair at this period (1481); whose admiration of it was so powerful, that he published a bull excommunicating any future violator of so precious an article, which did not prevent the soldiers of three centuries later from profaning it, and casting the holy bones into the street.

These were, however, preserved from dispersion, and have since been restored to their original resting-place in a receptacle of less costly materials. Another sepulchre in the same church is worthy of notice; tradition ascribes



it to the same author, but the style bears an earlier character. It is erected to the memory of an infant of the house of Camponesco, (a family celebrated in the annals of this city,) by its mother, a lady of Spanish origin.

The effigies of both are represented in recumbent postures, in two separate divisions one above the other; and they both are admirable for the beauty and delicacy of the faces, and the elegant simplicity of the figures.

A general of that race, by name Lello Camponesco, rendered himself illustrious under the reigns of Ladislas, and his sister the second Joan, for his valorous conduct, and in particular for his successful defence of Aquila against the attacks of the well-known Braccio di Montone, surnamed *Fortebraccio*, who was killed in its vicinity.

In the sacristia of this church, four small paintings on wood are shown, said to be the work of Giotto, and to represent various acts of the life of St. Bernardino: the two facts are incompatible with each other, as the artist died previously to the birth of the saint; but the singularity of the costumes, the correct-

ness of the drawing, the freshness of the colours, and, above all, their excellent state of preservation, combine to render them highly interesting.

Another very singular church is that called Santa Maria di Collemaggio, placed on a hill so named outside of the walls. It has a Gothic front incrustated with marble in squares of different hues, like that of the Duomo at Sienna, with a large arched portal and scrolled window: above these, an iron rail runs along the whole of the edifice, and from this, the Bishop of Aquila, on the 29th of August, reads a bull in favour of the city, granted by Celestinus IV, alias Peter of Morrone, the hermit, who was consecrated and crowned in this edifice on that day in the year 1294, and afterward buried in it.

The sepulchre containing his remains is smaller, and of earlier construction, but much in the same style as that of S. Bernardino.

A monastery of Celestine friars, the order which he had founded, had been established on the spot, but suppressed in more recent times by the French.

A community of the Franciscan rule, designated by the title of *Antoniani*, have since been allowed to occupy the convent; but they are so poor as to be disabled from keeping up the church and its appendages in the state of decent repair which it deserves.

During the occupation of the monastery by its original confraternity, one of them, a native of Flanders and a pupil of Rubens, adorned the church with the labours of his pencil, many of which are still in existence, and exhibit talents nearly approaching those of his master. I had already seen one of his works in the church of S. Bernardino; it was on a gigantic scale, and represents the crucifixion; the composition has a strong and poetical effect, though it is full of incongruities.

I found the paintings in the church of Collemaggio executed with a more careful hand: among them is a representation of the coronation of Celestinus, in the presence of Charles II. of Anjou, and his son Charles Martel, which shows superior merit; as well as another, commemorating an event relating to the history of Aquila.

But those which are most worthy of notice display a series of the miracles performed by the said pontiff, every one of which contains several figures of animals or birds, equal to any performances of the same kind by the most celebrated Dutch and Flemish masters: many of those are unfortunately much damaged by the effects of damp.

Aquila contains many ancient families in easy circumstances, whose habitations exhibit an appearance of affluence and respectability superior to most other provincial cities in the kingdom. The members of these are also distinguished by no common proportion of mental cultivation, extending far beyond the limits of their own country. I was no less pleased than surprised at finding many individuals conversant with the leading topics in English science and literature, kept up by the continued perusal of our most esteemed periodical publications.

I should be ungrateful, if among these I omitted the names of the Marquises Torres and Dragonetti, whose stock of information on all subjects derived additional value from the unaffected and truly obliging manner in which

it was conveyed: both these gentlemen possess a collection of pictures; in that belonging to the former, two cabinet pieces may rank as *chef-dæuvres*.

Among those belonging to Marquis Dragonetti are several paintings by Pompeo dell' Aquila, a native artist worthy of more extended fame, and some Dutch pieces of still life, and flowers of superior beauty: he likewise possesses a fine selection of medals, and an extensive and well-chosen library.

The attentions and assistance of these distinguished individuals contributed not a little to add variety and interest to my stay at Aquila; and, united to the kindness of the Intendente, Prince Zurlo, in whom I recognised a friend of many years' standing, coloured my residence in that city with the most favourable tints.

Many other families preserve in their houses some specimens of the graphic art, as well as fragments of antiquity, among which a portion of a Roman calendar on stone deserves peculiar mention.

In times more remote, this city advanced claims to distinction in several of her sons,

who were renowned both in arms and letters. Among the former are numbered Simonetto, Rosso, Antoniello, and Menicuccio, all bearing the addition of Aquila instead of a family name, and celebrated among the condottieri of their age : the first improvisatore mentioned in the poetical records of Italy was likewise born here; of him (Serafino dell' Aquila) a long and detailed account may be found in Roscoe's life of Leo X. Among the earliest printing-offices established in the south of Europe must be noted one at Aquila, the management of which was conducted by a German named Adam Rotweiler.

Some antiquaries have believed that the present site of Aquila was included within the precincts of the ancient Sabine city of Amiternum ; a circumstance entirely at variance with another hypothesis, which places it on the confines of the adjoining territory of the Vestini. The ruins and situation of Amiternum have, however, been recognised with more probability at a small village called S. Vittorino, about four miles distant from Aquila. This spot, which I visited on Whit-sunday of the year 1830, offers

some vestiges of antiquity ; but these, except in a few portions of polygon walls on a hill, probably the citadel, do not point out a more remote æra than that of the Roman empire.

The situation, on a sloping bank above the river Aternus, from which it derived its name, is favourable to the necessities of a large town, and commands an extensive and cheerful view of the surrounding country.

Along the banks of the stream are to be seen the fine substructions of an ancient road ; and beyond it stand the remains of an amphitheatre constructed of bricks, about the size of that at Pompeii.

The modern village consists of only a few huts scattered on the brow of the hill, with a small church, and a square detached tower adjoining it. The former, notwithstanding its dilapidated state, is celebrated throughout the province as a sanctuary of some renown ; being the burial-place of the tutelary saint, Victorinus, who was bishop of the Christian Amiternum, and suffered martyrdom, with several others of his faith, at Cutilia, in the Sabine country, from whence their remains were con-

vayed hither, and deposited in some catacombs excavated under the church. These are of no great extent, and offer nothing remarkable but a highly glazed ancient painting, on the rock, of the Virgin, Child, and St. Joseph, in a tolerable state of preservation, and deserving some attention, from a more graceful roundness of outline, and a more correct style of design, than is generally observable in the early works of the same nature.

The walls of the church, as well as those of the contiguous tower, contain many Roman inscriptions; one of which is curious, as the only relic that mentions the existence of Aveja, a town supposed to have stood near Fossa, a village to the south of Aquila. There was a great concourse of country folks of both sexes within and round the church, attracted by the festal rites of the day, and a kind of fair for cotton handkerchiefs, ribbons, toys, and cakes.

These peasants appeared to be a hardy, sedate, and civilised race, without either obsequiousness or arrogance in their manner. The females, who were in general taller in proportion than the men, advanced no higher claim to good looks



than a straight form and a fair complexion; attributes which not imperfectly corroborated the assertion of one of my companions, that they descended, with but slight foreign mixture, from the Langobard tribes.

Their dress, of substantial and cleanly materials, was not unbecoming; consisting of a dark blue body, with sleeves of the same fastened on the shoulder with full bows of ribbon,—a petticoat of similar substance (cloth), and peculiar from the quantity of small plaits into which it is gathered,—and a head-dress formed of an oblong piece of white cotton or muslin, simply but most gracefully placed on the hair, and bordered with a deep row of thread-lace of a coarse but rich pattern.

Several of the men bore pieces of coloured silk of about two yards in length, which they displayed as the prizes that were to excite competition in a foot-race which was to take place in the evening.

On my way back to Aquila, I observed a number of springs that gush from the foot of the hills, and are said to dry up entirely every ten years, and remain dormant for two or three,

after which they resume their periodical course. Within a mile of the city, on the right of the road returning to it, a pool full of weeds is shown as the source of a river named Novanus by ancient writers; it is now called Lago di Vettoio. I had been struck, ever since my first entrance into Abruzzo, by the natural musical taste and ear of the natives of the lower classes; and at Aquila this remark was frequently renewed by the recurrence of choruses sung in parts with the most perfect harmony and intonation. They were chiefly executed by children as they returned from their evening tasks; but it was not uncommon, even at other times of the day, to see two boys walking or playing together, occasionally breaking out in similar strains, the effect of which offered a striking contrast to the discordant shouts which are sent forth in the shape of song by the vinedressers or woodcutters of Campania. It would be unfair to close all description of Aquila without some mention of its castle or citadel, which, though now become insignificant in a military point of view, exhibits a not uninteresting specimen of a for-

truss of the time of Charles V, constructed with all the skill of which that age could boast, and at an expense which even its present appearance may account for. It is situated just outside of one of the gates, somewhat above the level of the city, but commanded by other hills on all sides but that.

Its outward aspect is more imposing than picturesque, being a regular square surrounded by a deep fosse, and flanked by round towers immensely broad in proportion to their height. This ponderous mass of stone has withstood the ravages, or rather the neglect, of centuries, and the shocks of earthquakes; and shows itself exactly under the same form as that bestowed upon it under the viceroyalty of Peter of Toledo, in 1543: the solidity of the materials, the care displayed in the manner of connecting them, the immense subterraneous passages it contains, and the numerous embrasures now but scantily provided with artillery, show what efforts were made to secure to it the means of able and protracted resistance.

Several runs of water, supplied from the same aqueduct which furnishes the town, pro-

vide it with that most essential requisite; and if these were cut off, four deep wells, one at each angle, in an underground circular vault, added to several cisterns of rain-water, would still make up the deficiency: a small military force is stationed in it, and one portion is used as a prison.

The gateway is surmounted with a rich escutcheon within a carved scroll, bearing the quarterings of the Imperial arms, executed in marble with a degree of minuteness and finish that might grace more delicate labours; while the well-known emblem of the Herculean columns, and the enterprising motto *Plus ultra*, adopted by Charles V, are in perfect keeping with the style and character of the whole edifice.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Village of Prettura.—Remains of ancient Baths on the Banks of the Velino.—Curious Narrative.—Birth-place of Vespasian.—District of Tornimparte.—Antiquities of Alzana.—Antiquities at Pace.—Amiable qualities of my Hosts.—Beverage and Produce of the Country.—Murder of the Count Cenci.—Cattle-paths to Aquila.—Melancholy March of the Abruzzese Shepherds.—Laws for depasturing Cattle.—Decrease of the Flocks.—Town of Capistrano.*

FROM Aquila I undertook a journey to Antrudoco, and the frontiers of the kingdom towards Rieti; and likewise made an excursion to that part of the district of Cicolano which I could not effect from Avezzano.

Leaving the road to S. Vittorino, at about three miles from the city, a track to the left crosses the Aterno over a bridge of most dangerous construction, and, passing by the village of Coppito, enters one of the narrow glens which open in many directions from the northern extremity of the valley or plain of Aquila.

That which we followed, between two low, but well-wooded ridges of hills, was watered by copious streams ; and displayed, on either side of the road, a succession of meadows whose luxuriant verdure might vie with those of our native England.

The village of Prettura, pleasantly situated among them, contains a handsome villa and a large dairy-farm belonging to one of the most opulent families of Aquila, which supplies the market of that city with the best butter I ever tasted out of my own country.

After this, the boundaries of the valley assuming a greater extension and a more barren aspect, the way is dull and dreary, and brought us to a solitary tavern and church, about six miles from the city : the latter is dedicated to the Madonna della Strada, or Sancta Maria Viatorum.

The remainder of the road runs through a wider valley bounded by naked hills of no considerable elevation ; the least unfertile portions of which produce scanty corn, growing among luxuriant weeds and wild flowers, while the edge of the path is bordered with sloe-bushes,

white and black thorn, dwarf ilex, and the plant bearing the cornelian cherry.

It is but traced, and so stony as to preclude any progress beyond that of a foot's pace, but is in no part rough or dangerous.

Rocca di Corno, a wretched-looking village, is seen at a short distance on the right; and, about four miles from Antrodoco, the mountains close on the road by degrees, till they leave but space for it and the bed of a torrent: this pass, rising precipitously on either side, forms the defile of Antrodoco, a post which, being easily defended by a small force, has always been considered as of importance in checking the advance of an invading enemy.

In 1798, the peasantry and inhabitants of Antrodoco opposed so effectual a resistance to a column of the French army as to kill a considerable number and repel the remainder: not so in 1821, when the Austrian forces entered the kingdom, and forced their passage after a very insignificant contest; which, however, cost the German troops many lives, and is recorded as the only action that took place during the whole of their march to Naples.

A large tavern and church are placed in the most contracted part of the pass; the last is called the *Madonna delle Grotte*, being in reality partly built in a cave, the rugged projections of which are seen intruding through the walls and vaults in several places. It contains nothing worth notice, except a good painting over the altar, apparently a copy of some ancient master.

From this spot, the road assumes a more rapid and winding descent, and brings one to *Antrodoco*, situated about two miles farther, on the river *Velino*, at the junction of three valleys, or rather glens: one, through which we had descended; the second, through which the *Velino* approaches the town from behind the stupendous mountain that frowns over it; the third, being the larger and better cultivated vale, which conducts the same river along the road to *Civita Ducale*, the boundary of the Neapolitan kingdom, and to *Rieti*, the frontier of the Roman states.

The town itself presents to the eye nothing better than an unseemly mass of shabby buildings with red-tiled roofs; but the ruined castle



above it, the variety and richness of the vegetation which borders the stream, and the fantastic form of the mountain ridges that enclose it on either side, richly covered with oak and chestnut woods, make a most interesting picture of the whole.

The Velino is divided into two branches just below the town, forming an island laid out into gardens, meadows, and coppice thickets; and is tinged with that peculiar vitriolic hue which characterises all the sulphureous streams which abound in this valley. Three of these rise near the old castle, and are justly esteemed for their salutary qualities both in external and interior use.

A bridge over the Velino, at the entrance of the town, led us within its streets, which I found more regular than I had expected, and furnished with some good houses.

The intendente had provided me with a letter for one of the principal proprietors of Antrodoco; but I avoided consigning it to its address before I had secured an abode for the short time I meant to pass there, which I was fortunate enough to find in a house placed in

the only square, which its owners allowed me to convert to all the uses of an inn, though they professed not to keep one.

The gentleman to whom I was recommended, and who paid me a visit as soon as he got his letter, offered the use of his own mansion, but very slightly enforced my acceptance of it ; limiting his assistance to the only objects I sought, namely, general information respecting the country, and his own company during an excursion I made the following day in the direction of Civita Ducale.

There are but few villages scattered along the brows of the adjoining hills ; among which Borghetto on the left, and Canetro, Monte Sant' Angelo, and Paterno on the right, are the largest. Under the first of these, and near the road, about two miles from the town, are seen spacious and well-preserved brick ruins, which were evidently baths.

Vestiges of constructions of a similar nature abound on both sides of the Velino ; and the district is well known to have been celebrated for its cold waters, which were resorted to by the inhabitants of ancient Rome.

Most of these springs, as well as the river itself, leave a thick sediment on all the substances over which they flow, and depositions of this kind are found in great abundance throughout the valley: they are dug out, and used in masonry wherever a light, and at the same time solid, material is required to fill up considerable masses, such as arches or buttresses.

A remarkable specimen of this kind of deposition presents itself at a very little distance from Antrodoco in the shape of a bank of considerable length, height, and thickness, running from the lateral mountains to the immediate banks of the river: it was cut through when the road was made; and the small rill which had formed it by its coats of sediment during the revolving course of many centuries was at the same time turned off into the neighbouring fields: but it is curious to observe the regularity of the layers of which it is composed, and the depressed channel at the top, through which the water flowed which gradually increased its bulk.

The road was much worse than that of the

preceding day, and rendered our drive somewhat tedious; though its extension was but limited, terminating at a spot where it turns to the right into another and larger valley in which Civita Ducale is situated. Here, under the village of Paterno, and below some fine ruins of Roman baths, stands the lake, which still bears the name of Cutilia, from a city so called, the remains of which are placed by Cluverius in the adjoining flat.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentions both one and the other; adding, that in the former a floating island existed, to which the natives attached a sacred origin and divine attributes. Here, according to the same author, the Pelasgi rested on their first entrance into Italy, having recognised in the spot that which the oracle of Dodona had pointed out as the final term of their wanderings. The position and dimensions of this pool entirely coincide with the description given of it by Dionysius; but the island is no longer visible: and it is to be observed that in another much smaller pond, situated on lower level on the left side of the road, two or three masses of a vegetable substance appear

floating on its weed-covered surface, and are said by the country people to be put into motion when the wind is sufficiently strong.

This is called Pozzo di Rastignano, or Pozzo Sfondato, from the often-believed tradition that it is fathomless.

The water bubbles up in the centre with such violence as to keep that spot entirely clear from the film which covers all the remainder. The stream it produces is sufficiently powerful to turn a mill erected close to it; and its taste is sweet, but flat and mawkish. Very near it are three springs, gushing from the soil at equal distances from each other; one of which is sulphureous, the other slightly acidulated, and the third drinkable, and resorted to by the natives as such.

A little below these, towards the river, are several more pools of the same nature and form, all designated by the name of Pozzo, with the several additions of Bollente, Freddo, Torbido, &c. They are mostly sulphureous; and their waters, which communicate by small channels, finally discharge themselves into the Ve-

lino. They are generally coloured with that vitriolic tint which distinguishes similar waters: a few are clear and tasteless; but all are extremely cold, and boil up with remarkable force from the middle.

The Abbé Chaupy, following the opinion of Varro cited by Pliny, which makes this spot the central point of Italy, has looked upon it as identical with Virgil's lake of Arus sanctus; an hypothesis which has been much disputed.

An old peasant, who accompanied us in the investigation of these singular phenomena, added greatly to the interest and curiosity they inspired by the recital of a circumstance which happened about ten years before.

Being at work with other labourers in the vicinity of these pools, they observed the water in one of them to sink and finally disappear in a very short space of time; leaving the sides, which were very steep, and the interior in its whole depth, entirely dry and exposed to view.

On one side of the cavity, placed in circular array, they observed a row of marble steps, or seats, surrounding a large jar or urn of

earthenware, closely covered with a lid of the same material, measuring about fourteen feet in height.

The spectators which had collected round the basin, attracted by the singularity of the circumstance, were impressed with the notion that this gigantic vessel must contain something precious; and, after a lapse of four or five hours, they let down one of the party, by ropes fixed round his waist and shoulders to secure his retreat as well as to effect his descent; and moreover, in their impatience to obtain the object of their research, they flung large stones at the vase, and succeeded in effecting some fissures on its surface: but before they could proceed very far in their operation, the water returned in such abundance, and with such rapidity, that they had scarcely time to draw up the investigator; and in a very short space of time the pool was restored to its wonted state, the objects entirely covered, and the stream flowing from it as usual. The water, however, appeared to be tinged with a yellow and thick liquid; and emitted for some days after a strong and fragrant aromatic odour,

which they supposed to proceed from the contents of the jar issuing from the openings they had made.

The old man's memory did not seem very correct in the details of his marvellous narration; but the principal facts were attested by several other witnesses, who agreed in their account of them.

After a halt of about two hours, which were spent in examining these lakes, the various remains of Roman constructions that are found near them, and some fine traces of the Via Salaria, running parallel to the modern road, I returned to Antrodoco, and, in so doing, had a more favourable opportunity of observing the beauty of the scenery which distinguishes the banks of the Velino from Antrodoco to Civita Ducale, and indeed as far as Rieti.

Their produce and cultivation attest the mildness of the climate as superior to that of Aquila and its environs; for here the olive thrives on the lower slopes of the hills, while the vines are seen growing to their very summits,—with this distinction, that in the upper regions they are cut low and tied to canes, and



in the lower grounds they are trained upon trees as in Tuscany and the neighbourhood of Naples.

Potatoes, beans, Indian corn, and a variety of esculent vegetables, abound on the flatter banks of the river, while magnificent forests crown the higher ridges; so that, if ever the road is rendered practicable, which it scarcely is at present, the drive from Antrodoco to Rieti will be one of the most agreeable in Italy, and would open a new and short line of communication for travellers returning from Naples to the northern parts, who would thereby vary their course by avoiding Rome and the tedious repetitions of its campagna; as a very tolerable road exists between Rieti and Terni, following the line of the Velino to the lake of Pié di Lecco, and the celebrated fall of Le Marmore. From Rieti, also, a secondary, but not very good road, is frequented by all the inhabitants of this portion of the kingdom in their frequent communications with the papal states and their capital; the upper classes (as I have before noticed) making it their residence for

some part of the year, and sending their children for education thither.

The lower ranks use it for a passage to the deserted and unhealthy regions of the Roman and Tuscan marenmma, which they assist in cultivating; and for this purpose a numerous emigration of individuals of both sexes takes place every year, in whom the love of gain, and habits of suffering and labour, predominate over other considerations, and who are by these induced to quit their native homes to obtain a precarious existence at a higher rate of wages.

This propensity is deprecated as a serious injury to a country already verging on depopulation, and naturally not fertile; as it is not only for many months deprived of their powers, but a large proportion of these deluded victims never return from the pestilential marshes to which they resort, and the survivors bring with them the elements of disorders which the keen and bracing air of their mountains cannot overcome, and which frequently assume an endemic and even contagious character.

These evils almost excite the wish that a go-

vernment essentially despotic, and sufficiently disposed to exert its coercive power in restraining individuals of a more exalted class from leaving their country in search of instruction, should extend similar prohibitions to a miserable race, who, through the infatuation of habit, and a mistaken thirst after gain, bring serious disadvantages on their country, and heavy calamities on themselves.

Antrodoco boasts of no relics of antiquity, but has been recognised as *Interocrea*, a station recorded in the ancient itineraries, on the Via Salaria, between Reate and Phalacrina: this last name is still given to the valley which runs to the north of Antrodoco, and serves as a channel to the Velino, from its original source, near Civita Reale, which is looked upon as the representative of the ancient Phalacrina.

This small village, (*vicus modicus*), as Suetonius terms it, was the birth-place of Vespasian, who retained such an affection for it that he frequently resorted to it, as well as to the baths and cold springs of Cutilia, the immoderate use of which was supposed to have hastened his death, as well as that of his son Titus, which

took place at a residence he possessed in these regions.

From Antrodoco I returned to Aquila, and at a subsequent period undertook a journey from this last town to the district of Cicolano, already alluded to in a former chapter, for the execution of which my friends at Aquila afforded me every facility which I could not master at Avezzano.

The way, for some miles, was the same I had followed to Antrodoco; but quitted that road at a small village of a few houses called Sasso, just below a larger, on the mountains to the right, named Civita Tommasa.

As far as this we had used a carriage, but left it to mount some horses, which had been sent from Aquila; on which, under the guidance of a drunken old vagabond, who knew the way, but appeared to forget it purposely, we pursued the rest of our day's journey.

This lay, first, across a pretty smooth valley in which are collected several villages forming a district called Tornimparte: leaving this to our left, we climbed a bare hill, then crossed a second valley, after which the ascent of another

mountain brought us to a point overlooking the entire regions of Cicolano. These, on a first aspect, were extremely beautiful: the singular ramifications of the hills, the fantastic form of their upper extremities, and the magnificent forests that embrace the inferior belts, present a spectacle of freshness and tranquillity which is very attractive.

We descended through these umbrageous recesses, crossed the verdant meadows and the silver streams that refresh them, and at last found ourselves at a little village called Sant' Elpidio, in the heart of the district, about three miles from another called Pace, which was destined to be our residence that night and the following: thither I despatched a messenger with the credentials which were to propitiate my reception; and, after a slight refreshment, examined the antiquities which existed very near our resting-place.

These are supposed to point out the site of the town of Suna, mentioned by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, some similarity to which is still preserved in the name of Alzana, now given to the place in question.

They consist of three rows of polygon walls, one above another, as at Alba; and a very curious monument exists between the first and second. This is a circular subterranean structure, formed of uncemented stones placed longitudinally, each row gradually projecting above the under one, till they bring it to a pyramidical shape, truncated at top, and closed by two semicircular flat slabs joined together, and having a round opening in the centre, above which another stone is placed which closes it.

The entrance into this fabric, which in shape is exactly like a bee-hive, is from one side, at an aperture like a small window, through which the earth which had filled it has been removed: but the interior has not been excavated to a sufficient depth to verify the original height of the building, which however does not appear likely to have been considerable, the diameter at the lowest extremity not measuring above six feet. It is supposed by the natives to have been used as a cistern; but its miniature resemblance to the fabric known by the name of the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenæ, and so ably described by Sir William Gell in

his Argolis, may point it out as adapted to the same purpose, though it has likewise been looked upon as a granary.

After bestowing all due attention on these remains, we cast a much slighter portion of notice on some Roman ruins, also near Sant' Elpidio, or rather Torre di Taglia, the appellation of the district in which these villages are placed; and their comparatively recent origin did not corroborate the notion advanced by some native antiquaries, that its real name was *Torre d'Italia*, as that of one of the most remote aboriginal foundations.

We afterwards proceeded to Pace, to the house of one of the principal proprietors of Cicolano, the extended white front of which showed itself at a great distance, and covered as much ground as the whole of the village put together. Here we were received with the wonted hospitality of these unfrequented regions by the proprietors, two brothers constantly residing there, who vied with each other in offering us more attention and accommodation than we ever could have expected.

The next day we resumed our researches

with the little village of Nesce, supposed to represent the ancient Nursæ mentioned only by Virgil :

*Et te montosæ misere in prœlia Nursæ.*

The native antiquary I have spoken of, Signor Martelli, has not hesitated, notwithstanding this solitary reference to its existence, to point it out as the capital of the Equi, and the residence of Saturn himself.

The remains which it retains, and which undoubtedly attest the existence of a town of some importance, are nevertheless stamped with a character of less remote antiquity in their form and construction. They are situated in a woody glen near the Salto, under another village called Civitella di Nesce, and consist of several ranges of walls, the stones of which are placed in a much less irregular manner than those of the walls of Suna. The most interesting of these form a square enclosure or peribolus, each front of which, with its corresponding angle, is so perfect as to furnish an exact notion of their dimensions.

Several other fragments of walls are to be found in all directions near these ; and, a little



below them, numerous stone sepulchres, of such smooth and exact masonry as to leave no doubt of their Roman origin, even if an abundance of inscriptions, votive altars, shafts and capitals of columns, scattered among them, did not prove it still more clearly. In the midst of these, however, a fragment of Cyclopiian wall shows itself of the most irregular and remote style: and not far from it two subterranean receptacles, like that at Suna, have been found; one has not been excavated, but the lid has been removed, and shows the upper part of the interior construction; the other is filled with water, and used as a cistern. Some fragments of opus reticulatum are also visible, which, with the imperial coins found on the spot, afford indubitable evidence that the town, however remote its first foundation, had received considerable additions from the hands of the Romans at a much later period. Among these relics, by far the most remarkable is a sepulchral inscription, in Latin, engraved on the surface of a rock roughly hewn into the shape of a square pedestal, or altar,

on some steps, and most picturesquely placed in a thicket of evergreens.

Besides the vestiges of antiquity here specified, to which I gained an easy access, the whole course of the Salto is distinguished by similar objects, in addition to bridges of one arch, aqueducts, and the frequent traces of a paved road ; proving the whole district to have been thickly inhabited at a very distant æra.

The house I inhabited at Pace was extremely spacious, and most of the villages of Cicolano are adorned by a similar edifice belonging to the principal proprietor, formerly, and not unfrequently now, dignified by the title of baron. In the present instance, the individual on whom devolved the greatest portion of the territorial inheritance, made it his habitual residence ; but gave up the management of the estate, and the regulation of his domestic establishment, to a younger brother, whose habits of business as a member of the law, which was his profession, fitted him for such an occupation. They were both single, and past the

prime of life; but other brothers were married and established elsewhere, leaving their portions of the patrimony to be administered by the above-mentioned delegate, who regularly transmitted to them the income they produced.

The letter I brought with me was addressed to him, nor could I for some time discover, from his brother's manner and discourse, that he was the eldest.

Similar instances of family union and confidence are of common occurrence in almost all parts of the kingdom, and are frequently still more forcibly exemplified by the spectacle of various married branches, or generations of the same stock, residing with their respective families under the same roof, and collected at the same table in a state of uninterrupted harmony and friendship.

These habits, the most natural, and certainly the most advantageous to the united interests of an extensive family, while they prove the slow advance of the conveniencies, luxuries, and refinements of modern life, which entail so many wants on more civilised races, speak at the

same time favourably for the natural disposition and temper of those who adhere to them with so little effort, and consequently with so much self-satisfaction. I remarked here the same deference and regard manifested by the lower classes towards my hosts as I had noticed at Civita d'Antina, only with perhaps a little less exterior show of submission.

The house was undergoing considerable repairs and additions, which afforded labour, consequently subsistence, to a great proportion of the population; while numbers of the remainder were occupied in the daily avocations attending the cattle, and appertaining to a farm, which a level surface of some extent allowed to be cultivated, and which produced a sufficient quantity of corn, wine, olives, fruit, and various sorts of vegetables of good quality.

It appeared that the beneficent disposition of the landlords provided for the necessities of the poor as well as the laborious; and that all who came in hungry were fed in the hospitable kitchen. These benevolent qualities, I apprehend, were extended beyond the limits of prudence, if I may judge from the

number of individuals I saw every evening, who had evidently partaken too largely of the liquid donations so indiscriminately bestowed as to become the incentives to both idleness and licentiousness.

The temperature of this district is considered milder in winter and cooler in summer than that of Aquila, which may easily be accounted for by the sheltered position of the majority of the villages which compose it, as well as the narrowness of the valleys among which they are placed. The fact is exemplified by the earlier maturity and superior flavour of most of the common fruits, although the snow falls often, and lies long on the ground, during the winter months.

We found at our hosts' hospitable table a very distinguished exception to the usual quality of the daily beverage, in a light and excellent white wine, resembling Rhenish, and manufactured on their property; the common sort being throughout the provinces of Abruzzo boiled to ensure its durability, which operation gives it a peculiar and very unpleasant flavour.

I observed here, what had often struck me before, that the higher classes of proprietors in this, as well as almost every other part of the second Abruzzo, look to the Roman states for all the advantages or returns to be derived from the produce of their estates, and regard the capital of these as their own.

The communication established along the course of the Salto with Rieti, and the proximity of that place to the eternal city, satisfactorily account for this.

It is seldom, therefore, that those who can afford a journey of either pleasure or interest, prefer the Neapolitan to the Roman metropolis; and I could perceive, not only that they consider this last as the channel of all foreign intelligence, but that all their correspondence is carried on in that direction.

The immediate vicinity of the frontier is a great incitement to contraband trade; and I was not surprised to learn that it is prosecuted with great success, notwithstanding the severe regulations adopted by the authorities against it, and the innumerable stations and subaltern agents established to enforce them.

Among the numerous villages that are now comprised in the regions of Cicolano, I cannot omit the mention of Petrella, situated to the north-west, and nearly at the extremity of the district, as the scene of the murder of Count Francesco Cenci, at the instigation of his wife and his daughter Beatrice, whose beauty, crimes, and misfortunes were in themselves sufficient to transmit her name to posterity, had not the pencil of Guido left a still more impressive record of her person.

This village formed part of the extensive and powerful feudal tenure of Mareri, belonging to a family of the same name, which, with many others, probably all originating from Provence, had, after the conquest of the kingdom by Charles of Anjou, subdivided among themselves the territories which had till then constituted the country of the Marsi, and had mostly exchanged their original names for those of the fiefs so lavishly bestowed upon them.

That of Mareri becoming extinct, the property in lapse of time was conferred on that branch of the Colonna family distinguished

by the adjunct of Sciarra, and it belonged to an individual of that race, Marzio, at the period above mentioned; when old Cenci, who was nearly allied by the ties of kindred and friendship to this nobleman, obtained his permission to establish a temporary residence in his baronial castle of Petrella during the season of the autumnal villeggiatur.

The general outline, as well as the catastrophes of this atrocious tragedy is probably well known to most of my readers; but the details of the plot are no less singular than characteristic of the habits and manners of the age that witnessed such a deed, and would probably have never been brought to light, had not the exalted station of the perpetrators, and the conflicting interests which suspended their doom for a considerable space of time, given publicity to facts which have been recorded in a few rare manuscripts.

It should be observed, that the removal of the whole family to this spot, beyond the temporal jurisdiction of the papal government, who were already but too well apprised of the brutal iniquities which for many previous years had



degraded the character of the old man, and rendered him an object of universal reprobation and disgust, was in all probability the event which excited in the criminals the final resolution of destroying him.

Beatrice's advocates on the trial did not fail in their endeavours to prove that her father had selected this remote and solitary residence as best suited to the continuance of that course of ill-treatment and degradation to which he had ever subjected, not only all the persons nearly connected with him, but her in particular; who had, moreover, to apprehend the renewal of the criminal and revolting designs of which she had on previous occasions but too forcible reason to complain.

The wife, with her step-daughter and son, Beatrice and Giacomo, had submitted the execution of a deed, which they represented more in the light of self-preservation than revenge, to a prelate named Monsignor Guerra, who had been their friend and adviser in all their sufferings, and who not only approved, but lent his assistance and direction to the first plan they had formed. This was a deep and

well-combined scheme, which, had it been executed as intended, might have succeeded without the hazard of detection or discovery.

The whole of the family and their domestics were to have been attacked and robbed by one of the numerous hordes of banditti which from time immemorial have infested the frontiers of the Roman and Neapolitan states. The old Count was to have been detained in the hands of the brigands, to answer with his life for the ransom they exacted, and which the rest were to promise to pay on being liberated. This being of considerable amount, and therefore difficult to procure, the tardiness observed in remitting it would have doomed the prisoner to death; an event by no means unfrequent in those days, and not beyond the verge of probability in the present.

But the impossibility of transmitting the plan in time to prepare and train the band for its successful execution, rendered it unavailing, and the Count's destiny was postponed for a short time.

The violence and injustice of his own disposition proved auxiliaries to it, for having

quarrelled with, ill used, and even discharged the keeper of the castle of Petrella, named Olimpio, revenge easily rendered this man a willing instrument to the designs of the Countess and Beatrice; and it was to him, and a hired assassin called Marzio, that the execution of the sanguinary deed was entrusted.

The murder was committed while the victim was asleep in his bed; and the body afterwards thrown from a terrace into the castle-ditch, to induce the belief that an accidental fall had occasioned his death,—an opinion very difficult to be established through an examination of the nature of the wounds that had caused it. As it was, the body never reached the ground, having been caught and entangled in the boughs of an elder-tree growing in the fosse; and there it was found, with the eyes perforated by the branches.

It does not appear that any very strict investigation was then established as to the cause of the accident, and the mangled corse was buried in the parish church of Petrella, where the tomb still exists. The judicial proceedings which were subsequently entered upon

against the culprits commenced in the Neapolitan tribunals, as regarding a crime committed within the pale of their jurisdiction; but the principal instigators of the deed being Roman subjects, they were transferred to the pontifical chamber, and the time occupied in legally establishing the criminality of the perpetrators was considerable. Monsignor Guerra had escaped in the early stages of the business in the disguise of a coal-heaver, and through his instigation the assassin Olimpio, whose criminatory confessions were apprehended, was dispatched by another hireling; which last being apprehended for this murder, his avowals afforded a clew to all that remained undiscovered: and the subsequent deposition of a female of Petrella, to whom Beatrice had secretly given the sheet to wash which bore the bloody proofs of her father's fate, added to the apprehension and final confession of Marzio the second assassin, brought the conviction of the deed too closely home to admit of acquittal. The unshaken firmness and persevering denials of Beatrice, together with her youth, beauty, and previous excellence of character,

strongly combined to excite in many persons a feeling of interest and compassion, which might have been influential in mitigating the severity of the sentence that awaited her. To these efforts were joined those of the many distinguished families united by consanguinity to hers, and the more disguised, but no less efficient instigations of bribery and corruption. Intrigues of a contrary tendency were, however, set on foot by a particular party who had much to gain from the extinction of this affluent family, and the confiscation of their property ; but it is probable that mercy would finally have been extended to her, had not a fresh crime of a similar character been perpetrated at the time when her existence hung upon a thread. This was the murder of the Princess of Santa Croce by her two sons, who stabbed her with their own hands : this second instance of atrocious parricide turned the current of public feeling, and removed all hesitation and tendency to forgiveness from the mind of the reigning Pope, Clement VIII, (Aldobrandini,) who ordered the fatal sentence on the guilty

members of the Cenci family to be executed without delay.

I quitted Cicolano after a short residence of two days, and traced my way back to the Antrodoco road; not exactly along the same line I had followed, but by one nearly parallel, and offering little or no variety in the objects it presented: it joined the above-mentioned track at the tavern and church of Sta. Maria Viatorum, from whence I proceeded to Aquila, to prepare for my final departure from it on the following day.

My intention was to proceed to Teramo, and a straight course over the mountains would have enabled me to reach it in little more than one day; but the state of my health, and the difficulties of the road, though probably exaggerated, deterred me from so doing, and induced me to follow the beaten and circuitous, but more commodious track by Popoli, Chieti, and Pescara. That which I renounced might not have proved devoid of interest, the line of communication running under the roots of Monte Corno (the Gran Sasso), by a village

called Tottea (the only resting-place), and near the springs, and subsequently along the course of the river Vomano.

After descending the hill of Aquila, the road extends in a southern direction along the centre of the high valley, more deserving the name of plain, which runs nearly as far as Popoli. The Aterno, nearer the mountains on the right, runs in a parallel line with it, and the frequent glimpses which are caught of its stream serve to break upon the monotony of the general aspect; an effect which appears owing more to a peculiarity of colouring than the features of the country, which are well defined, and sufficiently varied to produce a contrary impression: the glens that open at a distance in the flanks of the mountains are mostly wooded, and always furnished with substantial villages: numerous streams flow from these into the Aterno, and many parts are well cultivated; but the whole is tinted with a wintry and ungenial atmosphere.

This tract of land was once almost exclusively adapted to the cultivation of saffron, which produce formed, some time back, one of

the principal and most lucrative exports of the province. Competition from other parts of Europe, and various causes, many of them local, have greatly injured this branch of agriculture, which, however, is still carried on on the stony banks of the higher portion of the valley of Aquila, which (contrary to my expectations) are much more favourable to the growth and quality of that plant than the level moist meadows adjoining the river.

One of the broad tratturos, or cattle-paths, runs in the same line with the high-road to Aquila; and I was so fortunate as to see it occupied by a very extended line of flocks, which slowly passed by the carriage for the space of a mile or more. The word 'fortunate,' adapted to such a spectacle, may excite a smile in my readers; but I own that I never beheld one of these numerous animal congregations plodding across the flats of Capitanata, or the valleys of Abruzzo, as far as the eye can reach, without experiencing a sensation of a novel and exciting kind, nearly allied to that of enjoyment, but which I shall not attempt to account for.



One shepherd heads each division of cattle, of which he has the peculiar care and direction: armed with his crook, he walks some paces in advance of his flock, followed by an old ram termed *il manso*; which word, meaning tame or instructed, has undoubtedly a more apposite signification than that of our bell-wether, though he is, as well as ours, furnished with a large deep-toned bell.

The sheep march in files of about twelve in each; and every battalion, if I may so call it, is attended by six or eight dogs, according to its number: these accompany the herd, walking at the head, middle, and rear of each flank.

The beauty and docility of these animals, which are usually white, has often been described, and their demeanour is gentle as long as the objects of their solicitude are unmolested; but at night they are so savage, that it would be dangerous to approach the fold they guard.

The goats, which bear a very small proportion to the sheep, and are in general black, wind up the array, and evince their superior

intelligence by lying down whenever a temporary halt takes place.

The cows and mares travel in separate bodies.

A certain number of these flocks, commonly those belonging to the same proprietor, are under the immediate management and inspection of an agent, entitled *fattore*, who accompanies them on horseback, armed with a musket, and better clad than the shepherds, who, both in summer and winter, wear the large sheep-skin jacket, and are in other respects provided with substantial though homely attire, and good strong shoes.

These Fattores are all natives of Abruzzo, an Apulian never having been known to undertake the profession: the former, through particular habits and the repeated experience of years, are looked upon as so peculiarly fitted for the care required by cattle, and indeed animals of all kinds, that all the helpers in the stables of the capital are natives of these provinces, or of the adjoining county of Molise.

In addition to these qualifications, they are esteemed an abstemious and honest race.

When following the calling of shepherds,

and occupied, as I saw them, in the duties of their charge in travelling, their countenances are almost invariably marked by the same expression, which combines mildness and sagacity with immovable gravity, and, it is painful to add, a look of deep-seated sadness; the whole caravan, animal as well as human, exhibiting, at least while engaged in one of those tedious peregrinations, a general appearance of suffering and depression, distinguishable in every individual that composes it.

The shepherd that opens the march, the independent manso, jingling his brazen bell, the flocks that follow, the dogs that watch over their security, and even the Fattore who directs the procession, all appear to be plodding through a wearisome existence of monotony and toil.

The extreme slowness of their progress, the downcast expression of every head and eye, and, above all, the indications of exhaustion and fatigue which are but too perceptible after a journey of more than a month's duration, may well account for this impression.

The animals suffer greatly from heat until they reach their summer dwelling, and full as much from lameness, which, when it has reached a certain pitch, becomes the signal for destruction. I saw a mule bearing no other load than the skins of those that had perished in this manner.

Several other beasts of burden follow the rear of the herds, laden with the various articles necessary for them and their guardians during their protracted march: these consist in the nets and poles requisite to pen the folds at night, the coarse cloth tents for the use of the shepherds, and a limited stock of utensils for milking, and boiling the produce of the flock. Among these are to be noticed some portable jointed seats of very ingenious though simple construction, composed of the stems of the giant fennel, a substance remarkable for its light and compact texture.

The cattle which I thus met near Aquila were within two days' journey of their resting-place, which is generally in some of the valleys placed on the lower flanks of the mountain

ridges, but sufficiently elevated above the larger plains to afford fresh and abundant herbage and a cooler temperature.

The duration of their abode in these regions is regulated by the rapid or slow progression of the summer season; in the course of which they shift their quarters, as the heat increases, till they reach the highest spots, which are the last divested of the deep snows in which they have been buried during three-quarters of the year.

Here large tracts of the finest pasture, rills of the coldest and purest water, and shady woods of considerable extension, are occupied by them during the remainder of the fine weather, and afford the *ne plus ultra* of enjoyment allotted to an existence of such restricted variety. A visit to those retreats at that period would undoubtedly exhibit a spectacle of far different interest and effect from that which I have endeavoured to describe, and stamped with a character which no other part of Europe (except some portions of Spain) is likely to present.

Had I remained later in these provinces, I should undoubtedly have encountered all the

inconveniences which must attend a similar excursion to have obtained the sight, and secured the recollection, of an encampment of this nature in all its most detailed features.

The upper regions, and most inaccessible recesses of the mountains which cover almost the whole surface of the second Abruzzo Ultra, are the scenes which nature appears to have purposely formed for, and appropriated to, the summer abode of these stupendous flocks. In Abruzzo Citra, or the province of Chieti, as it is likewise termed, no similar pastures exist, though it is not deficient in hilly tracts; and few are to be found in the division of Abruzzo Ultra prima, though the eastern flank and extended ramifications of the king of mountains, the Gran Sasso, are included within its precincts.

The paths which the herds follow in their annual migrations to and from Abruzzo are wide tracks marked out on the turf, the integrity of which is attended to with great assiduity. Under the generic name of Tratturo delle pecore, they all commence in the province of Capitanata or Puglia piana, and for

some time run parallel with each other till they reach the adjoining province of Molise, when some branch off to the higher districts of this region, which in some of its mountains, especially the Matese, affords a limited portion of summer pasture.

Continuing in a line with the shore of the Adriatic, the other cattle-paths occasionally intersect one another, and finally extend their various veins into Abruzzo Ultra, as above described.

This custom is involved in questions of such vital importance to the proprietors and inhabitants of these provinces, that one can scarcely wonder that it has existed, with very slight changes or modifications, ever since the Roman æra, and has at different periods called forth the attention of the most enlightened sovereigns and statesmen.

Alphonso of Aragon was, however, the first who, by establishing irrevocable laws and regulations as to the mode in which it was to be prosecuted, ensured a considerable revenue to the crown, and at the same time maintained the rights and advantages of the flock-holders.

From that epoch, all the lands granted to Apulians, under Censos or Emphitensis to the sovereign, were charged with the express condition of being let out, during the winter season, for the use of the Abruzzese possessors of cattle.

This being enforced as a law, the former found it a matter of consequence, if not of necessity to their interests, to become likewise proprietors of flocks, in order that, by a system of reciprocity, their herds might join those of Abruzzo in their summer migration, and participate in the benefits which the peculiar topography of that province only could afford to them.

It certainly is a circumstance worthy of notice that the climate and geological formation of two districts so nearly contiguous, and situated on the same line of coast, should differ so essentially as to render one totally unfit to support large flocks of cattle during the summer, while the other is disqualified for maintaining them during the opposite season.

It should be noticed, that the measures established by Alphonso of Aragon were entirely



favourable to the Abruzzese proprietor, who though he be the unconstrained and direct owner of his land, and not a lessee of the crown, can turn it to no other advantage than the pasturage obtained in the summer months; while the Apulian plains are fertile enough, and sufficiently favoured by climate, to repay the slight labour of various modes of cultivation.

During the French occupation of the kingdom, a more enlarged and less partial system of policy having prevailed, the restrictions were removed from the Apulians, and being thereby empowered to submit the culture of their land to what species of produce they preferred, much of it was ploughed and adapted to raising corn and cotton,—commodities which for a time proved a source of considerable gain, but only as long as the freshness of fertility inherent in an untilled soil, and the facility of disposing of the produce without competition, continued to exist. Time, and the close of the Continental war brought both these to a termination; and it was then discovered that while the Abruzzese landholder, who had no resource but his flocks,

was ruined by the abrogation of the old system, the Apulian proprietor had only gained a temporary advantage over his neighbour ; and that a renewal of the anomalous and antiquated laws might, after all, restore a fairer balance between them.

Shortly after his return from Sicily, King Ferdinand I. instituted a committee, who, after taking the complaints of the Abruzzese into consideration, and maturely weighing them against the unlimited prerogatives granted to the Apulians, might frame some regulations which might equitably secure the welfare of both.

It is difficult to decide whether this result has been obtained by the promulgation of a royal decree which restored the ancient law to very nearly its original form, granting to the Apulians the right of cultivating one-third of their crown leases in any manner they think fit, but enforcing the obligation of allotting the remainder to the winter occupation of the cattle.

This has opened to the Abruzzese the stream of their former prosperity ; but the flocks,

which had suffered considerable diminution from the causes above specified, have never been, and probably never will be, restored to their original numbers.

The Apulians have entirely ceased to have any share in the possession of cattle; and although they have the power of cultivating at their own option one-third of their property, and are certain of letting the remainder during the winter, the rents are so fallen, from the reduction of the flocks, that they find themselves upon the whole the only sufferers. Before the year 1800, the amount of sheep alone that travelled from Apulia to Abruzzo, and back again, was estimated at more than a million; but is now reckoned little more than half, of which about sixty thousand resort to the Roman coast for winter dwelling: a small quantity likewise remain in the sheltered parts of Abruzzo; these are called *pagliarde*, and are killed for butcher's meat, or their produce used for the purposes of rural economy.

It is calculated that about five thousand individuals obtain a subsistence by attending the cattle.

The plain of Aquila, for it is too wide to deserve the name of valley, is, as I have before observed, very well peopled; on both sides of the road numerous villages and farm-houses show themselves, and corroborate this appearance. The soil is evidently poor and unfertile, though abundantly irrigated by streams mostly flowing from the left; that is, from the heights intervening between the base of the Gran Sasso and the flatter district which I traversed; Intervera, Paganico, Pienza, Barisciano, and many other large villages, appear on that side. On the right stand those of Ocre, that of Bagni, the supposed seat of Furconium, and Fossa, the ancient Aveja. Under this last the river Aterno enters a parallel and narrow glen, also thickly studded with villages; and, winding through it, finds its way to the valley of Solmona, which I shall hereafter describe.

The cultivation is chiefly wheat, but much hay is made near the stream: fine walnut-trees, and an innumerable quantity of almond-trees, grow all over this region, but their isolated station adds no beauty to it.

I stopped to bait at a little village called

Poggio Picenza, the only one through which the road is conducted, and from which, looking back towards Aquila, a fine prospect of the whole plain is displayed.

After this, a long ascent brings one to another much more elevated flat, the country and all its appendages losing much in its outward aspect by this change. This is nevertheless well peopled, for Civita Retenga and Navelli are almost cities.

About five miles to the east of the former is seen the town of Capistrano, containing little more than two thousand inhabitants. It once belonged to the Grand-ducal family of Medici, and, after having passed through the possession of several princes of that house, finally returned to that of Bourbon, occupying the Neapolitan throne.

It would, however, have but little claim to the notice of the traveller or historian, had it not given birth to one of those singular personages, which enthusiasm, or perhaps fanaticism, rendered not uncommon in the age that produced him. Giovanni, whose family or surname has been lost in the adjunct of Ca,

pistrano, by which he has ever been designated, was born in that town in the year 1385, and distinguished himself through life as much by his erudition, as by his zeal and fervour in combating the germs of the various heresies that preceded the final reformation of the Roman church.

His learning and eloquence obtained for him employment from several popes in various councils, and were likewise forcibly opposed to the sects which were forming in Bohemia, Silesia, and Hungary. He ended a long and active life of indefatigable religious labour by preaching a crusade against the Turks, and raising a considerable army, which he led in person against them, joined to the forces commanded by the celebrated Huniades; the successful efforts of which compelled the infidels to raise the siege of Belgrade in 1456.

In his account of that memorable action, addressed to the pope and the emperor, he claimed the whole merit of the military deed; which induced Æneas Silvius, his contemporary, to observe that he who could spurn the pomps of the world, and fly from its riches

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and allurements, was not proof against its glories.

He died three months after this exploit, at Villach in Carinthia; and, two centuries afterwards, his name was first admitted to the honours of beatification, and subsequently to a still more exalted rank in the Catholic hierarchy, having been canonized by Alexander VIII. at the intercession of the Franciscan order, to which he had belonged.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Popoli.—The river Aterno.—Family of Cantelmo.—Tocco.  
—Monastery of San Clemente at Casauria.—Mountain  
ranges.—Pescara.—The ancient Aternum.—Victoria Co-  
lonna.—Death of Sforza.—Ortona.—The Gran Sasso.—  
The Salino.—Atri.—Teramo.—Antonio Campano.—D.  
Melchior Delfico and his nephew.—Ascent of the Gran  
Sasso.—Valle Siciliana.—Castelli.—The Republic of  
Senarica.*

AT the termination of the cheerless flat which we had reached, the road begins to descend in a zigzag course along the openings which give admittance to the vale of Solmona. The construction of this portion of the road alone, which may, in its windings, measure three miles in extent, has cost more than the whole of the remaining twenty-two miles to Aquila; being in many parts supported by large masses of masonry, arches, platforms, and



buttresses. The view from it southwards somewhat compensates the tediousness of the declivity, and the slowness of progress which it necessitates.

The town of Popoli shows itself at the base of the mountain; and the whole extent of the valley, richly cultivated, abundantly watered, and adorned with substantial villages, partly shaded by forest scenery, stretches under one's feet in an expanse of about thirteen miles in length, and from four to eight in breadth.

At the foot of the hill, close to the bridge which forms the entrance into the town of Popoli, a very abundant fountain has been erected, the design and sculpture of which display much taste and skill. This is fed by the various rivulets which run from the lateral ravines, and add in this spot their supplies to the course of the Aterno, already enriched and enlarged by those of the numerous rivers which irrigate the vale of Solmona, and fall into it. These are, the Gizio, rising at the southern extremity, which receives the smaller Vella just below Solmona, and afterwards the Sagittario, a copious mountain stream. About a mile to the south of

Popoli another very abundant brook, without a name, springs from some rocks close to the road-side, and mixes with the Aterno within the space of a few hundred yards ; while, in the town itself, a much more considerable addition is poured into it by a river of equal size, the source of which is only about a mile distant, under the range of hills which form the northern boundary of the plain. This, I was assured by some peasants, is the real Pescara, a name which is given to the Aterno at Popoli, and which it preserves in its final course to the Adriatic. It is not surprising, therefore, if, under the above-mentioned bridge, it offers the appearance of a deep, rapid, and powerful river flowing in sullen majesty under dark willows between two sedgy banks.

Popoli contains about four thousand inhabitants, and presents that aspect of industry and activity which gains upon the partiality of a traveller at first sight. This is probably owing to its position as a thoroughfare, not only between Solmona and Aquila, but likewise between those two cities and Chieti, the capital of the adjoining province, and the shores and ports

of the Adriatic sea. It has a good square and some large houses, among which must be noticed a large and now dilapidated mansion, of handsome architecture, once the residence of the family of Cantelmo, dukes of Popoli, and the most opulent and influential in the province. It is now extinct, having merged into that of Tocco, princes of Montemiletto, through the female line. But this last, as well as all the descendants of the heiress in whom it terminated, have considered it a distinction to add the name of Cantelmo to their own with the adjunct of *Stuart*, the authority for doing which I was at some pains to discover.

It appears that the original stock of Cantelmo, who came from Provence with Charles of Anjou, claimed consanguinity with the kings of Scotland; and succeeded, under our Charles II. in obtaining from that monarch a recognition of the connexion, and his full sanction to bear the name.

In other respects the town offers nothing remarkable, except its cheerful situation, the pastoral transalpine character of its environs, the fine view of the valley which it commands, and

a singular low circular tower, without either door or window, standing at its western extremity, near another bridge over the Aterno. No one could give me any account of this fabric; except that it was *casa antica*; nor could I obtain a more satisfactory explanation of the words "Resta, Resta," deeply engraven in large characters on a square stone inserted into the surface of the exterior wall, at about half its height from the ground.

I found a better inn at Popoli than any I had met with since my departure from the capital, that at Aquila excepted; and, among a number of well-dressed dishes, I had an opportunity of judging of the variety and excellence of the fish supplied by the streams above described, among which, nevertheless, its own Pescara holds the first rank.

On leaving Popoli for the shores of the sea, this stream is not recrossed; but the road branches off from the centre of the town, and immediately joins its banks, within a very short distance of which it runs for the rest of the day's journey. The barren and very steep ridge of rocks which rises on either side, leaving

barely space for the track and the Pescara, points out some violent convulsion of nature as the only means by which it could penetrate through so contracted a ravine.\* This, however, widens by degrees, offering an agreeable landscape, with verdant meadows by the water-side, and a flourishing state of cultivation, divided into small compartments shaded by many fine trees. A small brook, running from a village called Bussi to the north, here mingles with the main stream.

About four miles farther, on a high cliff overhanging the road, stands the little town of Tocco, in a commanding and picturesque situation, with a carriage road to it, branching off up a steep hill. This place contains about three thousand inhabitants, and abounds with springs;

\* The space occupied by the valley of Solmona was, according to some naturalists, a lake, the contents of which forced themselves, through the narrow defile here alluded to, into the wider plains that border the Adriatic. The rocks that border the pass are volcanic, and the gorge is moreover remarkable for a periodical current of air that alternates its direction every fifteen hours, from east to west, with great regularity, beginning below Tocco towards Popoli, and *vice versa*. The pass bears the name of *Intermonti*.

which fertilize the elevated platform on which it rests, so as to copiously provide it with all the necessities and even luxuries of life. The natives are considered industrious and enterprising, and the community in a flourishing condition.

After this, another stream, named Orta, throws itself into the Pescara, from a glen on the right. We crossed its wide stony bed, bearing all the marks of the devastations it commits in the winter, which render the assistance of a bridge, now in a state of construction, highly necessary. This brook, which has a bitter bituminous taste, rises in the mountains of Majella; and, after receiving another, called Ofente, it flows under the town of Caramanico in its way to the plain.

About a mile before this spot, not far removed from the opposite bank of the river, stand the ruins of a monastery, which, for extent of territory and jurisdiction, and consequently for affluence and power, ranked among the most distinguished of the many sanctuaries which existed in this portion of Italy.

It had been dedicated to the Holy Trinity,

but was more generally known by the name of San Clemente, having been founded for the express purpose of receiving the body of that pope, who was the fourth in succession from St. Peter himself.

The Emperor Louis II. obtained these venerated relics from Adrian II. in the year 866; and, having ordered them to be removed from Rome, assisted in person at the ceremony which illustrated their deposition in this spot. This was attended with all the pomp and solemnity that could render it impressive; and, if we are to believe the chronicles, was ennobled by no scanty accompaniment of miracles and prodigies.

The river Pescara, dividing in two branches, formed an island of considerable extent: the amenity of its position and the fertility of its soil appear to have struck the emperor as conferring upon it the most appropriate attributes for such an establishment. It was named Casa Aurea, which was soon corrupted to Casauria, an appellation which the convent and the whole of the surrounding possessions retained to a very late period. The physical changes occasion-

ed by earthquakes and the operation of time have restored the course of the river to a single stream, and the island no longer exists : but the remains of the church, and of part of the monastery, are to be seen in their original position, preserving sufficient vestiges of grandeur to attest the magnificence of the original building ; while a fine pulpit, or ambone, of sculptured marble,—a candelabrum of similar workmanship,—a basso-rilievo on the exterior façade, representing the translation of the bones of St. Clement,—and the brazen gates, which, like those at Monte Cassino, are inscribed with the names of the possessions belonging to the community, are still in existence.

One of its monks, at the end of the twelfth century, wrote a detailed account of its institutions, and a subsequent chronicle of the events which particularly regarded it. This document, which was found in the Royal Library at Paris, has been considered of sufficient historical importance to have caused its publication successively by Duchesne, Ughelli, and finally Muratori, who, with that minute spirit of investigation which characterizes all his re-



searches, has enriched it with some valuable commentaries, and adorned it with the engraving of the above-mentioned bas relief, which, if it does not establish a very favourable idea of sculpture in the year 866, is not deficient in attraction to those who make the history of the dark and middle ages their peculiar study.

The names of all the personages represented in sculpture are engraved over their heads, and the speeches that issue from their mouths are expressed in poetical numbers: one of these records the locality as *Insula Piscaria, paradisi floridus hortus*.

I never could obtain any satisfactory information as to the period of the suppression of this community; but am led to imagine, from collateral circumstances, that it occurred before the commencement of the seventeenth century; since which what remains of its original tenure is held in commendam.

On looking back from this plain to the mountain ranges which occupy the central portions of Abruzzo, their aspect undergoes a very material alteration. The whole line of the gloomy Morrone, forming the eastern flank

of the valley of Solmona, is visible, as far as its point of junction with the higher chain of Majella, the extremity of which runs in a diagonal line towards the sea-shore, assuming at the same time a much more distinct and isolated form. I could observe, on the other side of the river, the same appearance in the high ridge to the east of Aquila; while Monte Corno, though still towering in supereminent majesty above the rest, loses much of the peculiarity of shape which has given it the name it bears.

All this portion of the Apennines, the highest of their whole extent, gradually sinks, and finally subsides into a comparatively level space, which stretches for at least ten miles to the edge of the Adriatic; which tract, from the quality of its soil, and the milder temperature it enjoys, is suited to the various species of cultivation which distinguish the most fertile districts of Italy. This was already observable below the Orta, where the road after traversing an uncultivated portion of forest scenery, diversified by large blocks of grey rock, reaches a broader platform less favoured by picturesque details, but gifted with a much richer

cultivation. The fruit-trees of all sorts were loaded with their different produce in such luxuriant clusters, and of such considerable dimensions, as to speak most forcibly in favour of the change of climate; the effects of which were likewise visible in the advanced maturity which they exhibited. Soon after this, the river is crossed at a ferry, and the road carried, for no very ostensible motive, on its left bank for the space of three miles.\*

Here we stopped to bait at a tavern, called, from its position, *Mezza Scafa*; from which spot a horse-road branches off to the small town of *Alanno*, three miles distant.

The next ferry, which replaces the traveller on the south side of the Pescara, is situated in the widest part of the plain, entirely cultivated with wheat, and affording but an uninteresting prospect, though the city of *Chieti* shows itself to considerable advantage on a high ridge to the right.

\* The cause was a change in the original course of the river; this has now (1835) been restored to its ancient line, and embanked. The high-road is no longer carried across it, but keeps to the right shore all the way to Pescara.

On the left is seen the village of Rosciano, and beyond it several towns and habitations scattered over a tract of land, which, though not absolutely flat, presents at that distance too unvaried and colourless a surface to be grateful to the eye. The ferry-boats of the Pescara are remarkably well constructed, and afford every facility for entrance and exit which can be required, displaying, in these particulars, a very forcible contrast with the crazy and awkward vessels adapted to similar purposes in the vicinity of the capital, and in the southern provinces.

About eighteen miles from Popoli, and seven from Pescara, a stone pillar, erected at a break in the road to the right, indicates that it leads to Chieti: we passed it, keeping a straight direction towards the sea, through a clayey soil, which assumes a very peculiar character from being broken into numerous narrow and very deep ravines, rendering bridges of one arch a matter of frequent and absolute necessity. At the bottom of these, a turbid and scanty rill indolently works its way to the Pescara, which flows now in a broad, smooth, and

stately stream in a north-east direction towards the sea.

As we approached the shore, the temperature was much hotter, and we saw reapers employed at their work ; while in the plain of Aquila, on the preceding day, the hay was barely fit for the scythe. The Adriatic, which we were fast approaching, and which might have relieved the dullness of the prospect, is not visible, in consequence of the extreme flatness of the intervening surface, till within a mile of the town of Pescara itself ; but a low range of hills on the left of the river, running back from the shore, and covered with villas, woods, and cultivation, present an agreeable picture, as well as a contrast to the general view. Among them is situated a village called Castellamare, which, like its more celebrated namesake in the vicinity of Naples, is much frequented in the summer for the convenience of sea-bathing, and the benefit of a cool and healthy air.

Except the steeple of its church, no part of Pescara is visible from the exterior of the fortifications, which inclose it in a perfect

square, parallel to the river on one side, and to the sea on the other. These are as strong as the situation and the rules of art could make them in the time of Charles V, the date of their completion.

The river itself, or at least that part of it which adjoins the town, runs within the line of the outworks; and an inner gate opens from the quay to the inhabited part just facing the ferry, which crosses the Pescara, and unites the road from Popoli to that of the Roman frontier. As high as this point the stream is navigable, and affords safe anchorage to vessels of small tonnage; twenty of which, chiefly from the inferior harbours on the Adriatic coast, were moored near the quay. The mouth of the river is nearly a mile farther, and is marked by a small flat island, leaving only one side open as a channel, which, from its shallowness and tortuous shape, renders the navigation somewhat difficult.

Pescara would undoubtedly never have claimed the appellation of a town, were it not for its fortifications, and the addition of a garrison of about two hundred men to the four hundred

which form its population. These are distributed in small houses of mean but uniform construction, bordering wide and straight streets laid out on a regular plan, but bearing the most desolate aspect of poverty and depopulation. The air is considered so unhealthy, that this circumstance alone renders a residence at Pescara an object of terror to all military men.

I found a miserable inn, devoid of the slight necessities which I had hitherto met with, even in places proverbial for such deficiencies. A general scarcity of vegetables, milk, and even fish, wine of the worst quality, and water barely drinkable, (the Pescara furnishing the only supply,) rendered half a day's sojourn in so dull and gloomy a spot a matter of considerable irksomeness ; but the distance to Giulia Nuova, the nearest resting-place, was too great, added to the increased heat of the weather, to allow me to proceed farther.

The inmates of the inn, chiefly females, were however courteous and attentive ; a disposition which shone through the languid listlessness which peculiarly marks the habits and manner

of all persons who have repeatedly suffered from malaria fevers, in the same degree as the faded remains of a brilliant complexion could still be traced through the clayey hue imparted by that disease. I had more than once previously remarked the regularity of feature, and cast of expression, which frequently distinguish the populations most exposed, from their local situation, to the ravages of this scourge; and this observation, renewed and corroborated at Pescara, added painfully to the melancholy impression which an intercourse, however transient, with the sufferers, is but too apt to produce.

In the days of the Roman republic this estuary was illustrated by the existence of a considerable town, which, from it, had been named Aternum, and entirely covered the site of the modern Pescara; with this difference, that it likewise extended to the opposite bank of the river, to which it was united by a bridge. It belonged to the Frentani, occupying the district to the south-east, and formed indeed their boundary with the neighbouring Vestini. Several tombs and vestiges of ancient build-



ings have been found in the immediate vicinity, and attest the identity of Aternum ; which has likewise been proved by inscriptions, many of which are preserved and copied.

It retained its original appellation in the infancy of Christianity, when it was very early dignified with an episcopal see. Its present name was introduced by the Lombards in its original form of *Piscaria*, probably from its maritime situation ; which ought to have secured to it at a more remote period the station which it seems to have attained much later, when, under a military point of view, as a stronghold and one of the keys of the kingdom, it attracted the notice of the government. It then became a fortress, and, as such, was frequently besieged and taken ; but can scarcely be said to have gained any celebrity but that of giving its title to one of the most renowned generals of Charles V., Ferrante Francesio d'Avolos, whose limited course of existence was crowned by every distinction belonging to military glory.

His widow, the celebrated Vittoria Colonna, derived, perhaps, as much renown from her

union with so famed a warrior, as from those virtues, talents, and powers, which called forth for nearly half a century the homage of every individual who advanced any pretensions to learning and genius. For many successive years all Italy re-echoed with the praise of her who could inspire the pen of Ariosto with these well-known lines :

Sceglieronne una, e sceglerolla tale  
Che superato avrà l'invidia in modo  
Che nessun' altra potrà aver a male  
Se l'altre taccio, e se lei sola lodo.

The river itself had, more than a century before this, (in 1423,) acquired a mournful celebrity through the death of Muzio Attendolo, better known by the appellation of Sforza, which, though originally a nickname, descended to his children with the inheritance of his glories.

After having successfully forded the Pescara just below the spot where the present ferry exists, and where it appears that a bridge then stood, he attempted the same passage in order to rally the courage of his cavalry which had remained on the opposite bank ; when having deviated from the line he had first followed,

to extend a helping hand to one of his pages who was in danger of being drowned, the hind-legs of his charger failed him, and, sinking in the soft and deeper bed of the river, the weight of his armour debarred him from even an effort to avert his fate.

Paulus Jovius, in his life of that warrior, gives an impressive account of this event, adding, that his iron-girt hand was seen twice above the billows, as they rolled the horse and rider towards the Adriatic, from whose depths neither were ever recovered.

From Pescara a tolerable carriage-road runs along the shore southwards to Francavilla and Ortona, both small sea-ports. The last, now an episcopal see, whose ancient name has suffered no change, was the principal port of the Frentani, and derived considerable importance from this circumstance, as well as from being the seat of various manufactures connected with the maritime profession, including ship-building. It still has a few insignificant remains of antiquity; but its port, through a succession of physical alterations, has lost all its advantages.

This place was comprised in the territorial possessions settled by Charles V. on his natural daughter Margaret, on her marriage with Alessandro di Medici, and afterwards carried by her into the Farnese family. She restored some temporary consequence to Ortona, by conferring upon it the title of capital of these states, and selecting it for her winter residence.

I was assured that in the summer, when the rivers are low and easily fordable, it is possible to proceed along the coast from Ortona as far as Il Vasto, the ancient Histonium. This was likewise a city of the Frentani, whose domains extended a considerable way along the seashore; and it was as much superior in population and magnitude to Ortona, as the present town of Il Vasto is to the modern representative of this last. This track would bring the traveller nearly to the confines of Abruzzo, divided by the river Trigno from the province of Molise or Campobasso.

My departure from Pescara was attended with indescribable feelings of relief and satisfaction. I quitted it by the ferry above mentioned, which at a very early morning hour was

crowded by groups of country folks of both sexes, bearing the animal and vegetable produce of their districts to Pescara itself, and the small towns which lie on the southern bank of the river; and which, from this circumstance, I judged to be less favoured by fertility of soil, or individual industry and labour.

The road is excellent and perfectly level, running for nearly three miles under a pleasant range of olive-clad hills, thickly studded with small villages, farm-houses, and villas in agreeable situations. Among these is placed Castellamare, which I have already mentioned, and another called S<sup>ta</sup> Maria del Foco, enjoying an equally salubrious air.

The base of this ridge is well cultivated, principally as garden-ground, *orti*, watered by several inconsiderable springs which originate on the spot, and stagnate on the soil, from the physical impossibility of discharging themselves in the sea; which, though only a few hundred yards distant, is inaccessible from a sand-bank covered with pines, which likewise renders it invisible from the road that runs parallel with it.

The myrtle, cistus, and other plants that love the shore, grow abundantly in this region, denoting the influence of a much milder climate.

This is succeeded by another chain of hills, of a very different formation, being composed of a poor clay, crumbling as usual into fissures, and but imperfectly clothed with scanty vegetation. Beyond it, the group which forms the Gran Sasso assumes an interesting aspect as one travels along and round its roots.

In my subsequent journey to Solmona, I observed that the highest peak of the Gran Sasso, which alone is visible from that spot, appears quite isolated. From Aquila a second pinnacle is discernible, nearly equal to the first in elevation. Descended from the road to Chieti or Pescara, these two seem to touch each other ; but, from the sea-shore, a considerable space extends between them, with intermediate points. Though, perhaps, the first-mentioned aspect is the most striking, this last view, being less remote, gives a more perfect insight to the precipitous and rugged recesses it contains, and exemplifies in a more forcible manner the austere character of its form.

The first river to be crossed after the Pescara is the Salino, retaining its ancient denomination: it is a narrow and turbid stream, flowing in a broad bed of clay, and, like most others of the same quality, rather diminishes in rapidity as it approaches the sea, which now becomes, and continues to be, visible from the road during the remainder of the day's journey, in consequence of the lowness of the intervening sand-bank.

The distance from the Salinus to the Aternus, or Pescara, coincides with that marked in the ancient itineraries between this last and a spot called *ad Salinos*, from a large establishment for the collecting and manufacturing of salt which existed there. Festus, indeed, seems to indicate that the celebrated Via Salaria derived its appellation from this circumstance: "*Salaria Via est appellata, quia per eam Salini sal à mari deferebant.*"

The ancient city of Angulus, one of the four mentioned by Pliny as belonging to the Vestini, has been recognised (probably from some analogy in the names) in Cività Sant' Angelo, a little town of about four thousand inhabitants,

which we soon discovered to the left, on a small eminence some way inland ; previous to this, another smaller, called Monte Silvano, had showed itself ; and, beyond it, one still less considerable, named Silvi.

After crossing the little river Piomba—the ancient *Matrinus*, and another lesser stream, we could descry, about five miles inland, the city of Atri, situated on a commanding elevation, in a country little favoured by form or fertility.

Under the names of *Hatria*, *Atria*, or *Adria*, this town constituted the capital of the *Adriani*, occupying a subdivision of the district known by the appellation of *Picenum*.

Of its size and importance in ancient times some idea may be formed, not only from the remains which it still exhibits, and the circumstance of its having a port, or naval station, at the mouth of the river Piomba, now *Matrinus* ; but likewise from the remoteness of its origin, as denoted by the curious coins found within its precincts, and in its immediate vicinity. The peculiarities of form and execution which stamp these relics, and their Etruscan legend, have ranked them as anterior to those of *Todi*,



Gubbio, and Veletri ; and the native antiquaries have not hesitated, from these and other circumstances, to ascribe to this place the honour of having given its name to the sea that bathes its shores, affirming that the other Adria, beyond the Po, in the Venetian territory, was only a colony derived from this city.

I shall not venture to discuss so momentous a question, or decide which of these gave birth to the Emperor Hadrian ; but limit my observations to the singular subterranean excavations which exist near Atri, forming a series of chambers, distributed with such regularity as to authorize the notion that they were designed for some particular object, such as prisons or magazines.

Their peculiarities have suggested the idea that they are of more remote construction than the Lathomix at Syracuse, which they much resemble, and the celebrated prisons of Servius Tullius at Rome ; while some antiquaries have not hesitated to assert that the word *Atrium* may have originated from these excavations, originally invented by the natives of this city.

These, with some fragments of walls, remains of baths, and other public edifices, constitute the vestiges of antiquity which are to be noticed at Atri; to which may be added a number of well-preserved Latin inscriptions, one of which records the worship of Jupiter Doliænus, whose title was derived from a town in Dalmatia.

The modern city is an episcopal see, containing about four thousand inhabitants, and confers the dignity of Duke on the illustrious family of Acquaviva, who boast of having been the first in the rank of subjects to whom such a title was granted by King Ladislas, towards the end of the fourteenth century.

About twelve miles inland, in the same line as Atri, stands Cività di Penne, one of the principal towns of Abruzzo, and still more considerable in antiquity under the name of Pinna, belonging to the Vestini.

It retains some antique fragments, but of no great importance or interest. A diramation of the Via Salaria was conducted to it from Castrum Novum (now Giulia Nuova) near the sea, through Adria, and afterwards returned

back to the coast near the river Salinus, joining the main branch at the mouth of the river Aternus.

We stopped to bait at one of the few habitations that exist on the sea-shore. This, like all the rest, was constructed of mud mixed with straw, and hardened in the sun ; but, notwithstanding the humbleness of its exterior appearance, we found it contained a good stable and kitchen, and a room cleaner and better furnished than many others we had met with in the large towns of Abruzzo. The little town of Montepagano is seen at a short distance inland from this spot.

After quitting this our resting-place, we had to cross, that is, to ford, four miles farther, the Vomano, which retains its ancient name, and is considered one of the most considerable, and by far the most formidable, among the rivers of these regions.

It rises in the higher valleys of Monte Corno, and receives, during a course of forty miles, many other streams and mountain torrents, which contribute during the rainy season, or the melting of the snows, to increase the ra-

vages which it commits, as well as the obstacles it opposes in the way of travellers.

This day's journey, as may be inferred from the above description, was somewhat tedious ; as nothing could be more uninteresting than the general features of the country, or more monotonous than the sea-view from a flat and barren bank.

The aspect of the town of Giulia Nuova, rising on a considerable eminence at no great distance from the shore, and showing its towers and cupolas above a rich inclosure of trees and cultivation, proved a most agreeable relief to the eye ; but, previous to reaching it, the line of our progress was changed by a sudden turn to the left, not along, but into the wide bed of the river Tordino, the only practicable road which, as we had been informed, could allow of our approach to Teramo.

This channel, widened to the extent of more than half a mile by the several small rills into which the river is subdivided, was the course we followed for more than two hours, over the rough pebbles which strew it in its whole extension. After this most trying progress,

we suddenly emerged from the bed of the torrent into an excellent road, which has been made thus far from Teramo, but is here obstructed by a deep ravine, over which no bridge has hitherto been erected. The rest of the way somewhat compensated what we had endured, as it ran through a pretty undulated country, well cultivated, and shaded by olives interspersed with oaks. The aspect of the Gran Sasso, which we were rapidly approaching, added greatly to the surrounding scenery: its details, and especially the highest peak, became more clearly defined, and developed themselves in a state of dignity, not the less impressive from the somewhat gloomy character they assume.

But some steep, though inconsiderable elevations, which inclose the town of Teramo, soon shut out this prospect as we approached it. The city is situated at the junction of the rivers Tordino and Vezzola, which unite at right angles just under the principal gate; giving it that peculiar position which obtained for it, like all others in similar situations, the appellation of Interamnium. We had to cross

the Vezzola, which, though at this time scarcely deserving the name of a stream, is subject to such very sudden augmentations, that we were told it is not uncommon for the inhabitants of Teramo to find themselves debarred from returning to their abodes, after an evening's walk, by a sudden fall of rain.

This river is called *Albulates* by Pliny, probably from the white hue which, running through a chalky soil, it assumes in its temporary increases, and which by Livy is recorded as a prodigy.

The exterior of Teramo, encircled by decayed walls and crumbling towers, is far from indicative of the capital of a province. A breach in the former, which served for entrance for a carriage during some temporary repairs to the principal gate and street, was in strict unison with this appearance. The interior, composed of narrow lanes and mean-looking houses, seemed quite deserted at the hour I entered, which was that devoted to rest after the noon-day heat. We found some difficulty in gaining admittance to one of the only two inns which it boasts of; but the accommoda-

tion, especially the culinary department, was above mediocrity.

The city of Teramo, containing from five to six thousand inhabitants, is not unfavourably situated on a kind of promontory, advancing towards the point of junction of the two above-mentioned streams, and covers two sides of the triangle which it forms. These, from the aspect of their wide stony beds and rugged banks, can scarcely be looked upon as conferring any picturesque additions to the prospect; and the hills, which close round it on every side, produce an unpleasant sensation of confinement on the mind as well as the eye.

There is but one broad and straight street; and, in that one, but few good houses: in some of the outskirts, however, some better edifices are to be seen, displaying in the style of their architecture, and its accompanying ornaments, a more refined degree of taste and workmanship than is usually observable in provincial towns.

I found the same superiority of execution in the interior of most of the edifices, especially in the department of fresco painting.

The town boasts of but few manufactures, or establishments of industry ; but, as the capital of the first province of Abruzzo Ultra, it contains the civil and criminal tribunals, and is the residence of several families of considerable landed property.

Notwithstanding these advantages, the population wears the appearance of poverty and idleness, but their manners are singularly courteous and conciliating ; and the higher classes, in dress, demeanour, and discourse, evince a general superiority over the other provinces.

The cathedral has been so repaired and modernized, that except in its portal, which retains a Gothic scroll, it has lost the venerable character of antiquity which the date of its foundation might claim for it ; for it is considered as the earliest of all the Christian dioceses in this part of the kingdom, and its head, on that account, is dignified with the title of Bishop of the *Abruzzi*. One of its pastors, Antonio Campano, who died in 1474, is said to have derived his name from the circumstance of his birth having taken place under a bay-tree between Calvi and Capua. He was



noticed and educated by a priest, and his uncommon quickness and subsequent acquirements obtained for him a rapid and successful advance in the ecclesiastical career. As an author he likewise obtained no mean celebrity; especially by the lives of the two noted condottieri,—Picinino, and Braccio di Montone: he has also left a long and elaborately penned epistle, entirely filled with laudatory descriptions of the city of Teramo and its environs, which proves that he was either singularly impressed with, or grossly exaggerated, the natural advantages of his episcopal residence. This work—for its length deserves that name—is, however, not deficient in entertainment, and exemplifies the familiar and even facetious style which characterized a bishop's pen in the fifteenth century.

The surrounding country, broken into hills of a precipitous form but no considerable elevation, is in general fertile, producing in abundance corn, wine, and oil of a good quality.

Its position, on the southern side of the Gran Sasso, may account, notwithstanding its proxi-

mity to this highest of the Apennines, for the mildness of the climate: the snow scarcely ever lies on the ground; the caper-plant grows wild; but the orange-trees, of which a few are planted in private gardens, require to be covered up in the winter. The hills that thus surround Teramo on every side, are supposed to be detrimental to a free ventilation, and the air is, in consequence, not considered healthy at all times of the year. They likewise effectually shut out all view of Monte Corno from the town; but a slight ascent of few minutes' duration, up any of their banks, immediately replaces it within the scope of vision.

This city has been so accurately demonstrated to have been the *Interamnium Prætutium*, that no argument is requisite to corroborate the fact.

Its name was due to its position between two rivers, and was common to others in similar situations,—such as, *Interamnia Lirinas*, on the *Liris*, *Interamnia Nar*, (now *Terni*,) and *Interamnia Tiferna*, the present *Termoli*; and its adjunct denoted its rank as the principal town of the *Prætutian* tribe or nation.

The district which they occupied appears to have abounded in wine during the Roman æra; and this article, which formed a staple commodity of the country, was collected for exportation at the mouths of the several rivers that divide these regions.

When the Lombards succeeded to the Goths in the invasion and successful occupation of Italy, the name of the city was changed, or corrupted, from Prætutium to Aprutium, and it is, as such, first mentioned by St. Gregory the Great. Its episcopal church retained, however, its distinctive appellation of Interamnium, which, later, became Teramum; and early in the twelfth century the town itself resumed its original name under the slightly altered form of Teramo, while the division of country to which it appertained continued to be called Aprutium, which title gradually extended to the whole of the surrounding district.

Some remains of antiquity are still extant, which point out the identity of its site, and the rank it held in the country. Among these may be noted two fine arches, of immense blocks, belonging to the amphitheatre, the re-

mainder of which is buried under a portion of the modern town; these relics being in the interior court of a small house, to which the access is by no means easy.

There are also to be seen the faint vestiges of a theatre, baths, and other edifices; while the quantity of busts, sculptural fragments, and inscriptions, which have been found, is numberless.

The day I passed at Teramo proved more than sufficiently long to see everything it contains that is worthy of observation; but by no means equally adequate to the enjoyment and advantages to be derived from the conversation of the Cavaliere D. Melchior Delfico, justly esteemed the Nestor of Neapolitan literature, who has for many years past made this city his residence. This distinguished author of many works on history, antiquity, and a variety of interesting subjects, unites to a very widely extended store of instruction, a most accurate and profound knowledge of every topic relating to his own country; and possesses, at a very advanced period of life, the still rarer merit of communicating the mental

treasures he has acquired with an amenity of manner, and a facility and simplicity of expression, which render them doubly valuable to those on whom they are bestowed.

The nephew of this gentleman undertook, in the year 1794, an excursion to the summit of Monte Corno, or the Gran Sasso, of which he has published a narrative, containing the only accurate and detailed description of these regions which exists. This undertaking, without presenting the sublime difficulties which attend the ascent of the more elevated regions of the Alps, so forcibly illustrated in a recent publication, or offering to the naturalist the local interest attached to the Sicilian volcano, offers nevertheless considerable obstacles not without a share of peril.

This production, written in a clear and un-presuming style, gives a very satisfactory, though not minute account of all that can arrest the attention of a philosopher; and fixes the height of the mountain, which was thereby accurately ascertained, at 9577 Parisian feet, that is, 459 less than Etna.

It is needless to add, that the pinnacle is

clothed in eternal snows ; which, however, are of sufficient consistency and smoothness to rather facilitate than obstruct the progress of the observer ; the more dangerous parts being entirely confined to such steep and broken portions of the mountain where the bare rock is scantily covered with loose shingles, which render the footing insecure in spots where the least slip or false step would be fatal.

The chamois are found so frequently as to become an object of sport to the inhabitants of the highest villages ; and this is probably the only spot among the Apennines where this animal exists.

At the foot of this giant of the mountains, an Alpine district, situated in an eastern direction towards the Adriatic, and composed of several villages, has been known ever since the seventh century by the name of Valle Siciliana.

Pope Leo II. was born within its territory ; and the period of his election is that which records the first mention of the spot, in the year 682.

Some of the native antiquaries have with

much eagerness attempted to derive its appellation from the ancient Siculi, whom they assert to have been its first inhabitants ; while others ascribe it to the quantity of fern, *selce*, which abounds in this region, and caused it to be named Valle Seliciana, of which its usual denomination is a corruption. It continued for many centuries in the possession of a family which, having fixed their residence at a spot called Paleara, now Pagliara, assumed that name. The last scion of this stock was an only daughter, who, in 1276, carried the inheritance of this property into the house of Orsini, one of whom she had married.

These turbulent feudatories retained it for three centuries, during which space of time its importance, both as to locality and extent, placed it foremost among those fiefs the possession of which conferred sufficient power on their owners to render them generally troublesome, and sometimes formidable, to their sovereign.

The Orsini having forfeited it through the crime of rebellion, it was conferred by Charles V, in 1526, on Ferrante d'Alarçon de Mendoza,

with the title of marquissate, whose descendants possess a great portion of it to this day.

The villages that compose the district are, like those of Cicolano, numerous but small; and one of them, called Castelli, acquired considerable renown, during a considerable space of time, for a manufactory of earthenware, which not only supplied the domestic uses of the whole province of Abruzzo, but was gradually carried to a scale of excellence which nearly placed it on a level with that fabricated at Faenza, from which all subsequent imitations of the same material have been named. The art is now lost; but the specimens preserved in the cabinets of the curious, exhibit, in the paintings that adorn them, a correctness of design and vivacity of colour which may bear comparison with the finest porcelain.

Another very small village, called Senarica, placed on the left shore of the Vomano, though not within the district of the Valle Siciliana, has boasted for centuries of the name, if not the dignity, of republic; and the causes that have led to the tacit confirmation of this singular distinction, are perhaps worth recording.



It appears that, in the year 1610, the Spanish viceroy of Naples, Count Benevente, granted to ten persons, who divided between them as patrimonial inheritance the possession of the whole village and its territory, a diploma of investiture, recognising in these individuals the right of immediate and feudal jurisdiction over a property, the tenure of which was instituted, and had existed for many centuries, according to the form of the Lombard laws and customs, *jure Langobardorum*. Similar investitures had been permitted to continue in an unaltered shape in various other parts of the kingdom; but this was the only example of the entire population of a single village having an united claim to it.

Each separate member was therefore admitted to the enjoyment of the rights and privileges which the baron or feudal lord only exerted in other less favoured spots, and which were, moreover, secured by the same solemn grant to their descendants in perpetuity. These having greatly multiplied since the above-mentioned period, Senarica displayed the solitary example of a community entirely com-

posed of nobles, who were exempt from feudal service and royal imposts, and possessed the exclusive right of selecting from among their own numbers the governor, judge, and other principal local dignitaries, without reference to, or interference from, any superior authority in the kingdom.

The name of republic, which was rather conferred by the neighbouring municipalities, than assumed by this privileged association, may not seem quite compatible with the nature of an institution the origin of which was entirely feudal, and the continuance of which depended on the whim or caprice of a despotic government; but it, nevertheless, obtained a sort of stability, and its members willingly adopted it, conferring on their chief magistrate the title of Doge. The overthrow of all the feudal institutions in the last century put an end to this distinction; but Senarica still preserves with great care, and no small portion of pride and satisfaction, the parchment on which is recorded the boast of having been (no disparagement to San Marino) the smallest republic in Europe.

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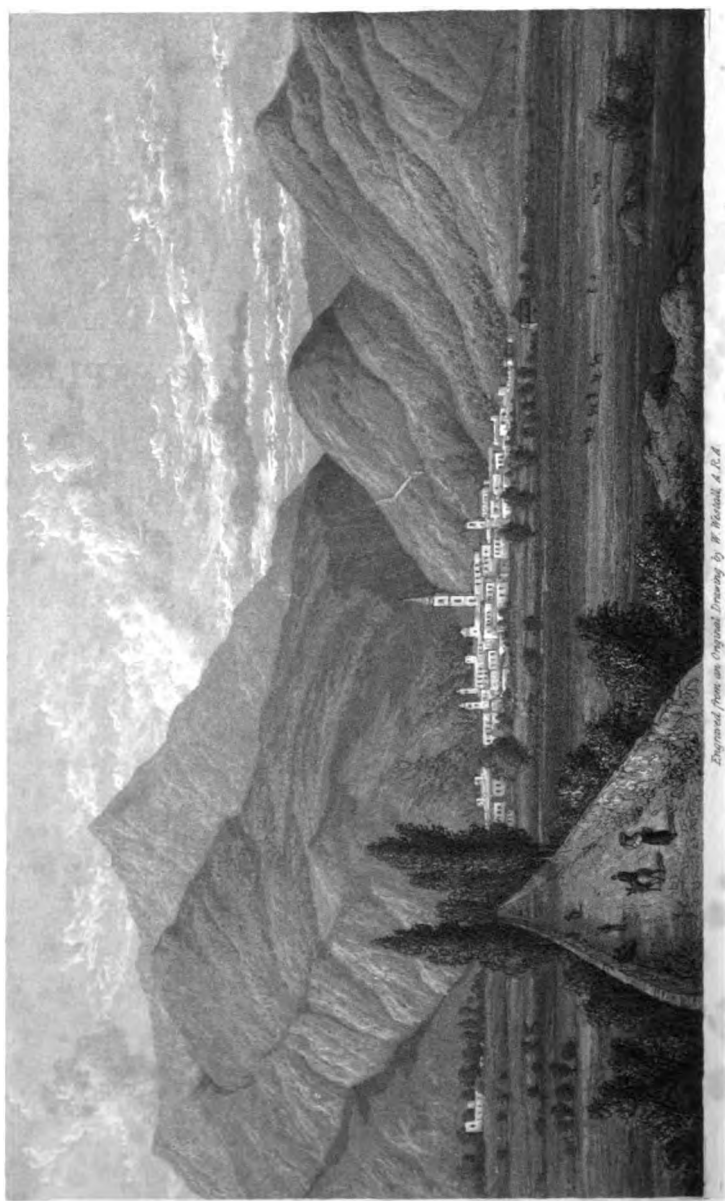
**EXCURSIONS IN THE  
ABRUZZI.**

**VOL. II.**

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Dorset Street, Fleet Street.







*Engraved from an Original Drawing by H. Mitchell del.*

## SOLMONA.

(ABRUZZO ULTRA SECONDO)

**EXCURSIONS**  
**IN**  
**T H E A B R U Z Z I**  
**AND**  
**NORTHERN PROVINCES OF NAPLES.**

**BY THE HON. KEPPEL CRAVEN,**

**AUTHOR OF**

**“ A TOUR THROUGH SOUTHERN NAPLES.”**

**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

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# EXCURSIONS

IN

## THE ABRUZZI.

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I QUITTED Teramo, after a residence of one day and a half, without even visiting the theatre, the organization of which is reported to be so indifferent as to add but little to the stock of amusement enjoyed by the inhabitants, which is in itself so limited as to have obtained for the town the reputation of being the dullest in the whole kingdom.



I had been recommended to return by the line of road which was forming to complete the communication between Teramo and Giulia Nuova; and accordingly, instead of jolting again along the bed of the Tordino, I crossed with much caution, and some difficulty, the ravine which marked the spot where I had left it on my previous journey, and kept the track which runs from thence in the direction of the sea. This is parallel with the course of the stream; and being not only traced, but already supplied with the materials used for road-making, our progress was in most respects less tedious than that of the preceding journey, though frequently interrupted by the gullies which stretch from the line of hills to the Tordino. These, however, it was always possible to cross without peril, at the cost of a little attention and some trouble; and we thus saved at least two hours, and fell into the road which runs along the coast, at about half a mile south of Giulia Nuova, between that town and the river, whose wide bed we had to cross again to resume our direction towards Pescara.

The country between Teramo and Giulia

Nuova is not remarkable for beauty or peculiarity of feature ; but it is carefully cultivated, and well-furnished with farm-houses and even villas. Some brick ruins of considerable magnitude show themselves among the olive-grounds, probably belonging to the town of Castrum Novum, which with Interamnia and Beregra formed the principal cities of the Prætutii.

Castrum Novum is mentioned by Pliny and others ; and is placed, in the Antonine and Peutingerian itineraries, on the Via Salaria near the Batinus, now Tordino, twelve miles distant from the Tronto, formerly Truentum.

This measurement agrees exactly with the existing distance between the former river and the frontiers of the kingdom of Naples, designated by the Tronto.

In the middle ages, Castrum Novum changed its name to San Flaviano, from the body of a saint so called, brought thither from Byzantium. The unhealthiness of the spot had contributed so greatly to the depopulation of the town, that one of its feudal possessors, Giulio Antonio Acquaviva, Duke of Atri, laid the foundations of another residence in a more salubrious,

#### 4      INSALUBRITY OF RICE PLANTATIONS.

though contiguous situation, and removed the remaining inhabitants thither about the middle of the fifteenth century, where it has increased in numbers and prosperity under the name, from that of its founder, of Giulia Nuova.

The surrounding territory has, since that period, been frequently exposed to the ravages of a feverish and unhealthy atmosphere, said to originate in the establishment of rice plantations, which in all hot countries are accounted most prejudicial in their effects.

These have been alternately suppressed and reinstated, according to the fluctuations of influence possessed by the different proprietors; but at present none are in existence, and it is to be hoped their restoration will never again be allowed.

I slept another night at Pescara; and, having retraced my way along the river as far as the stone obelisk which points out the road leading to Chieti, we followed its zigzag and very wearisome course for the space of three miles along the sides of an olive-grown bank, till we reached the gate of the city, placed on the very crest or saddle of the hill: the situation of which is

salubrious, and commands an extensive prospect of the surrounding country, but is far from commodious, or even agreeable, in other respects.

We found a good but very crowded inn, much attention from its inmates, and excellent fare; but the heat of the weather, and the state of bodily suffering under which I began to labour, prevented my remaining as long as I intended, or even availing myself of the letters I had brought with me for some of the principal families and the Intendente. These drawbacks may possibly have imparted an unfavourable colouring to the impression made by the town of Chieti, which I nevertheless must record as I felt it.

The city contains about ten thousand inhabitants, and is placed longitudinally on the narrow crest of a range of hills that runs in a south-east direction from that of Morrone towards the sea.

Its form is modified upon the space it occupies, which is narrow and elongated; the streets are in general contracted and tortuous, and in many parts dark and dirty, though provided

with well-built houses and shops, which in size and splendour approach nearer to those of the metropolis than any other belonging to provincial towns.

It has a large cathedral, which offers nothing remarkable except an extensive collection of Latin inscriptions found in the vicinity, and fixed on the surface of one of the walls of the edifice: a mode of uniting and preserving such records of antiquity, which ought to be more generally followed in all countries where they abound.

It possesses a good theatre, with a respectable operatic corps, whose performance of the rehearsal of the *Donna del Lago* during a whole summer's night contributed not a little to effectually banish such intervals of sleep as the heat of the earlier part of the evening, and the tumultuous gaiety of the working classes, might have spared. In this last respect, Chieti vies with, or perhaps exceeds, the clamour of the narrow lanes of the capital, where the security from any interruption of carriages allows such artisans as carry on their labours during

the nocturnal hours to indulge in all the noisy mirth which seems an indispensable appendage to such occupations.

It offered in this particular a remarkable contrast to the wider but deserted streets of Aquila, where, after nightfall, even in the brightest moonlight, not a voice is heard, or a human form visible.

I need not add, that an appearance of ease, cheerfulness, and activity, is the natural accompaniment of these habits of industry, which may nevertheless be attributed to the effects of climate rather than to those of education.

The fertility of the surrounding territory, improved by assiduous cultivation, provides the city with abundant supplies of every necessary and even luxury of life, added to regular importations of river and sea fish.

Among the natives who have distinguished their name by abilities and talents, the Abbate Galiani stands pre-eminent, who not only obtained a merited degree of celebrity in his own country, but was unanimously admitted in the first ranks of that class of beaux esprits who

more peculiarly illustrated the last twenty years of the ancient monarchical regime of France; that is, from 1769 to the Revolution.

Chieti is the seat of an archbishop, and as such has conferred its name on the religious order of the *Theatines*, from Teate, its ancient classical denomination; this community having been founded at the instigation and through the indefatigable exertions of its archbishop, Gian Pietro Carafa, better known afterwards as Paul IV, one of the most imperious and restless pontiffs that ever filled the papal throne.

Theate, or Teate, at a more remote æra, was considered the capital of the small but not unimportant tribe of the Marruccini, who sought the alliance of the Roman republic in its early successes, and remained its useful and faithful allies until the Social War, when they took part with all the other nations on this shore of the Adriatic, and shared their downfall.

Among the relics of the ancient city, the most remarkable are the vestiges of a theatre of considerable dimensions, those of a large public edifice, some remains of a temple of

Hercules, and one of Diana Trivia; a few arches, a gateway, and a fine pavement of mosaic, found in the year 1640, representing the contest of Hercules and Achelous, and described as one of the most perfect specimens of that species of labour ever discovered. To these must be added numerous inscriptions, some of which allude to the principal families of the town, and more especially to the Ve-zian and Asinian tribes; the last of which produced Asinius Pollio, one of the most remarkable characters that distinguished the age of Augustus.

The native antiquaries of Chieti have endeavoured to dignify it by a Greek origin; founding their hypothesis on an error in some of the editions of Strabo, in which it is called Tegeate, and considering this appellation as bestowed upon it by a colony from the Arcadian Tegea. It is, however, more probable that it was (like most others located in these regions) a Samnite or Oscan population; and, in addition to the many objections which naturally present themselves to the former assertion, it is to be remarked that no monu-



ment of any kind has ever been found within the present range of the provinces of Abruzzo bearing an inscription or letters in the Greek dialect.

The fragments of antiquity above mentioned, it is almost needless to add, are all of Roman style and execution.

Chieti, after the invasion of Italy by the Lombards, was comprised in the principality of Benevento, and governed by Castaldi, or Counts, of which the chronicles of the kingdom have preserved a list. In later times it was occasionally granted in fief to influential families, or made the reward of military services; but it was never subjected to that species of jurisdiction for any extended period, and has long since been restored to its own government, subject only to the prerogatives of the royal power.

The air of this city is esteemed pure and healthy; but its elevated position, and proximity to the high range of Majella, subject it to great varieties of temperature, exemplified by violent heat, sudden and tempestuous winds, and frequent fogs in the autumn and winter.

The view on all sides, which is very extensive, is extolled as remarkable for its beauty and amenity; but, except to the south-east, scarcely deserves this encomium. On this side, the sea, though not nearer the eye than from the opposite flank of the mountain, appears much more distinctly, and the intervening ground is diversified by numberless hillocks, wooded valleys, or contracted glens, not scantily enlivened with substantial villages and country-houses, many of which last bespeak greater affluence and a more refined taste than the generality of such edifices exhibit. The environs of Chieti are thickly studded with similar buildings, which are as remarkable for their architecture, as they appear deficient, to a foreigner, in what constitutes the most valuable appendage to such residences, namely, a garden.

These, belonging mostly to the more opulent class of inhabitants of the adjoining towns, are not unfrequently constructed at a considerable expense, displaying some taste in design and execution, a convenient interior distribution, and are sufficiently ornamented and well-fur-

nished to form commodious abodes; but I scarcely can remember one having a garden attached to it, though the surrounding territory is probably extensive, and in every respect well adapted to such a luxury.

It is not uncommon to drive up to these habitations through a handsome architectural gateway, between pilasters, and a short extension of front wall on either side, ending abruptly, and therefore quite useless for the purpose of enclosure: but the intermediate space of ground leading to the mansion is generally a barren waste, unprovided even with such humble embellishments as the usual mode of cultivating the native farms might supply. For it is customary wherever a house is built for the purpose of a villa, or what is most improperly called a *delizia*, to clear the surrounding soil of every tree or vegetable production which nature may have kindly provided, and which are never replaced by more refined or ornamental substitutes.

This is the more remarkable, as the immediate skirts, and frequently the interior of large provincial towns, exhibit gardens laid out in

an antiquated but not inelegant style, attached to many of the larger houses.

One of these, belonging to a Baron Nolli, at the very gates of Chieti, exemplifies this observation in a very striking and even splendid manner. A good carriage-road runs along each longitudinal flank of the town, between the bordering houses and the edge of the steep precipices that surround it. These form agreeable, though somewhat limited drives for the inhabitants, who are enabled to select either, according to the season, the time of day, or the direction of the sun and wind.

I quitted this town the day after I had arrived at it, and reaching Popoli, along the road already described, I passed a second evening and night there, though there was ample space of time to reach Solmona the same day; but the wish of deviating from the direct road to this last town, to see some objects in the vicinity, induced me to make this halt, to secure more leisure for the morrow's journey.

No drive can be pleasanter than that from Popoli to Solmona: an excellent and perfectly level road, running nearly in the centre of a

well-cultivated valley, bordered by high and fantastic ridges of mountains, much variety in the landscape, and several other details of interest and local beauty, amply make up for the formality of a perfectly straight line of eight miles' duration from north to south.

The first objects worth notice present themselves to the traveller's observation within a mile from Popoli, in the shape of the ruins of a small villa, once belonging to the Cantelmo family, who had constructed it as a place of summer relaxation, near their baronial residence, already mentioned as existing at Popoli. The spot is somewhat elevated above the level of the high-road which runs close to it, and thereby commands a view of the whole extent of the vale, with the city of Solmona at its farthest extremity.

What remains of the building shows it to have been fabricated in a style of superior elegance; and the remains derive a picturesque character from the wild luxuriance of a deserted pleasure-ground, still retaining the name of *Il Giardino*, which it originally possessed. But the peculiar and principal attractions of the

spot arise from the abundance of water which flows round, and indeed under, the fragments of its fallen magnificence. A copious spring, of singular transparency and coldness, rises from a nook in the small rocky amphitheatre which backs the villa ; and, after forming a lake or pool, is divided into many branches, distributed in the happiest manner through various parts of the edifice and the surrounding territory.

These assume different shapes, and maintain the neglected vegetation in a state of freshness which adds considerably to the general effect. A broad marble fountain, in the shape of a large conch, overflowing in a silver cataract, has resisted the workings of time and neglect, and finishes the picture in the most characteristic manner. It is surrounded by several fragments of antique sculpture, and some inscriptions found in the vicinity, with which the taste of the day was wont to decorate rural retreats.

A thicket of oak, of circumscribed extent but luxuriant growth, overhangs the cleft in which these abundant rills originate : a numerous breed of wood-pigeons inhabit its recesses ;

and their peculiar note, mingled with the louder rushings of the waters, and the monotonous whirl of a mill-wheel recently erected within the precincts of this little domain by its present possessor, add that kind of animation most suited to a scene which wears the aspect of solitude rather than desolation, and is not without considerable attractions.

Leaving this, we continued our way towards Solmona; but quitted the direct road, about three miles farther, to follow one branching off to the right, which crosses the river Gizio previous to its junction with the Aterno, and leads in a diagonal line across the valley to the village of Pentima, through which it runs, and to that of Rajano, situated about two miles beyond it, nearer the lateral ridge of mountains.

Pratola, which almost deserves the name of a town from its population of three thousand three hundred inhabitants, appears on rather a higher level to the left, in a pleasant position.

Pentima contains about fifteen hundred souls, and Rajano about the same number. The former is situated on a fine level surface of ground, somewhat elevated above the plain,

which extends as far as the second; and deserves notice as the site of Corfinium, the principal city of the Peligni, rendered still more famous in the Social War as the spot fixed upon for the reunion of the forces furnished by the allied nations who resisted the Roman arms in that memorable contest. It was likewise designated as the seat of the confederation which directed the military operations, and held supreme command over all the combined armies. It was well adapted to this purpose, from its capacious dimensions and its strong fortifications; and still greater dignity was conferred upon it, by becoming the bulwark of the allied populations, and receiving the senate, composed of five hundred individuals chosen from among the different tribes who had united against the republic, and had deposited within its precincts an enormous treasure in specie, and abundant stores of all sorts. So confident were the allied forces of their success in resisting the Roman army, that they conferred on this city the name of Italia, (which still exists on some of its coins,) in anticipation of the rank it was likely to obtain from its defence and resistance :



all which splendid precautions proved however fruitless.

The situation, at no great distance from the Aterno, is very fine, and not unsuited to a city which was considered deserving the honours thus bestowed upon it; but the existing remains of its former consequence are few, and composed of very indifferent materials. They consist of some shapeless masses of buildings, constructed of very small stones, strongly cemented together, and shaped into the semblance of large blocks.

There are also some faint vestiges of walls, and of an arch. These ruins are scattered round a church, (a portion of which is of good Norman architecture,) dedicated to San Pelino, as the cathedral of a city called Valva, which, in the dark ages, succeeded to the Christian Corfinium, and to the privileges of a diocese, subsequently transferred to Solmona.

In the interior of this edifice are some ancient tombs, among which is seen that of St. Alexander, who stands fifth in the number of pontiffs after St. Peter.

Rajano is pleasantly situated among the sinu-

osities of numberless clear streams, the produce of two aqueducts, both of ancient construction, but in exactly opposite directions to each other. One brings the waters of the *Sagittario*, which I shall have to describe hereafter; and the other, which conveys those of the *Aterno*, is infinitely a finer work, being excavated for a space of three miles in the flank of the rocky mountain that rises above that river. Its course can be traced the whole of that way, first, in an uncovered channel hewn in the stone, and afterwards by the apertures which have been cut at periodical distances, and afford the means of turning off the water, and cleansing the passage, which is of considerable depth. Both these were executed by the inhabitants of *Corfinium*, to supply their city, which stands too high above the bed of the *Aterno* to derive any advantage from its stream.

The last of these is now called *Canale di S. Venanzio*, from a small church and hermitage, placed on an arch over the river in its narrowest part, where it rushes from a gorge in the hills to the broad expanse of the valley.

This saint was a standard-bearer, and his

legend has sanctified this wild retreat as that where he performed a painful and protracted penance; the little church being filled with *ex-votos* in painting and sculpture, commemorating the numberless miracles which he still is in the habit of performing.

One of these, but one week before my visit, had illustrated the feast annually held in honour of his name; when a child having fallen out of its mother's arms, over the parapet on the arch, into the stream, it was carried about fifty yards down the current, and taken out, not only without injury, but without being wet; which, as my guide sagaciously observed, proved the needful interference of the sainted protector in the most indisputable manner; and the painting, or daub, representing this memorable event, was already suspended at S. Venanzio's shrine.

Besides the aqueduct, the spot offers something remarkable in its wild situation, the precipitous and fantastic shape of the rocks that overhang it on all sides, and the variety and luxuriance of the plants and flowers with which nature has bountifully clothed it. Among

these, I was surprised to find the daphne, lentisk, and cistus, usually the produce of a milder climate; and much struck by a beautiful species of althea growing to a great height, and a pale flesh-coloured pink of singular fragrance.

The situation of the ancient Superæquum, the third city of the Peligni, has been recognized at Castel Vecchio Subequo, placed on the hills, at no great distance from the river.

From Rajano, the road which led us to it is continued over a bare and very steep mountain, by the pass called Forca Caruso, and afterwards, by Coll' Armeno, to the Fucine Lake, Celano, and Avezzano; a journey which, though tedious and rugged, may be performed in a carriage.

We retraced our course the way we had come, as far as the high-road, which brought us to the town of Solmona, where we took up our abode in a vast dilapidated building, occupying a large portion of a suppressed monastery, once belonging to the Jesuits, and now the only inn the city can boast of; as filthy and unpromising a residence as can be imagined.

The modern Solmona, or Sulmona, which stands very nearly on the site of the ancient, of

which only very faint traces can be perceived, contains at the present day about ten thousand inhabitants. It was once much more populous; but the earthquake of 1706, which destroyed great part of it, impressed the remainder with marks of devastation and ruin which it has never recovered. The streets are straight, and in general furnished with substantial stone houses, the exterior fronts of which have been left in an unfinished state, which greatly injures their general appearance; the stones of which they are constructed having never been smoothed at their exterior surface, or covered with any kind of stucco; though the doors, windows, and angles are almost all faced with a finer-grained material, carved and ornamented with considerable taste and skill. The contrast afforded by this circumstance is more particularly observable in the Gothic portals of the churches, of which a considerable number exist.

The most remarkable specimen of architecture is the town-house, formerly an hospital belonging to an adjoining church and ecclesiastical establishment called L'Annunziata. The

front has three large doorways, with a corresponding window over each: every one of these is adorned with a frame-work of most beautiful carved stone, all different from each other; and a frieze of the same rich and intricate character runs along the whole edifice, and gives it a most dignified aspect.

The principal street is divided from a very large unpaved square, on a much lower level, by the aqueduct which supplies the city from the river Gizio, and was built in the year 1400.

The square itself, though very spacious, is surrounded by mean and newly erected houses; but it has a fine antique fountain in its centre, composed of two distinct pateras, or basins of marble, one above another. The effect of this monument, seen through the arches of the aqueduct, is extremely picturesque; and is much enhanced by the addition of an immense Gothic porch of a ruined church, and a portion of its ornamented front, of such exquisite labour and florid tracery as to speak most favourably for the remainder of the structure, one of the many overthrown by the earthquake.

The cathedral, which is situated out of the town, and by which we had passed in our way from Aquila and Popoli, is dedicated to a Greek saint, Pamfilo : it offers nothing remarkable except a stone image of the Virgin and Child, of somewhat grotesque design, but curious in the intricate finishing of the drapey and ornaments, and likewise from having been painted and gilt.

The bishop's palace was once attached to this church ; but, having been destroyed by the earthquake, it has been replaced by a large modern edifice, just facing it, the exterior appearance of which assimilates it to an extensive manufactory or magazine.

The natives of Solmona are not deficient in industry ; having some paper-mills, tanneries, and several establishments for dyeing : but the most celebrated of its productions, though undoubtedly the least useful, are the sugar-plums and comfits, (*confetti*,) which, though much fallen in the public estimation, are still pre-eminent in the kingdom.

We found the heat suddenly, and most unpleasantly, increased on the evening of our arri-

val at Solmona; a circumstance of not unusual occurrence, according to the inhabitants, who complain much, not only of these abrupt transitions, but of the severity of the winters. The barren and stony surface of the Morrone, which is scarcely a mile distant, to the east of the town, reflects the sun in the summer, as it does the snow in the opposite season, and is probably one of the causes of these extremes in the temperature.

This ridge runs along the whole valley, dividing it from Abruzzo Citra; but a village called Pacentro, about four miles to the south-east, is placed on a kind of buttress, forming part of the still higher and more extensive range known by the name of Majella, and considered one of the most elevated districts of the kingdom:\* it runs from this spot in a south-east diagonal direction towards the sea; but its roots sink in the plain before they reach the Adriatic. Its higher peaks retain the snow during the whole year: it contains some

\* The Majella has never been accurately measured, but is supposed to reach an altitude of eight thousand feet above the Adriatic.



populous villages, fine pastures in the upper valleys, and is particularly noted for the variety and qualities of the medicinal herbs found only within its limits, which afford a livelihood to a number of individuals who are occupied during the whole summer with the labours of collecting them.

Pacentro stands at the entrance of a defile through which the ancient road, never practicable for a carriage, led to Palena, a town which I shall have occasion to mention at a later stage of my journey. This path is still used by pedestrians and mules; but not at all seasons, as it runs through two of those mountain passes not unaptly designated by the word *Forca*. These passes, from their peculiar position, are subject to terrific gusts of wind, which, in the winter, not only render all progress through them a matter of difficulty, but, when accompanied with snow, threaten rapid destruction to the solitary traveller.

A spot, a little way beyond this village, now bearing the name of Campo di Giove, is supposed to point out the site of a temple of

Jupiter Palenius, mentioned in the Peutingerian itinerary as one of the stations between Corfinium and Alfidena.

Solmona, in the early part of the Roman æra, was a principal city of the Peligni, yielding in size and importance to Corfinium only, and placed in the same valley at no great distance from it. Its name has become famous as the birth-place of Ovid, who has frequently referred to the coldness of its climate, which did not, however, abate from the fertility of its soil, and has likewise recorded the abundance and freshness of its streams, characteristics which it possesses to the present day :

Sulmo mihi patria,  
Gelidis uberrimus undis, &c.

A statue of most wretched execution, evidently a production of the middle ages, and clad, like that of Horace at Venosa, in a clerical habit, is placed over one of the church-doors, with this poet's name inscribed under it.

The immediate vicinity of Solmona offers but one object worthy of notice, in one of those overgrown edifices which the wealthy ostentation of monastic institutions, rather than their

devotion, raised in honour of their founder. This is the abbey (now suppressed as a religious community) of S. Pietro Celestino, the hierarchal title of a remarkable individual, who, at the age of seventy-nine, was, in the year 1294, torn almost forcibly from the humble cell of an anchorite, and forced upon the papal throne, which he voluntarily abdicated after the short space of only five months, to linger out two more years of his existence in a state of honourable but strict captivity, misnamed retirement. Peter, a native of Isernia, surnamed of Morrone, dwelt in an hermitage still extant on the lower flank of the mountain, about three miles from Solmona; and it is just below this spot, and to commemorate those virtues which obtained for him a place in the catalogue of saints, that the order which was founded under the name he assumed as supreme pontiff (that of Celestinus) established one of the largest monasteries, not only in this kingdom, but perhaps in all Europe.

The community had existed ever since his time, and spread itself into other countries;

but this convent was its cradle, and, having received considerable damage from repeated earthquakes, it was rebuilt, by the voluntary contributions of the various branches subject to the same rule in all parts of the Catholic world, in a style of magnificence which must have raised it nearly to the level of Monte Cassino itself. It is situated at the foot of the Morrone, not more than two miles distant from the city, with a good carriage-road leading to it.

The French government suppressed it, and for a long while it remained totally unoccupied ; but an experiment has recently been attempted to render it of some public utility, by placing within its precincts a small portion of the juvenile paupers who inhabit the Seraglio, or Casa di Poveri, in the capital, and instruct them in the humbler mechanical professions. The appearance of the boys spoke unfavourably of either the air or diet of the institution ; but in other respects it appeared well managed, though on so restricted a proportion as to form a singular contrast to the dimensions of their abode.

The architecture bears the character of solidity rather than that of elegance: the court, an inner cloister, double corridors ranging round the principal quadrangle, magazines, refectories, dormitories, stables, cellars, kitchens, in fine, all the necessary and supernumerary appendages of an overgrown community, being laid out on a scale which can only be justly qualified by the term gigantic.

The ornamental marbles, as well as the paintings which adorned the church, have not been removed. Among the former are four remarkable columns of verd antique, which the taste of the year 1718 (the epoch of the restoration of the building,) has barbarously disfigured by giving them a twisted or spiral form. Among the paintings the only very fine work is one by Mengs.

But a monument, which in my humble opinion is far more attractive than either of the forementioned, is the sepulchre raised by a female of the Cantelmo family to her husband and her two sons.

Placed in a dark vault, or niche, in a portion of the ancient church, it is scarcely to be dis-

cerned at all, and requires candle or torch-light to be examined in detail: this scarcely allows justice to be done to the exquisite beauty of the heads and the natural simplicity of the figures, which, like most of those appertaining to the sepulchral monuments of the fourteenth century, are represented in the recumbent attitude appropriated to either sleep or death.

I was much struck by the similarity of style exhibited in this sculpture to that described in the church of S. Bernardino at Aquila; and the information that they were both by the same artist did not therefore surprise me.

A rapid stream, the produce of some neighbouring springs, runs just in front of the monastery; and some stagnant pools, which they likewise form, may probably taint the atmosphere with some degree of insalubrity; especially as the building, though so near the mountain, is to all appearance lower than the rest of the valley to the west, and is deprived from that cause, added to the proximity of the Morrone, of a free circulation of air.

M. Ternaux, well known as one of the most enterprising and enlightened manufacturers in

France, has obtained from the Neapolitan government the sanction to form an establishment for the fabrication of woollen cloths in an unoccupied portion of the convent; and, when I visited it in June 1830, an inspector had very recently examined the premises to ascertain if the volume and force of the little stream was such as to render its application to machinery practicable: the result had proved satisfactory.

Within twenty minutes' walk from the convent exists a ruin of Roman construction, known by the name of Le Stanze d'Ovidio, from an ill-founded tradition which has established a villa of the poet's on the spot: it is considerably above the level of the plain, built against the flank of the mountain, overlooking a stony bank scantily clad with a few stunted oaks.

Its principal merit consists in the extensive and interesting view it commands of the whole valley; the fabric itself being nothing more than a terrace or rampart of considerable width and elevation, faced in its whole extent with *opus reticulatum*. It rests against the bare rock, and serves as a base to twelve arched divisions

or chambers, which might be supposed to have answered the purposes of thermæ or baths, if any vestiges of water-channels were observable; but the springs above mentioned rise some way below it in the flat, and are honoured with the title of Fonte d'Amore, as being the representative of that mentioned by the Solomonian bard. They form a pool, to which a circular form has been given, and a handsome stone border added, probably as a reservoir for fish to supply the monastery.

The retreat from which Peter of Morrone was dragged to fill the papal throne, is exactly above this ruin; it is little more than a stone hovel stuck against the perpendicular face of the mountain, upon a projection of just sufficient capacity to support it. The access to this hut is so rugged and precipitous as to require considerable time to reach it, although placed at no very great height.

Till very lately, two hermits had occupied it; but they died within a very short space of time of one another, and their unattractive abode has found as yet no tenant to succeed to them.



Solmona, having followed the fortunes of Marius, suffered greatly from the resentment of Sylla, who demolished its walls, and endeavoured by other devastations and outrages to sink it below the rank of a city. Under the emperors it was reduced to the condition of a colony. In the Christian æra it was dignified with an episcopal see, united to that of Valva, the successor of Corfinium; and in an age less remote it formed a portion of the country of the Marsi. Charles V. bestowed it in fief on Charles de Lannoi, one of his Belgian generals, whose descendants continued for some time to possess it, with the title of Prince; after which it passed, through inheritance or marriage, to other illustrious families, among which must be reckoned that of Borghese.

The town is placed between two streams: the Gizio, much the most copious, runs on the western side; while the smaller Vella waters its opposite extremity, and unites itself to the former river just below it. But among the numerous tributaries of the Aterno, that lend their aid to fertilize the valley of Solmona,

none holds a rank more eminent, from the abundance and never failing supplies which it furnishes, than the Sagittario, which irrigates nearly the whole southern portion of the plain. An excursion to its source proved extremely gratifying, from the peculiarities which mark its origin, and which, till I found myself so near it, had, no more than its existence, ever reached my knowledge.

I quitted the city early in the morning, and, crossing the Gizio, proceeded athwart the valley towards the mountains which bound its south-western extremity.

After passing under the village of Bugnara, pleasantly situated in a grove of oaks on the declivity of the above-mentioned hills, and descending into a deep and darkly wooded glen, we crossed the Sagittario flowing through its gloomy recesses, and, ascending the opposite slope, turned abruptly to the left, to follow the course of this river during the whole of the day's journey.

Above our path ran a considerable body of water, diverted from the main stream some way farther: this is conducted in an artificial

channel on the flank of the hills for the space of nine miles; after which it enters a subterranean aqueduct, an ancient labour of the Romans, cut through a mountain of considerable height, from which it issues in the direction of Rajano, at the other end of the plain, for the purpose of adding its supplies to those of the canal of S. Venanzio, already described. From this spot a path to the right leads over the mountain to Cocullo, which I have alluded to, in my account of the Marsi, as famous for the shrine of S. Domenico, the snake-charmer.

To return to the darkly-wooded glen of the Sagittario, along which our progress lay: a farther advance of about two miles brought us in sight of the village of Anversa, situated at its very extremity, and overhung with stupendous mountains crowding on each other so as to present the appearance of an impenetrable mass. The view is very striking, from this particularity, as well as the position of the village, which looks much larger than it really is, and offers at this distance an aspect entirely oriental, from the quantities of large

poplars that surround it, and are interspersed among its buildings, mimicking with illusive resemblance the cypress-trees that adorn all Turkish cities.

Leaving Anversa above us, a winding descent brought us to the edge of the river at a spot where the chaos of stones renders it impossible to believe but that the stream must spring from their very base. An abrupt angle in its course admits one into a ravine just wide enough to allow a passage for the torrent, and the narrow path that borders it, between two ridges of perpendicular rocks assuming the appearance of a wall, which they preserve during the whole extension of this singular pass or defile,—about six miles in length. It becomes somewhat wider soon after its commencement, below Anversa; and the river there receives a considerable increase from a lateral stream that rushes into it, after forming a beautiful cascade on the right.

A steep ascent then ensues, which, giving a more rapid impulsion to the progress of the waters, stamps them with an Alpine character by a succession of cataracts. There are no

less than seven or eight rustic bridges in the whole extension of the dell, which in no part opens to any breadth, and in many places leaves but a contracted space for the path, so little elevated above the banks, that, whenever the Sagittario is augmented by heavy rains or the melting of snow, the road becomes altogether impracticable.

In one spot the width from rock to rock is not above twelve feet; in another, the stream precipitates itself, through an aperture which it has worn through a large rock, into a deep chasm resembling the well-known grotto of Neptune at Tivoli; in a third, it passes under a stratum of limestone, (without having, as yet, given it the form of an arch,) which serves as a bridge, and gushes out from the opposite side, as if it oozed through it.

In one of the few spots that admit of a comparatively extended margin, the rocks are scattered in isolated masses, of considerable bulk and fantastic form; so that the course of the glen, or rather gully, offers a wild and singular aspect, considerably embellished by tufts of creepers and flowers growing out of the crevices.

This defile is designated in the country by the several appellations of Gole d'Anversa, or Foce di Scanno, the river here being usually denominated *Acqua della Foce*, and not assuming the name of *Sagittario* till it reaches the wider valley of Anversa; previous to which, at the commencement of the glen, a village called *Castro Valle* shows itself on a high eminence to the left. Near to its termination a beautiful group of little cascades is seen on the right, tumbling in succession from the mountain; on which another village, named *Villa Lago*, closes this extremity of the pass, having opposite to it a collection of miserable huts called *Fratturo*.

Here, also, several springs gush from under the hill; but the principal source of the *Sagittario* issues from the top, or rather pinnacle, of a mass composed of large blocks of limestone, heaped together by the hand of Nature into a pyramidal form, and apparently precluding all farther passage; so that it is only by climbing, with some difficulty, from one to the other that the summit can be attained; an operation with which our horses seemed

quite familiarised. These rocks are picturesquely variegated with patches of vegetation, and interspersed with high trees, which, casting their waving shadows over the innumerable cataracts that dash through the broken surface of this singular cone, add considerable effect to the originality of its general aspect.

- I had understood, from the accounts I had received, that the Sagittario was produced by the superfluous waters of the lake of Scanno: but such is not the fact, at least apparently. From the highest among the rocks composing the pyramid just spoken of, the main spring bubbles with great force, and in considerable abundance; but, beyond it, nothing is seen but a plain of tolerably level surface, with large fragments of rocks scattered over it, which seem to have rolled from the surrounding mountains. This flat stretches for about a mile to the edge of the lake, (which is not visible from this spot,) exhibiting a platform of a wild and dreary character, with two or three little circular pools of very clear water.

It is, however, probable that it is the lake

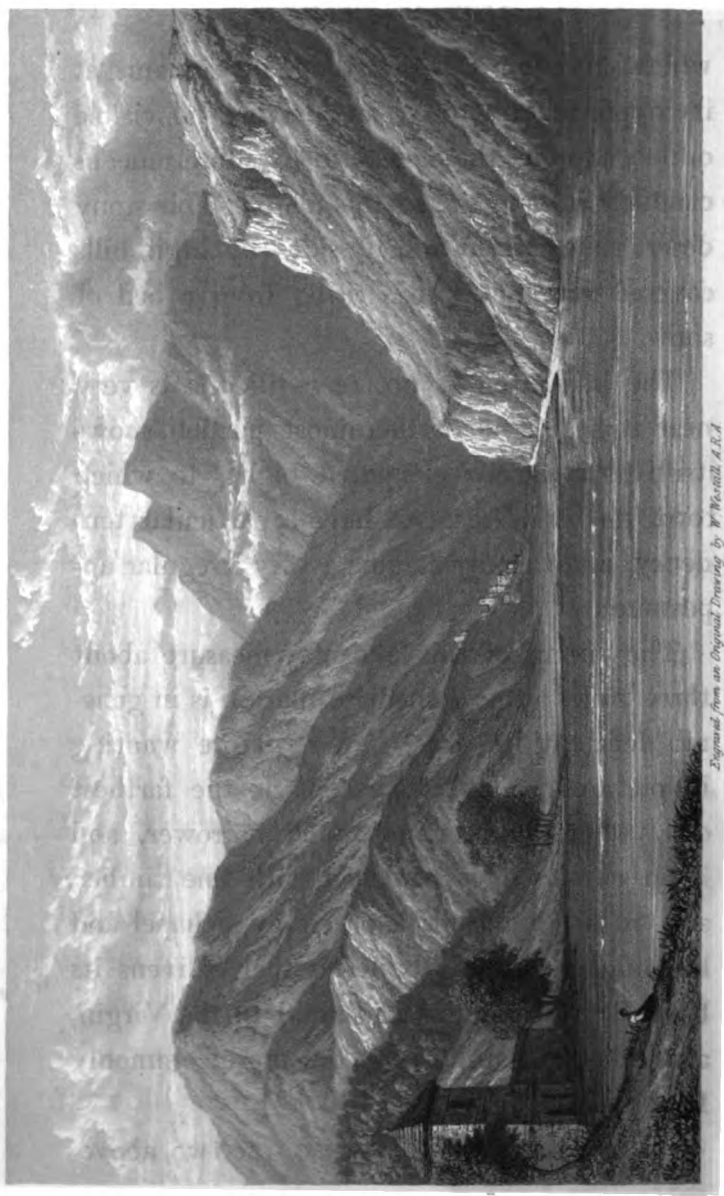
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*Engraved from an Original Drawing by W. P. 1832. A.R.A.*

**LAGO DI SCANNO.**

which, receiving two considerable streams at its opposite extremity, and having no visible outlet, supplies the Sagittario by subterraneous channels running under this plain. This stony desert is encircled on all sides by high hills covered with fine woods rising from a bed of snow.

The lake itself is not seen till one is very near it, when its northernmost portion shows itself as a narrow elongated bight, to which form its banks seem to have a particular tendency, and thereby assume a very irregular appearance.

The circuit of this lake may measure about three miles: the immediate margin is in general deficient in trees, and therefore wanting in picturesque effect; except at the farthest end, where it becomes much narrower, and is on either edge furnished with fine timber, and on the left bank adorned by a chapel and hermitage, the only building that enlivens its banks: this edifice is dedicated to the Virgin, and called L'Annunziata, but more commonly La Madonna del Lago.

At this extremity, likewise, the two above-

mentioned streams enter its waters, after irrigating a contracted valley which extends as far as the village of Scanno, situated about two miles distant, but not discernible from the chapel.

We stopped here to breakfast, and sent our guide to obtain provender for our horses.

A few flat-bottomed boats were employed among the sedges in fishing for tench and barbel; but, if one may credit the natives, the most distinguished produce of the lake consists in a very fine species of red trout, weighing sometimes as much as twenty-five pounds.

The village of Scanno contains above two thousand souls, and was once as remarkable for the industrious habits and affluent circumstances of its inmates, as for the beauty of its women, whose dress was stamped with an Eastern character, and ornamented with a profusion of gold and silver.

On my way back, I was assailed by some showers, accompanied by gusts of wind that became absolutely terrific in the narrowest pass of the glen, and fully corroborated the ac-

counts I had heard of the impracticability of the road at some periods of the winter; at which time the natives are compelled to seek access to the high road to Solmona by the way of Rocca Valloscura, over regions presenting difficulties nearly equal to those of the defile, from the steepness and intricacy of the mountain paths.

## CHAPTER X.

*Consular Road.—View from above Pettorano.—Rocca Vall-  
oscura.—Piano di Cinquemiglia.—Rocca Rasa.—Palena.  
—Castel di Sangro.—Castrum Saricinorum.—Historical  
notices.—Excursion to the Voltorno.—Celeste, an ill-tem-  
pered Guide.—Bear-hunting.—Alfidena.—Pizzone.—  
Castellone.—Abbey of S. Vincenzo.—City of Samnium.—  
Sources of the Voltorno.—Prospect round S. Vincenzo.—  
Pastoral festival.—Course of the Sangro.—Rionero.—The  
Vandra.—Miranda.—Isernia.*

OF Solmona, which we reached in the even-  
ing after this rather fatiguing excursion, we  
took leave the following day, to resume our  
progress southwards towards the capital, along  
the Consular road of the Abruzzi, as it is  
usually termed.

This is excellent in its whole extent, but  
the direction which was originally given to it  
appears to have been selected without much  
discrimination; for in most of the continued

ascents, which are of frequent recurrence, the slightest investigation of the features of the country is sufficient to show that they might have been in many cases avoided altogether, and in others considerably curtailed as well as softened.

The valley of Solmona terminates about four miles southwards of this town, under the large village of Pettorano, containing about two thousand eight hundred inhabitants, and situated at some elevation above the plain, though at nearly the base of the high range, which it is necessary to ascend by a winding line of nearly five miles' duration.

From this spot, the view looking back,—that is, northward—is, in point of extent and variety, one of the finest in the interior of the kingdom. It commands the whole plain as far as Popoli, with all its details of wood, water, cultivation, and villages; and is terminated by the Gran Sasso, which, somewhat inclined at its highest peak, appears from this spot more particularly deserving of its other appellation of Monte Corno.

The Gizio, which, as I have before noted,

waters the whole of the flat, has its source in a ravine just below Pettorano.

About two miles more of the tedious acclivity just mentioned bring one to Rocca Valloscura, a village of nine hundred inhabitants; the name of which is indicative of its position, being nearly half-way up the mountain, in a precipitous, narrow, and dark cleft.

We stopped here to bait, and found, in spite of its ominous name and ill-favoured aspect, that it contained a tolerable inn and some good houses, with the proprietor's coat of arms sculptured on a shield in stone over the doors: a custom maintained throughout the provinces of Abruzzo, in the meanest hamlets as well as the largest towns.

After resting an hour, we resumed our zig-zag progress, which in the course of three miles brought us to the summit of the mountains and the northern extremity of the Piano di Cinquemiglia.

The name of this spot sufficiently denotes its nature, though it scarcely measures more than four miles: it is, in fact, one of those levels found on the higher portions of all mountains,

affording a commodious thoroughfare to travellers in serene weather, but invested with difficulties, and even perils, in the windy and snowy seasons. These have diminished considerably since the carriage-road has been constructed ; but even now it is frequently impassable at different periods of the winter : and, in former times, it was calculated that no year elapsed without many individuals perishing in it, by being either overwhelmed in the snow-drifts, which accumulate with incredible rapidity, or frozen to death in seeking rest or refuge.

The breeze which, though from the south, blew cold and impetuous during the whole passage, gave us some idea of the terrific violence of the wintry hurricanes ; but the general aspect of the scene presented no terrors.

It consists in a narrow valley, perfectly level, of less than a mile in breadth, between two ranges of hills, of which the right, called Argatone, is the highest, and clothed with some clumps of trees ; while the other, or eastern ridge, is low and bare.

The soil is poor and light, covered in most



parts with short herbage, and in some with patches of sickly corn. Not a drop of water, or a single habitation, is to be seen.

The road, considerably raised on a dyke above the general surface, is bordered with stone posts of scarcely sufficient elevation to point out the track when the snow is deep, though erected for that purpose. Another deficiency is very palpable, in the absence of buildings of even the humblest kind, to serve as temporary places of refuge during the falls of snow, which are sudden and considered so dangerous.

Rocca del Raso, commonly called Rocca Rasa, is a village of about one thousand three hundred inhabitants, placed at the extremity of the Piano, or rather at that of another plain, of different form and character, which succeeds to it, but is on the same level.

From this, a good carriage-road, of recent construction, branches off to the left, leading to Palena, a town of two thousand inhabitants, represented as most thriving through the industry and affluence diffused by the existence of many large woollen manufactories. It is

from this place that another line of road, entering the vale of Solmona at Pacentro, on a parallel with the town itself, might have avoided the terrors of the Piano di Cinquemiglia, and the irksome tediousness of the descent which follows.

The position of Rocca Rasa is chilling and desolate; but it is well built, and has numberless fountains; and an establishment for weaving and dyeing coarse cloths gives it some animation.

After this, the road descends again in the same tortuous manner, and for about the same distance as at the northern extremity, till it reaches the plain of the Sangro, on a lower level than that of Solmona.

The scenery is somewhat less dreary, from the bolder outline of the mountains and the occasional appearance of some fine forests which extend to the road-side. A little wretched village, called Rocca di Cinquemiglia, is passed on the left; and, but for one of those singular and unaccountable caprices of the engineers, already noted, the end of our day's journey might have been attained an

hour sooner than it actually was, as the track touches the bank of the river Sangro at not more than a mile from the town of Castel di Sangro, and nearly on the same level; but an additional course of three miles is superadded to it, carried in winding lines up and down the flank of the mountains, before it again reaches that river, over which a bridge leads into the town.

The various branches of the river Sangro running along the valley of the same name, are here united into one stream; which, like the Pescara at Popoli, takes an abrupt bend behind the mountain against which the town is placed, and continues its course towards the Adriatic, into which it falls at a distance of thirty-five miles.

Castel di Sangro stands at the northern extremity of a plain about six miles long by two broad, which, notwithstanding the bleak character impressed upon it by its elevation above the sea, and the influence of a very cold temperature, presents an appearance of pastoral freshness which is not without attraction. The clearness and rapidity of the river, flowing be-

tween meadows of the finest turf, under a steep bank shaded by clumps of oaks, contributes greatly to favour the landscape.

The town contains about three thousand inhabitants, who cultivate many inferior branches of industry, which give it some animation. It is situated at the foot of a high rock, overhung by a mountain still more elevated: on the former are seen the remains of the very strong fortress from which it derives its name.

The high-road runs along the whole extent of the narrow and winding street of which it principally consists, and issues through a gateway at the opposite end. After crossing another brook, which comes from the mountains of Molise, and here mingles with the Sangro, it keeps parallel with the valley for about three miles, and then ascends the heights to the south-east.

This place has by some been supposed to occupy the site of the ancient Aufidena, one of the principal cities of this district of the Samnites; but the modern town of Alfidena, placed at the southern extremity of the valley, has, with much more probability, been recog-

nised as its representative : and Romanelli has considered Castel di Sangro as the successor of a fort mentioned by Zonaras under the name of *Castrum Saricinorum*, in which a Samnite, named Lollius, escaped from Roman captivity, had collected a large treasure realised by plunder and robbery, which he strenuously defended against the forces commanded by Q. Gallus and C. Fabius, who finally obtained possession of it after many obstacles.

This event is recorded as having been productive of such an increase of the circulating specie in the city of Rome, as to establish the use of the silver drachm.

Ptolemy and Zonaras employ the kappa as the initial of this tribe of the Samnite race; while Pliny designates them by the appellation of *Caraceni* : but Romanelli corrects both these readings, as founded on an error of the first letter, which, according to him, should be an *s* ; thereby altering the name to *Sariceni*, as more appropriate to the dwellers on the banks of the Sarus, (the ancient denomination of the Sangro,) which nation Pliny divides into Upper and Lower. I shall leave the reader

to judge for himself on this point, and limit myself to observe that the arguments of the modern antiquary are well supported by topographical authorities.

It appears that its present appellation was conferred upon it by the Counts of the Marsi, already mentioned, whose territory extended thus far. They built the castle, of which the ruins are so considerable, and called it from the river which runs below its foundations.

At the period of the Norman dynasty it must have been a place of some importance, for its feudal lord was included in the catalogue of those who joined the crusade in the reign of William II, as possessing a fief furnishing five militants. Under the Angevine rule it belonged to the family of Sangro; and, after passing through the possession of many others, finally fell to that of a branch of the family of Carracioli, who to the title of Prince of Santo Buono, add that of Duke of Castel di Sangro.

The inhabitants manufacture a kind of coarse carpeting, tallow candles, and cards. Milk, and all productions resulting from it, are excellent

in the vicinity ; and the river furnishes the best trout in the kingdom.

I was induced to suspend the progress of my journey homewards, by one day, for the sake of an excursion to the source of the Voltorno, taking Alfidena above mentioned in my way thither.

For that purpose, I departed from Castel di Sangro in the morning, keeping the line of the high-road as far as the spot where it enters the valley at a bridge over a little brook called Zittolo, which likewise divides the province of Abruzzo Ultra Seconda from that of Molise. I had been assured that a carriage might be used as far as Alfidena, and accordingly had sent on some saddle-horses to that place. But soon after quitting the high-road, to follow a diagonal course athwart the flat, we found the soil so deep, and our progress so impeded by loose stones and frequent runs of water, that we sent back our vehicle, judging it more expedient to continue this portion of our route on foot.

We were attended on this excursion by the ostler of the inn, who had somewhat eagerly,

though not gratuitously, tendered his services, as being acquainted with the country.

We found in this individual a specimen of that kind of disposition and temper, probably not rare in any region, which, without justifying absolute ill-usage or violence, is formed of such irritating materials as to render the necessity of such painful measures a matter of ever recurring speculation.

In this instance, the peculiar tendency to everything that is offensive in speech and manner was strangely contrasted with the name of *Celeste*, a very common one throughout the whole of Abruzzo; and which, on this day's journey, seemed destined to haunt us under its various modifications with the same repulsive impression attached to it. Our cross-grained guide not only did everything to retard and embarrass our movements, but likewise committed all the mischief that fell within his means: he threw stones at the poultry in the villages, insulted every human being he met, tormented every animal, and, finally, broke the pitcher of a poor woman, after drinking a portion of the water it contained, which she had



brought from a distant fountain, and kindly offered to us.

It was on remonstrating with him on this occasion, that we first learned his name; and we were ruminating on the singularity of the misnomer, when our attention was painfully roused by an old hag beating her grandchild with a pewter ladle in the most brutal and even alarming manner. We found she was called *Celeste* likewise. And, a little farther we met an urchin, of about five years old, goading a tired pet-lamb with a sharp-pointed stick, which he thrust alternately into his nostrils, eyes, and ears, dragging at the same time after him an unfledged blackbird tied by a broken leg to a braid of rushes; which unsophisticated child of nature was also named *Celestino*.

We were so disgusted with our companion, that after reaching the object of our researches, and going through a long discussion as to a shorter road for our return, we found ourselves compelled to bribe him to remain in the rear, to avoid all farther intercourse and altercation with him.

About a mile previous to reaching Alfidenza, we saw the Sangro rushing from a dark glen, placed at a right angle with the valley, into which it sweeps with frightful impetuosity, and there receives another stream, called Rio Torto, flowing from Alfidenza. This junction of the waters takes place under a poor village named Scontrone; the houses of which are scattered along a steep bank rising above the Sangro, and are backed by the gloomiest pine forests that any northern region can boast of.

These form one of the retreats, not of uncommon occurrence in this province, in which bears are bred, and hunted in the winter season; a species of sport for which this district has been celebrated for some centuries back, as Castel di Sangro is known to have frequently been the residence of Alfonso of Aragon, (second of the name,) when Duke of Calabria, for the sake of pursuing these attractive but hazardous amusements.

Continuing our walk towards Alfidenza, we met the guardiano of an adjoining farm, who gave me a very lively and interesting relation of an encounter with these animals; and owned,

with great ingenuousness, that the feelings of alarm excited by the prosecution of such an undertaking far outweighed all those that were pleasurable. He described, in language so animated that it was almost poetical, the appearance of a large bear rendered furious by pursuit and the attacks of an armed multitude; and added, that no man, however strong-nerved, could behold an animal of that kind standing on his hind-legs within a yard of his person, stretching out his paws to grasp his throat, and sending forth yells of rage, without hearing the beatings of his own heart.

Such parties, always ending in the death of the victim, are however not unusual, and are almost always productive of dangerous wounds or lacerations on the persons of the sportsmen.

The population of Alfidena is rated at fifteen hundred inhabitants; but it may be more appropriately termed a large village than a town. It contains some good houses and rich proprietors, among which a large proportion of priests were assembled in the market-place, who, in the most courteous manner, offered us, not only

their assistance in showing us the antiquities, but the use of their houses, if we should be disposed to rest, or even to stay over the night.

We availed ourselves of the first proposal; but found that their good intentions by far exceeded their means of information; for the principal object they pointed out as the most worthy of remark, from its remote antiquity, was a ruined tower of the fourteenth century; after which they engaged in a violent altercation among each other as to the locality and date of the remains, which only proved that the majority had never even seen them.

We could, however, ascertain that they are few in number, and all situated on the steep hill beyond the river; the probable site of the ancient city and its citadel. This is identified by a range of polygon walls of considerable size, and evidently very remote construction. A curious monument likewise exists in an Oscan inscription, encrusted on the parapet of a bridge over the Rio Torto, which divides the modern town in two.

The stream, just below this, dashes through a very narrow cleft it has worn in a steep rock,

and precipitates itself into an abyss so dark that it appears unfathomable, at the bottom of which it is heard boiling with deafening roar.

We endeavoured to obtain from our obliging ciceroni some information regarding the excursion we had undertaken to the springs of the Voltorno ; but the answers were so unsatisfactory, and founded on such uncertain bases, that we resigned ourselves to the guidance of our crabbed companion ; and, trusting to that and our exertions, mounted our horses, and proceeded on our way.

On quitting Alfidena we toiled up a steep and barren hill, leading to a woody region diversified with little lawns and verdant glades, in which some fine cattle were grazing. Soon after, we left the course of the Rio Torto, and reached another glen, (which replaced us in the province of Terra di Lavoro,) along which a little brook runs for some miles, and finally throws itself into the very river we were seeking.

This circumstance, as soon as we were informed of it, proved how greatly the topographical difficulties of our journey had been mag-

nified, as the only embarrassment we now felt existed in the choice of paths on either side of the stream, flowing in a wide bed full of loose stones.

The banks were steep and well wooded ; but that to the right presented a range of mountains, of superior elevation and magnificent form, thickly covered with forest to their very summits. On the same side, but much nearer the river, which is called Pizzone, stood a large village of the same name, containing about fifteen hundred inhabitants, but wearing a dreary aspect.

Shortly after, continuing our route down the glen, appeared, also on the right, but in a much higher position, what at first sight bore the appearance of a large town, but was in reality the village of Castellone ; deriving this delusive semblance from its apparent junction with another called S. Vincenzo, from which it is in fact separated by a deep and precipitous, but very narrow ravine, which renders all direct communication between these totally impracticable, though placed so near to one another and on the same level.

The abrupt sloping ground that intervenes between them and the bottom of the valley is richly clothed with hanging orchards, vineyards, and gardens, enclosed with quick hedges and cultivated with vegetables of the most luxuriant growth. Among these, the stony and slippery path we followed had been conducted in the most capricious manner, with no other apparent object save that of lengthening it by a continued succession of descents and acclivities.

When just under the two above-mentioned villages, our attention was suddenly arrested by the sight of the Voltorno some way below us, whose winding course nearly described a circle in a small plain surrounded by a belt of high mountains. This, which we shortly reached, is the spot on which stood the abbey of S. Vincenzo, the remains of which are still extant on the banks of the river, at little less than a mile from its source.

This monastery was founded, according to tradition, early in the eighth century, by three brothers, or cousins, bearing the names of Paldo, Taso, and Tato; which, however sin-

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gular they may sound to modern ears, were by no means very uncommon among the Lombard tribes.

The community, in the very infancy of its existence, boasted of a visit from Charlemagne, while marching against the Prince of Benevento. It subsequently was subjected to the order of St. Benedict, and, in the lapse of centuries, attained a distinguished rank for riches, piety, and learning. It was suppressed by the French, and afterwards almost entirely demolished; its valuable archives, among which was a chronicle of the middle ages of considerable historical value, having been transferred to Monte Cassino.

It appears admitted by most antiquaries that a city existed, even later than the æra of the Roman republic, bearing, as well as the district to which it belonged, the name of Samnium.

The most remote authority for its existence is to be found in one of the epitaphs of the Scipios at Rome (that of Cornelius Lucius Scipio Barbatus). The inscription records his having taken Taurasium, Cisannia, and *Samnium*; which word being thus joined to the



names of cities, has in this instance been considered as meaning one likewise, and not the province or country so denominated.

I own I cannot look upon this reading as inaccessible to controversy; but Florus also mentions a town of Samnium, and some writers of the Lower Empire allude to it in even a more positive manner. Paulus Diaconus, the Lombard historian, says, "In Samnium are the cities of Theate, Isernia, Aufidena, and Samnium, now consumed by old age, from which the whole province is named:" which goes far to prove that it still existed in the eighth century. Moreover, the chronicle of S. Vincenzo a Voltorno, above mentioned, written by the monks of this very monastery, seem to identify the site of this town with that of their own residence; first, by saying that this last is situated on the river Volturnus at a place called Samnium; and afterwards by referring again to the spot as near the springs of Samnium, at a place called Cerrum.

The modern village of Cerro is not above a mile distant from the ruins of the convent; and it is therefore not unreasonable to con-

clude, that, if there did exist a city of Samnium, it must have stood very near them.

At present, the church (no longer used for public worship), and a portion of the dwelling of the monks, are entire; both of which are of comparatively modern construction: but numerous vestiges of antiquity, such as broken columns of granite, fine marble capitals, and a remarkable substruction of large stones without cement, which serves as a foundation for the west end of the church, denote most clearly the existence of some large structure, probably a temple, which seldom stood very far from a town.

The last-mentioned portion of building has all the appearance of having formed part of a peribolus; and two wide and deep trenches cut in the rock, parallel to each other, run in a direct line, on either side of the church, down into the glen that sinks just behind it, through which the Voltorno flows after having described a variety of meanders in front of it. These channels, which begin close to the river, appear to have been excavated for the purpose of receiving its waters, and thus con-

verting the spot into an island ; and the manner in which they have been cut, bears the stamp of most remote execution.

The plain before the monastery is nearly circular, but of no great extent ; the soil is clayey, and being, in its whole extension, cultivated with grain of a poor quality, the effect of its bare and parched surface after the harvest is the only drawback upon the peculiar, and, if I may so call it, eccentric beauty of the spot.

I followed the stream up to its very origin, which derives from two distinct springs, oozing in great abundance, but without violence, from the surface of a gravelly bed at the foot of a rocky hill, attached to a higher mountain, on which is placed, or rather perched, the village of Rocchetta.

These springs immediately join in forming a broad pool, as clear as crystal and as cold as ice, from which a considerable current is drawn off to turn a mill about two hundred yards farther, but soon unites itself to the main stream, which then assumes a slower progress along a deep weedy bed, in which the

cattle seemed greatly to delight in standing up to their shoulders.

If, as it has been somewhat fancifully inferred, this river obtained the name it bears from the tortuous course which characterises it, this peculiarity is nowhere so remarkable as near its birth-place. After describing nearly the half of a circle, it glides before the monastery, then resumes a retrograde direction towards its source, it next takes a sudden bend to the right, and, precipitating itself down a steep declivity in a succession of cataracts, reaches the glen of the Pizzone, which brook it receives, and again assumes a calmer progress behind the convent in an exactly parallel line with that of its course in front of it, though on a much inferior level. After this, it pursues its way through the deepening valley; and, repeating sinuosities measuring at least six miles, it finally returns to the immediate latitude of its original springs, and not much above a mile from them. After this, it deviates to the south-west, to seek the valley of Venafro; and it is evident, that if the high-road had been so planned as to run along its banks, not only a

very considerable distance, but all the hills between Isernia and Castel di Sangro might have been avoided.

But to return to S. Vincenzo : with the exception of its little sun-burnt plain, it is difficult to combine in one landscape features more favourable to its general aspect than those exhibited by the various objects with which it is surrounded.

Before it flows the river in all its serpentine deviations, under the hill of Rocchetta, studded with oaks, and crowned by one of those singularly picturesque constructions which unite in a baronial mansion the character of Gothic dignity to that of Italian elegance. On the left, sinks the deep glen, also watered by the Voltorno, and enlivened by the village of Colli. Opposite this, a much more striking effect is produced by the assemblage of buildings belonging to S. Vincenzo and Castellone, situated on a black and apparently inaccessible mass of rocks, showing themselves like a range of fortifications above, trailing draperies of ivy and flowering creepers, and looking down upon an inclined plane covered with vineyards and

gardens ; while the distant peaks of the mountain called Meta, the highest of all the surrounding range, close the picture on that side. The back of the monastery enjoys a scarcely less singular though more gloomy prospect, in the village of Cerro, (on the opposite bank of the stream,) whose castle, placed as usual at its most elevated extremity, and flanked by four pyramidical towers, may stand for the type of feudal grandeur in its darkest plenitude of power.

Of the traces of the city which bore the name of the nation most celebrated for its persevering hostility to the Roman power, nothing has hitherto been discovered of sufficient importance to point out its exact situation ; but several tombs have been found in the vicinity, as well as numerous articles of bronze, of the rudest workmanship, which a priest from Colli offered us for sale.

A large cattle fair is annually held on the area between the ruins of the monastery and the river, the original institution of which is considered of such remote antiquity as to warrant the notion that it is derived from a pagan

festivity : a circumstance by no means unfrequently exemplified in the same form in other parts of the kingdom.

We quitted the founts of the Voltorno, much gratified by the spectacle they and their accompaniments had presented; and retraced our way back to Alfidena, under the influence of those feelings of lassitude which are the inevitable result of excited interest and sated curiosity. A priest returning to Alfidena, to which place he belonged, joined our cavalcade, and somewhat relieved the tedium of a twice trodden track by the local information which his profession and habits enabled him to give. The last were far from sedentary; for, possessing a farm, or *massaria*, at Colli, near Cerro, the inspection it required obliged him to perform a journey there and back from Alfidena at least twice in every week.

His conversation was, consequently, almost entirely confined to topics of rural economy; and the most interesting part of it consisted in the account of a feast held by the proprietors of the pasture lands on the mountains at the end of the month of June, a period when the flocks

are driven to the highest regions in consequence of the increasing heat of the season.

The ostensible object of this meeting is the installation of the several herds and their attendants in their respective districts for the remainder of the summer: and the description he gave of it was singular, and certainly full as attractive as he meant it to be, though in quite a different point of view from that in which he regarded it.

He expatiated most eloquently on the extreme hilarity (to give it the most decorous name) which prevailed among the numerous and mixed communities there assembled.

By setting off from Alfidena long before day-break, and travelling on horseback as far as it is practicable, the point of reunion (one of the highest pinnacles of the Meta) may be attained two hours before dark.

Here the cattle with their respective shepherds and shepherdesses, whose presence, he said, added great charms to the festivity, have previously arrived; and after the different portions of pasture have been marked out and allotted to their respective occupiers, Vespers



are sung, just as the sun is going down, and a solemn benediction given to the whole congregation, who afterwards sit down in different divisions to a pastoral, but by no means frugal repast, supplied entirely by the flocks; the sheep and kids being roasted entire, and the oxen in quarters, on spits formed of young pine trees.

A due proportion of wine and bread is provided; the former being cooled in the snow-pits which abound in these elevated regions.

The second course is entirely composed of preparations from the milk of cows, goats, and ewes, in all the varied forms they admit of; and the surrounding turf supplies a luxuriant dessert of wild strawberries.

The banquet is then suspended, while the party repair to a still higher region, to enjoy the spectacle of the illumination of the cupola of St. Peter's church at Rome, which can, with the aid of glasses, be descried from this spot.

I own that this unexpected climax to the festivities somewhat startled my powers of belief; but as, on a topographical examination of the respective localities, the fact is

within the limits of possibility, I will not venture to attempt a refutation of it.

After this diversion to the sports, they are resumed in the shape of song, dance, and games of all descriptions; while the elder part of the community retire to rest under huts constructed of boughs, and strewn with leaves and heath: many of the party staying over the following day to enjoy a repetition, on a reduced scale, of the banquet and the gambols that succeed to it.

Our companion, whose outward aspect presented a singular contrast to his animated description of such epicurean indulgences, pressed us very strongly to return to these parts on St. Peter's day, the 29th of June, to partake of enjoyments which he with reason considered to be so new to us; and moreover invited us to refresh ourselves at his house at Alfidena, where, he said, we might fare on all the early fruits of the season, among which he enumerated raw beans as a peculiar delicacy.

This invitation not being of so tempting a nature as the mountain feast, we found no great difficulty in resisting it, especially as

evening was coming on apace ; therefore, passing hastily through Alfidena, we made the best of our way along the plain to Castel di Sangro.

The river from which it is named has its origin under the village of Gioja, already alluded to as one of the coldest spots in the kingdom, in the description of the regions that surround the Lacus Fucinus: it runs under Peschio Asserolo, Opi, Barrea, and Villetta, villages as difficult of access from their mountainous position, as they are insecure from the lawless uncivilized character of their inhabitants, but all of them more or less remarkable from the vestiges of ancient monuments which they contain.

It enters the plain under Scontrone, dividing its territory from that of Alfidena, and turning sharply to the northward; after passing by Castel di Sangro, it pursues its course, first through a hilly, and lastly an open country, till it throws itself into the Adriatic, between the villages of Fossaceca and Torino, at a spot which acquired a temporary renown in the twelfth century from having been chosen

as the point of embarkation for a crusading expedition which joined those commanded by Philip Augustus of France, the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, and Richard Cœur de Lion.

Resuming our progress southwards, we quitted the valley of the Sangro at the bridge over the Zittolo, previously mentioned, and began a tedious ascent over a range of hills of barren and unpromising appearance, though not totally devoid of cultivation; through the openings of which, distant glimpses of regions less comfortless occasionally showed themselves. Rionero, placed on the highest of the mountains, and through which the road is conducted, is a miserable place, much resembling Radicefani; and its aspect corroborated an observation which had previously sometimes suggested itself to me, that the name it bears is always attached, at least in the kingdom of Naples, to spots unfavoured by nature and fertility.

Soon after, we were surprised at suddenly obtaining a distinct, and apparently not remote prospect of the little circular plain of the Voltorno, the windings of the river, and

all the picturesque appendages that surround it, and which had so gratified us on the preceding day. The distance did not appear to be above three miles to the right, and an excursion to it from Rionero would consequently be an undertaking of much less duration and difficulty than one from Castel di Sangro.

After this, the descent lasts for five miles, till it reaches a narrow glen watered by the little river Vandra, on the banks of which a single house, at which we baited, answers the purposes of a tavern and post station; the mail changing horses here, between Isernia and Castel di Sangro.

The stream is little more than a mountain torrent running in a stony bed between steep banks of no beauty: it falls into the Voltorno previous to this last river quitting the mountainous district to enter the plain of Venafro.

After a short delay, we began once again the toilsome task of ascending; but this acclivity was of somewhat shorter duration, ending at a rocky peak of almost volcanic appearance, from which an extensive bird's eye view of a large

tract of flatter country to the southward is obtained.

The descent, which immediately succeeds, is carried along zigzag lines just under the little town of Miranda, perched on a rock to the left, one side of which, under the baronial castle, is perfectly perpendicular. The country, after this, though scarcely less stony, and apparently but little more favoured by climate, exhibits more satisfactory specimens of cultivation; and all the vineyards which supply the town of Isernia stretch on either side of the road, the plants trained low, as in all cold countries, and tied to canes.

We soon after arrived at the town above mentioned, and found, just outside of its gate, at this its northern extremity, a substantial-looking inn, having the advantage of an isolated situation; which, after gaining the confidence and good-will of the landlord, we found by no means deficient in tolerable accommodation.

Having entered the province of Molise, (which occupies the greatest portion of the ancient Samnium,) soon after quitting Castel di

Sangro, we had now reached the site of one of its most considerable cities, all of which, with slight modifications, have retained their original denominations; and it was not without a strong feeling of interest that I found myself in nearly the centre of a region, the history of which is so closely interwoven with that of the most celebrated of ancient republics.

## CHAPTER XI.

*The Samnites.—Isernia.—Varied Landscape.—Antiquities.—Aqueduct.—Working-classes.—Earthquakes.—Miracles.—Inns.—Country between Isernia and Venafro.—Charles of Anjou.—Mineral Springs.—Environs of Venafro.—Water for Royal use.—Hospitality.—Harvest-work.—Feast of S. Nicandro.—Privileges of Priests.—The ancient Venafrum.—Feudal Proprietors.—Baronial Castle.—Breed of Horses.—Environs of Presenzano.—Excursion from S. Angelo to Venafro.—Cataract on the Lete.—Caccia di Venafro.—Manufacture of Charcoal.—Royal Sporting Excursions.*

OF all the nations which had to grapple with the overweening spirit of conquest that characterised the early ambition of the Romans, none displayed so much courage, animosity, and persevering resource, as the Samnites; who, if we may believe Livy, not only exhibited a degree of military skill which repeatedly baffled the efforts of their antagonists, but combined domestic institutions the best calculated to consolidate the power they had attained, with the possession of opulence and luxuries, which are in general the offspring of a long æra of civilization and peace.



It is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive from what sources, a race, inhabiting a mountainous and unfertile district, distant from the sea, ill-suited to commerce, and almost impracticable to agriculture, could derive the more than elegant materials which formed the texture of their warlike habiliments, and the copiousness of precious metals that adorned them so profusely as to strike their enemies with a surprise not unmixed with terror.

The mountain now called *Matese*, for which no distinct ancient appellation has been preserved, may be looked upon as the centre of the country which they wrested from the aborigines, *Osci*, *Opici*, or *Ausoni*, when, under their first name of *Sabelli*, they separated from their parent stock, the *Sabines*, and, following the footsteps of a bull, (which traditionary fable has pointed out as their leader,) they sought a new and distinct district from that which had given them birth, wherein to found a colony and establish a nation.

It was at four different points at the roots of this stupendous mass, extending a circumference of seventy miles, that their principal cities

were constructed; and Bovianum, Alifæ, Telesia, and Æsernia, displayed, in their several positions, the skill they had already acquired in the art of fortification.

The extent of the regions which had been subjected to their rule, diverged by degrees to a considerable distance; and became subdivided into various tracts, known by the names of Pentri, Caudini, Caraceni, Hirpini, &c. which are easily traced to this day.

Among the tribe of the Pentri, the city of Æsernia held a pre-eminent station, but had submitted to the Roman yoke long before the ultimate subjugation of the Samnites, which was not effected till the close of the Social, Marsican, or Italic War, when, having fallen into the possession of the combined forces, Æsernia was destined to succeed to Corfinium as the bulwark in which they placed their last hopes of resistance; but, having failed in maintaining it against the attacks of the Romans, they ended by shutting themselves within the walls of Bovianum, which they considered their strongest hold, but with an equally fruitless result.

The modern town of Isernia, with its altered initial, is the seat of a bishop, and contains seven thousand inhabitants; a larger population than the space it occupies appears capable of holding, as it consists of little else than one long and tortuous street, running from south-west to north-east, and scarcely wide enough in many parts to admit the passage of a carriage.

To obviate this inconvenience, the high-road has been carried outside of the walls on the eastern flank of the city, between the bordering houses and one of the deep ravines that open in every direction, forming thereby a very handsome drive. Through the gulley which it overlooks, a brook called Fiume del Cavaliere, dashes impetuously among rocks and trees, under a small circular church dedicated to S. Cosimo and S. Damiano, and afterwards beneath a high perpendicular cliff covered with a drapery of evergreen creepers, falling from a grove of ilex that surrounds a monastery of Capuchins, vying in picturesque effect with the celebrated convent at Vico Varo, which it much resembles.

This stream turns several mills, and assists

the works of many manufactories; and, just below the town, one of its branches flows under a fine Roman arch, in excellent preservation, subsequently joining the main stream, which resumes a placid and widened course through a lovely dell that leads it to the Vandra, shortly before its union with the Voltorno.

I never beheld an inland landscape that struck me with more varied details of form and colouring than that unfolded by the short course of this river.

The antiquities of Isernia are such as to deserve some notice from the traveller. They consist of the remains of its very ancient polygon walls, which serve as foundations for the modern enclosure of the town, and which can be traced in nearly its whole circuit. Many inscriptions, and fragments of sculpture, are scattered in the streets, and incrustured on the walls of the principal church. But the most remarkable object is a subterranean channel, or aqueduct, of considerable depth and breadth, hewn in the rock for the space of a mile, and which to this day supplies the fountains and manufactories of the town with water brought from

under the little town of Miranda. The deepest *spiracula*, or air-holes, of which there are five in the whole extension of its course, and which rise from the level of the emissary to the surface of the soil, measure nearly ninety feet.

A portion of this stream runs through a ravine on the west side of the town, which by no means offers the picturesque appearance of the other.

In the town there exist two fountains, whose very ancient style of sculpture might lead one to imagine that they were original constructions of the Samnites themselves.

Isernia contains a sufficient number of establishments of industry, such as manufactories of paper, woollen cloths, earthenware, and others, to secure to it that aspect of animation and comparative ease which is ever so cheering to the eye of the traveller, especially when connected, as it usually is in this kingdom, with a courtesy and urbanity of manner seldom observable in a population entirely engrossed by the labours attached to an agricultural or pastoral life. It might be curious to investigate the causes of this peculiarity of manner, which

in our countries is usually exhibited in a reversed aspect. It is possible that a feeling of independence, imperfectly defined, but strongly impressed, may show itself in the outward demeanour of the individual who can scarcely look on his means of subsistence as secured by mercenary labour; while the servile habits of the hired manufacturer may gradually infuse themselves into his language and behaviour, even towards strangers. It is but justice to add to this observation, that the exterior alone is stamped with this peculiarity, and that with regard to sincerity and honesty the scale weighs in favour of the husbandman.

This portion of the realm has been at different, but unfortunately too frequent periods, most severely visited by the calamity so prevailing in the southern extremity of Europe: every succeeding century having seen Isernia and all the surrounding villages devastated by earthquakes of considerable violence and even duration; the effects of which are still but too evident in almost every part of the town, but more particularly in the buildings that border the exterior walls. The

last of these occurred in July 1805, and has been distinguished, from the day on which it took place, with the name of Earthquake of St. Anna. In the capital itself its shock was sufficient to cause some damage, and such alarm as to keep a large proportion of the population encamped in the open fields for many days ; but, in the province of Molise, its operations were terrific, and Isernia alone lost one thousand inhabitants.

A young man, apparently an artificer, who had very obligingly tendered his services as cicerone in my perambulations about the place, surprised me not a little, in the midst of the information which he communicated in a rational and judicious manner, by extolling the miracles performed daily by an image of the Madonna in the church of SS. Cosimo and Damiano. Among these, he said, was an eternal immunity in favour of the town from thunderbolts, and the ravages of tempests, obtained through its special interference from Divine indulgence: the same privilege had been requested with regard to earthquakes, but, added he, sighing, *fin adesso non si ha potuto ottenere.*

Isernia, and indeed every post station on this road, boasts of one, or more inns. As I have before observed, the inn was, in this instance, rather above mediocrity ; but a serious difficulty arose, which had sometimes happened before, in obtaining the undisputed possession of more than one room, with which, as it generally contains several beds, it is expected that the party, however numerous, cannot hesitate to be satisfied ; nor does it seem possible to convince the landlords of the certain advantage secured to them by payment for the space these beds occupy, even when removed, and reserved for any later arrival, in another apartment. A circumstance of the most rare occurrence in a country where there are no diligences, and where the few travellers that pass seldom or ever sleep at an inn.

We found at this place, in some very good wine, a gratification we had not lately enjoyed, as the prevalence of *vino cotto*, or wine boiled to ensure its preservation, is almost universal throughout the provinces of Abruzzo and Molise ; and this, to palates and stomachs unused to it, is equally unpleasant and unwholesome.



We quitted Isernia on the following day, and descending the steep promontory on which it is placed, by degrees lost sight of the cultivated grounds and patches of wood which adorn its base, to enter a stony, wild, and bleak-looking tract, the general aspect of which bespeaks an entirely different soil and even climate.

The windings of the little river that so greatly embellishes the environs of Isernia lose themselves in the distance to the right, as they approach the Voltorno; beyond whose course the little town of Montaquila is seen on an elevation; while on the left shore, and nearer the road, the smaller one of Macchia shows itself.

A region of quite opposite appearance then succeeds, being a sloping bank of considerable extent, watered by innumerable rills flowing from beneath the town of Monte Roduni, placed to the left on the lateral range: these give a fertility and freshness to the gardens and fields through which they are conducted, which add considerable charms to the prospect. A gradual descent then brings the road to a fine stone bridge over the Voltorno, which flows across the valley from its opposite side, in a

diagonal direction, and afterwards keeps at no great distance from the eastern ridge; while the road, on the contrary, leaves its banks to follow the western boundary of the plain; each exhibiting a chain of finely formed mountains covered with oak woods, interspersed with cultivation. At the bridge the province of Terra di Lavoro is re-entered, and the distant glimpses of the river which are displayed through the opening glades, together with the peculiar character of the banks beyond it, recall, upon a larger scale, some of the wilder scenery of our finest English parks. On the right, are the villages of Rocca Ravindola, and Pozzilli, and some others less considerable, placed in the usual inaccessible, but picturesque positions.

About three miles from Venafrò, the road runs through a fine open grove, called Bosco di Tulliverno, and crosses a stream of the same name.

Near this spot Charles of Anjou is said to have forded the Voltorno, in his progress from the confines of the Roman states to meet the army of Manfred at Benevento. In this case he must have traversed the mountains from S

Germano (to which he had marched after the combat of Ceprano) to Venafro, or, leaving it to his right, have followed the course of the Tulliverno itself into the plain, and then pursued the line of the broader valley of the Volturno, as far as its conjunction with the Calore, after which the banks of this last river conducted him to Benevento, under which it flows. This rapid march would account for his unexpected arrival before the walls of this city, and at the same time for the state of fatigue and exhaustion to which his troops were reduced, and which induced his antagonist to attack him without delay.

Other streams are crossed, descending from the mountains on the right, among which is one formed of many mineral springs, principally sulphureous and acidulous, rising very near the road. This water, as possessing the last-mentioned quality, is alluded to by Pliny. The salubrious qualities ascribed to the springs have led to the establishment of some temporary accommodations erected every summer by the natives, who resort to the spot for the purpose of drinking and bathing in them.

The kingdom of Naples is prolific in such springs, which however, at a distance from the metropolis, are seldom applied to so much advantage.

The nearer environs of Venafro are distinguished by a greater degree of cultivation, and the extensive plantations of fine olive-trees, which succeed to the oak forests, and clothe nearly the whole surface of the mountain, which overhangs the town, and seems, from this spot, to close and entirely terminate the valley. This, however, is an illusion, for its direction merely is changed by an abrupt angle which the river makes, and the plain which accompanies its course acquires, on the contrary, a much broader surface, as it spreads itself to the south, beneath the town, which thereby commands an extended reach of its dimensions. The town of Venafro, like most of those placed in similar situations, has an imposing aspect, which diminishes considerably on a nearer approach; it bears some resemblance to that of S. Germano, but is much inferior in many respects.

Like this last, it stands at the foot and on

the lower slope of a very high mountain, ending in two peaks, which is more bare, and steeper in its surface than that of Monte Cassino. Immediately under the last houses that touch the flat, innumerable springs of the finest water gush in abundance from the limestone rock. These are collected and dammed up in several pools and reservoirs, to supply the wants of the town; while the produce of one of them, pre-eminent for purity and lightness, has been inclosed in a marble basin, under lock and key, and exclusively appropriated to the royal table during the sporting excursions which the sovereigns have not unfrequently made to these parts. The late King Ferdinand held this water in such estimation, that he carried a large provision of it with him in a journey he made to Rome at the close of the last century, and had periodical supplies of it sent to him.

These springs unite, after having watered some gardens and turned some mills, and form a small river, called Fiume di S. Bartolomeo, which, in its limited course, produces very abundant stores of the best trout, crayfish, eels, and lamperns.

It runs along the base of the western range of hills as far as a village called Il Sesto ; after which, crossing the high-road, it diverges along the valley in a diagonal line, and throws itself into the Voltorno.

The modern town of Venafrò, which stands just below the site of the ancient, though dignified with an episcopal see, contains no more than three thousand inhabitants : a population so inadequate to the cultivation of the extensive territory belonging to the district, that an increase, amounting to the same number, is requisite during the labours of the harvest to ensure their successful completion. This, however, will not appear surprising, if the dimensions of such a plain, entirely given up to the cultivation of wheat, are taken into consideration.

On my first excursion into Abruzzo, I was received at Venafrò in the house of a proprietor belonging to the middling class, whose territory in the environs placed him far above mediocrity, and enabled him to receive strangers with a degree of liberal hospitality which might have compensated for the overstrained display

of this quality usually exhibited to guests, but which, in this instance, was exercised with such forbearance as to be principally limited to the luxuries of the table, composed of the best wine, fish, and vegetables I ever tasted: productions which indicated that Venafrò had not lost, in modern days, that fertility of soil and excellence of vegetation for which it was noted in more remote times.

The second time I visited the place, the master of the house was absent the whole day, inspecting the work of his reapers; while his wife remained in doors, more busily employed in preparing the successive supplies of food and refreshment, which form a portion of their daily stipend. These consist of three substantial meals of meat, vegetable soup (or *minestra verde*), bread, and as much wine as they can consume. Each person receives, besides, two carlins (about ten-pence), which may, in this country, be considered as an equitable, if not liberal remuneration for labours, which, nevertheless, appear to an inhabitant of the north, from their nature, and the season in which they are performed, fearfully severe and oppressive.

These labourers, who are mostly natives of Abruzzo, and have travelled a considerable distance, generally sleep in the fields; but the feast of S. Nicandro (the patron of Venafro) occurring just at that time, they all returned to pass the night within the walls of the town, which they entered at sunset in separate groups.

An itinerant bagpipe-player preceded each of these companies, who, almost without exception, were all engaged in singing to the full extent and power of their lungs, and dancing with a degree of energy and activity, which accorded but little with the fatigue they at the same time complained of.

It was, however, evident, that this state of excitement was produced by the refreshments they had so largely partaken of; but it was confined to the gambols they performed, for they made way for every well-dressed person, generally saluting them, and wishing them a good evening with much courtesy of manner. The female portion, which amounted to at least half the number, and among whom several were of a very advanced age, joined in these sports with a vivacity that was almost frightful.



In the interior of the mansion where I was so hospitably received, I had an opportunity, which had sometimes previously occurred, of observing the pre-eminent station which a priest always enjoys in a family of the middling class in this country.

It is frequently, I may add generally, the custom for one, among a numerous progeny of brothers, to adopt the clerical habit and functions. The choice of the individual is supposed to be originally influenced by a natural vocation, or a greater aptitude to study and acquirements; and it usually falls on the second or younger brother, who, having received the portion of learning deemed requisite to such a profession, enters holy orders; and whether this step leads to any lucrative preferment or not, he is immediately regarded in quite a distinct and superior light by the rest of the family.

It is customary, though not obligatory, for him to give up the possession of his share of the patrimonial property to the remaining members of his house, but on certain conditions, which ensure to him very considerable

personal advantages : such as a monthly allowance proportioned to what he has renounced, a separate table served in a more costly and delicate manner, at a different hour from that of the family meals, and, above all, the best apartment or room in the mansion : in addition to these privileges, he exacts a show of outward deference from the community and servants, which places him on a still higher level, and is in fact looked up to as their father and sovereign. His superior education enables him to keep the accounts, and is supposed to invest him with the experience requisite to direct all household affairs : all the contracts and financial concerns are submitted to his inspection ; and while the other brothers go through the drudgery of cultivating the land, and the sisters perform the labours of menial servants, he receives the rents, or disposes of the produce, deciding, according to his sole judgment, on the most advantageous manner of placing the funds it may bring in.

This system is subject to some abuses ; still, it is but fair to observe that, in most cases, it is the means of preserving a continuance

of friendly union and intercourse, in a large family, totally incompatible with our notions of personal independence, and it generally proves the medium of consolidating and improving the property, as well as the respectability of the whole united kindred.

This appeared the case in the family to which I allude, where the priest, in the absence of his brother, did the honours of the house with a tone of authority to which his sister-in-law submitted with greater deference than if it had emanated from her husband.

It is probable that the ancient Venafrum was originally comprised in the Samnite district, but for this hypothesis no authority exists; while most classical authors mention it as belonging to Campania; and it is by many of these extolled for the amenity of its situation, the fertility of its soil, and the excellence of the oil it produced. The former quality seems to have recommended it as a summer residence to many Romans who possessed villas there; but it is far from enjoying a similar character at present, as it suffers much from the heat of the temperature, and the air is not esteemed

very wholesome. Its other merits have survived in the form of wheat, oil, and wine, each being abundant and excellent in its kind.

Another species of celebrity it has likewise preserved in the size and strength of the wild boars, for which its environs were famed in Horace's days, as they are in these.

Some remains of antiquity still attest the rank it held : these consist in the faint vestiges of an amphitheatre, a portion of polygon walls, and numerous fragments of sculpture of Roman execution, as well as inscriptions.

In its modern state, the only impressive object it exhibits, is a handsome gateway, which admits the stranger into very tortuous, ill-paved, and narrow streets, so steep as to preclude the passage of carriages, and rendered still more gloomy by archways reaching across from house to house at regular intervals.

The cathedral, which is situated outside of the town, has nothing remarkable in or near it, except three very ancient and stately lime-trees, which, placed among the extensive olive-groves that stretch on all sides and cover more than half the hill, offer a grateful contrast in

their form and colour to the somewhat monotonous and dull appearance of that useful tree.

Under the Lombards Venafro was the seat of a Castaldus, afterwards of a Count; and, under that title, its possessor ranked in power and influence with those of Aquino and Teano.

Under the Angevine and Aragonese dynasties, a distinguished family of the name of Pandone held it as their principal fief: in later years it passed under the feudal rule of the Perrettis, nephews to Sixtus V; afterwards, by marriage, to the Savellis; and, finally, was occupied by a branch of the Carracciolis, distinguished as Dukes of Miranda. It has now, by two successive marriages, passed, with that title, to the families of Gaetano and Medici (princes of Ottajano), the last of which at present possesses it.

Like most other towns of any consequence in feudal times, it boasted of a baronial castle as the residence of its lords; and this edifice, though neglected and out of repair, is not untenanted, or even unfurnished. Its isolated position, detached from and considerably above the town, gives it the advantage of a magnificent view over the plain of the Voltorno, and

the richly wooded mountains that confine it on either side.

The dimensions of the building, though inconsiderable for a mansion of that particular description, are still more than adequate to the accommodation of a modern family ; while the stately hall, still adorned with the frescoes of two centuries back, and the distribution and ornaments of the apartments, evidently of the same date, offer a curious and not uninteresting specimen of the style of interior architecture of those days. The principal decoration of almost all the rooms and some of the corridors consists of portraits in fresco painting, as large as nature, of the horses appertaining to the breed of the Carracciolis, Dukes of Miranda : they are mostly represented with the warlike and equestrian accoutrements appropriated to the reign of Charles V, and each is furnished with an inscription, bearing the name, height, and date of birth of the animal, together with the titles of the individual to whom it was either given or sold ; among which may be read those of some of the most distinguished characters of that splendid era, including the Imperial sovereign.

It was by no means uncommon in those, and even less remote times, for the richest and most influential among the Neapolitan nobility to possess a breed of horses, distinguished by peculiarity of form and colour as belonging to their house; the preservation and improvement of which were attended to with considerable expense and solicitude by the respective owners, who attached much pride and importance to what they considered one of the most dignified appendages to their feudal power and consequence.

The repeated shocks given by the government to the superannuated system of feudal jurisdiction, and its final overthrow under the French, by breaking up the provincial establishments of this privileged class, put an end to all the institutions which accompanied them; and it is by name only that some races of horses, distinguished by that of their former breeders, are still preserved.

The distance from Venafrò to Capua, by the high road, is estimated at twenty-six miles, the post station between these being Torricella, already alluded to in an early chapter, in which

the road itself is likewise described as far as the tavern called *Il Pagliarone*, where that which branches off to *S. Germano* joins it. The country which is traversed is quite flat, and the *Voltorno*, though seldom seen, rarely flows at any great distance from the road till it has passed the little town of *Presenzano*, when it deviates from this line to assume a course still nearer the base of the *Matese* (which forms the eastern flank of the whole valley), and turning abruptly under the buttresses of this mountain, it enters the valley of *Piedimonte* already described.

At about three miles from *Venafro* a stone-bridge is passed, which, crossing the river, carries another road, through a gate, into the royal chase or preserve, stretching along the wooded banks at the foot of the *Matese* beyond the stream, and vying in extent, as it does in beauty, with the celebrated forest of *Persano*.

No villages, or towns, are gone through: those of *Rocca Pipirozza* and *Sesto*, picturesquely situated on the western range, are passed; but a few taverns are the only buildings that are within call of the road, which is



somewhat tedious, though commanding distant views not destitute of attraction. Several heaps of shapeless Roman brickwork are scattered along the flat, probably the remains of ancient sepulchres.

After Presenzano, the nearer prospect acquires considerable improvement from a detached cluster of hills, combining the picturesque effects produced by a happy intermixture of woods, Gothic ruins, stately monastic edifices, and the situations of the villages of Vairano and Marzanello, placed one at the foot, the other on the summit of these mountains. A very short distance then brings the traveller to the tavern above-mentioned, beyond which it is needless for me to direct the reader's attention over beaten ground.

During the first excursion I made into the Abruzzi, I was induced to perform the journey from the valley of Piedimonte to Venafro through the royal chase just referred to, as offering, to an equestrian wayfarer, a much more pleasing and shorter track than that alluded to as the post-road. I shall, consequently, describe it in an inverse direction, that is,

from south-east to north-west, beginning at the village of Sant' Angelo, from which I started.

Passing under Raviscanino, and approaching the river, a portion of wild forest scenery is explored, not sufficiently stocked with timber to preclude the cultivation of corn.

The immediate banks of the river being flat, and exposed to its occasional ravages, have a dreary and uncouth aspect; but it is relieved by the isolated hill that rises on the opposite bank, (the reverse of that on which Vairano is placed,) which, covered with a thicket of ilex, is most appropriately named Verdesca. It is between this hill and the Matese, that the Voltorno flows, effecting through this narrow defile its passage from one plain into another.

After this, on the right is seen the village of Ailano, seated some way higher on the slope of the mountain, on the edge of a rapid and clear stream called the Lete, which has its source in the higher regions of the Matese, near the village of Letino. It rushes down the steep with great impetuosity, and is subdivided into many artificial channels, for the purpose of working

some mills and irrigating the flatter country, after which it falls into the Volturno.

This stream furnishes very good trout, a large supply of which are yearly caught alive and transported to Caserta, to keep up the stock fed and fattened in the reservoir at the foot of the great cascade.

Three miles farther along the edge of the Lete stands the little village of Prata, surrounded by a gloomy and barren enclosure of mountains: and thus far I went on horseback, to obtain a view of a fall of this river, which is not without interest, from the singularity of its formation and position. I wished to have followed the ravine from which it emerges, and which leads in a winding direction to the very foot of the cataract; but this was impracticable from its extreme narrowness, which leaves on either side no space even for a footpath. The only way of getting a sight of it was to ascend the hills at some distance, till I reached a spot nearly parallel with the level from which it springs, and which enabled the eye to embrace nearly the whole of its height, which must, at least, measure three hundred feet. The body

of water is in no degree proportioned in volume to this elevation, and it therefore produces but little effect, especially from the distance where I stood.

The feature, however, which distinguishes it from other cascades of the same nature, is the point which first marks its appearance, and from which it casts its sheet of foam into the abyss beneath ; this being not from the surface of the cliff, but some way below, which gives it the semblance of issuing from a small cave. This is owing to the subterraneous course which the stream assumes for nearly half a mile previous to forming this cataract. After passing under the village of Letino, one of the highest on the Matese, it is suddenly absorbed in a rocky cleft, where it entirely disappears, only to emerge from the flank of the perpendicular rock above described.

I regretted that my time was too limited to allow of my climbing up as high as its source ; and retraced my steps as far as Ailano, and the level of the Voltorno. After passing by another village placed on the right, called Prattella, and an hour's more progress, we entered

the royal preserve, which from this spot occupies a longitudinal extent of six miles, but stretches so considerably over the mountain as to constitute a circuit of four-and-twenty, which is entirely walled or fenced.

The keeper's house, at the entrance of this privileged district, is most beautifully situated near a fountain backed by the forest, commanding to the right and left picturesque views of the valley, and having in front the village of Sesto, perched on the opposite range of hills beyond the river and the high road.

A very excellent track, wide enough for two carriages, runs along the whole length of this chase, parallel with the Voltorno, the edge of which sometimes forms its boundary: where it does not, a belt of cultivated ground intervenes, which the wooden paling very ineffectually protects against the incursions of the wild boars. The interior is again subdivided by fences, probably to keep the varieties of animals asunder.

Venafro in antiquity was noted for the ferocity of its wolves, as well as the size of its

boars ; and in this particular it still claims distinction in the province. We saw the marks of the spring traps, called *taglioni*, which are placed in the winter along the road, to catch the former animals, as they cross it from the mountain to the flat grounds near the river.

The forest consists principally of oak timber, but there is a proportion of beech and elm ; and among the underwood, which is very luxuriant, a great many large thorns are found.

This spacious tract, commonly called Caccia di Venafro, and as often Riserva di Torcino, affords to the royal proprietor some advantages besides the mere gratification of field sports ; as the trees are let, or, more properly speaking, sold, in lots every year, for the purpose of being felled and burnt into charcoal : an operation which can only be performed from the month of November to the middle of June, and which was going on, in some parts, when I passed.

The trees selected for destruction are marked in such proportion as to furnish about thirty to each *moggio*, or acre ; and a great portion of

the domain is thus let out annually at eleven ducats the moggio.

The contractor is obliged to find security for the payment, which he engages to make after a stipulated space of time granted to enable him to dispose of the produce. This he is bound to manufacture and carry off from the spot within the period above-mentioned; so that considerable activity is requisite to fulfil the terms of the agreement, which are rigidly enforced. But the speculation is usually successful, from the certain sale and consumption of the material, the only one used as fuel for culinary and manufacturing purposes in the whole country.

The labours requisite to reduce the timber to charcoal require great exertions and vigilance in the workmen, and a constant and minute inspection from the overseer. Nothing, as may easily be imagined, can be more detrimental to the beauty and rural character of the scenery than such an operation.

The inclosure terminates at its north-west extremity in a portion of inclosed meadows,

watered by a small brook, among which is placed the habitation of the head keeper, and a building adapted to the temporary accommodation of the royal party on sporting excursions. It contains large stables, a suite of small rooms, and a larger hall to dine in, besides kitchen and other useful appendages ; but the edifice is by no means of sufficient dimensions to allow of a residence of more than a few hours ; so that it is a matter of surprise that some additional expense has not been bestowed on the original establishment, to provide it with a mansion of adequate capacity and convenience to receive the royal sportsmen and their attendants, who, when they visit these regions, inhabit a very indifferent house in the town of Venafrò, so limited in its accommodations that all their attendants and retainers are billeted on the more affluent inhabitants.

This circumstance, and the distance from the capital, added to the enormous expenditure entailed on all royal journeys by antiquated customs and etiquette, have rendered a sporting excursion to Venafrò an event of rare occur-



rence in later times; and during a residence of seventeen years in the kingdom, I do not recollect more than two having taken place.

The building above-mentioned is at a very short distance from the gate opening from the bridge over the Voltorno, which joins the high road at about three miles from Venafro.

**EXCURSION**  
**INTO**  
**THE PROVINCE OF MOLISE,**  
**OR SAMNIUM.**

**VOL. II.**

**I**



# EXCURSION

INTO

## THE PROVINCE OF MOLISE.

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### CHAPTER I.

*View on approaching Maddaloni.—The town.—Dukes of Maddaloni.—Aqueduct.—Sant' Agata de' Goti.—The Caudine Forks.—The Calore.—Solipaca.—Suspension Bridge.—Guardia delle Sole.—Views from it.—A tragical event.—Morcone.—Altilia, the ancient Sepianum.—Its ruins and antiquities.—Tavern near Sepino.—A bandit innkeeper.—Suburb of Campobasso.—Trade of the City.*

THE first station on the road to Campobasso is at Maddaloni, a good town, situated about sixteen miles from Naples, at the foot of the same range of hills which rises behind Caserta, from which place it is distant four miles.

It is not, however, necessary to go through this last to reach it, the road from Naples turning off to the right four miles short of the royal palace; but I had slept there, and consequently must direct the reader's attention to the route I followed.

This runs along a well-cultivated fertile tract of country, about half a mile from the base of the hills, through several well-built villages, which add great animation to the journey ; while the view of Maddaloni itself, which improves on a nearer approach, gives great effect to the general character of a landscape peculiar only to the south of Italy,—I may add, to the Neapolitan realm.

The somewhat bare aspect of the hilly ridge is amply compensated by its bold and fantastic outline ; while its lower flanks are luxuriantly clothed with olive plantations, mixing with clumps of deciduous trees of more genial tint, and the varied cultivation incidental to these latitudes. The lower members of the mountain range, crowned by the imposing and picturesque ruins of a feudal castle, extend, like a promontory, into the ample plain which is comprehended under the title of the province of Naples ; and, attached to their extremity, are seen the broken masses of structure which form the town of Maddaloni, combining palaces of impressive, though irregular architecture, with towers and cupolas, agreeably relieved by the rounded masses of orange groves, or the

tapering cypress, overtopping balustrades and arched terraces; while the warm indescribable colouring, peculiar to these regions, seems to act on the general sense of the beholder, more forcibly than on the mere organs of sight.

The interior of the town did not, contrary to my expectations, belie its outward appearance; for I have seen none of equal dimensions in this part of Europe that can boast of so many good houses, such wide and regular streets, and which bears at the same time, in all its details, so cleanly and well-conditioned an aspect. It contains about eleven thousand inhabitants, and is a thriving place, principally in consequence of the fertility of its territory, the facility of irrigation, and the abundance and excellence of its various productions.

Its origin is probably Lombard, but the remains of Calatia Cisvulturnensis are supposed to exist at no great distance.

The title of duke, which it formerly conferred, was borne by one of the influential branches of the Carafa family: but this dignity, not of very remote date, is now extinct; while the fiefs and extensive appendages have been inherited and divided by collateral claimants.

It was under the rule of the Spanish viceroys that the opulence and power of the Dukes of Maddaloni attained their highest point ; and the individual who owned the title during the notorious revolution effected by Masaniello was particularly obnoxious to the popular party. He had the good fortune to escape the fury of the multitude ; but his brother fell a victim to it, and the memoirs of the times record the acts of vengeance and animosity exercised against his name and property at Naples ; while his lady's carriage was used by Masaniello's wife and mother when they paid their first visit of ceremony to the Vice-queen, and her jewels served to decorate their persons on this memorable occasion. According to the Duke of Guise, the same ornaments were subsequently applied to a similar purpose by the wife of another popular leader, named Gennaro Annese.

To return to the town of Maddaloni : the road to it from Caserta, following the same line along the base of the mountains, leads to Arienzo, where it falls into the main communication between Naples and Benevento.

The more frequented track to Campobasso

runs through the whole of Maddaloni, and, describing an abrupt angle to the left, ascends a narrow pass between two low hills, which is not apparent from the plain.

This defile is about two miles in length, and brings the traveller where the valley, widening suddenly, is traversed in its whole breadth by the celebrated aqueduct generally termed I Ponti di Maddaloni, the high-road being conducted under the centre arch. This far-famed construction, erected by Charles III. to furnish the artificial cascade at Caserta with water, has been so often and so accurately described in all books of travels, and is so well known to all northern visitors, that a detailed account of it would probably be considered superfluous.

The vale, which afterwards assumes still more expanded dimensions, shows on the right, as far as the eye can reach, the line of this water-course, along the flank of Mount Taburnus. It is marked by a wide path, with, at certain intervals, pilasters, or turrets, at the spots where openings have been constructed to turn off the stream, or cleanse such portions of the channel as may occasionally require it.



Soon after passing the arches, the little village of Valle is seen on the left, while the mountains on either side assume a bolder outline; especially the ridge of Taburnus, which is distinguished by two other names, Durazzano and Longano, the latter portion being that to which the aqueduct is united: the higher regions, richly clothed with dark forests on this side of it, (the northern aspect,) stretch as far as Benevento. The valley displays the richest and most varied style of cultivation, the road running through spacious orchards of cherry and apricot trees.

A track, practicable for carriages, branches off on the right, and leads to Sant' Agata de' Goti, an episcopal town, most singularly placed, about four miles off, on a volcanic hill, surrounded by the meanderings of the little river Isclero, which reaches it through a defile which many antiquaries have given the preference to as the celebrated Caudine Forks, over that extending between Arienzo and Arpaja, generally considered as the representative of that spot.

This pass, leading from Sant' Agata to the village of Mojano, undoubtedly coincides, in its

physical appearance at least, more closely with the description left us of the disastrous scene of Roman defeat than the other; the Isclero, and the contracted path which borders it, filling up the whole space between the lateral hills, which from their rugged steepness are impracticable on either side.

Sant' Agata de' Goti is supposed to stand very near, if not upon, the site of the ancient Saticola; some remains of ancient constructions being visible near it, and many tombs with fine vases having been found in the vicinity. In its present condition it contains three thousand inhabitants, and offers nothing remarkable but its picturesque situation contrasted with the peculiar gloomy appearance presented by its houses, the walls and roofs of which are nearly black.

The Isclero winds its way into the broader valley, where the high road crosses it; soon after which the Voltorno becomes visible, with a fine view of Cajazzo and the eastern front of the hill on which it stands. Shortly after this, the traveller goes through the little village of Ducentola, with a picturesque ruined castle,

and a fine baronial mansion of good architecture.

Beyond the Voltorno, on the left, are seen two large villages, Squilla and Campagnano; which last is situated very near the junction of the Calore with the former river. The road is conducted much nearer the roots of Mount Taburnus, deviating more or less, with their projections, into the plain, till the banks of the Calore are reached, along which it runs parallel for some time. This stream, which flows from Benevento, where it has received the waters of the Sabato, exhibits here exactly the same aspect, breadth, and colour, as the Voltorno, into which it falls very near this spot. It was crossed by means of an inconvenient ferry-boat, when I made this excursion in 1831, at a short distance from the little town of Solipaca, beautifully situated at the foot of Taburnus, but scarcely visible from the road on account of the masses of forest scenery which surround it.

This place contains three thousand souls, but is esteemed unhealthy, either from its proximity to the river or the dampness of its peculiar

position, looking to the north, and shut out by the impending mountain behind it from all the advantages of sunshine or mild breezes.

Near the ferry, stand the four piers of a fine stone bridge, the arches of which gave way and fell into the water before it was ever used. It seemed a matter of wonder that they had been left in that state, while a wooden bridge might have been established, at a very slight expense, upon these pillars: since that, however, in the present year 1835, a suspension bridge has been completed by order of the reigning sovereign, who has thereby conferred an inestimable benefit on the population of the contiguous provinces and the public at large. Immediately after crossing the river, the road begins a long and very tedious ascent on one of the buttresses of Mount Matese, divided here from Taburnus by the contracted glen through which the Calore flows.

The whole extension of this mighty mountain had for some time spread itself on the left as far as Piedimonte, which likewise showed itself under the highest of the snow-capped peaks.

The portion of Matese which the road ascends, has at first an aspect of nakedness, which vanishes on a nearer approach, as it is well cultivated, and sufficiently furnished with olive and fruit trees to somewhat divert the tedium of a climb of three miles, between the banks of the river and the little town of Guardia Sanframondo, or delle Sole, where I halted for the rest of the day and night. The line of the ancient road is still visible along the base of the mountain ; a direction more extended than the present, but attended probably with greater advantages in point of time and practicability.

The place I stopped at derives its name, Guardia, from having been originally founded as a stronghold, or outpost, to guard the approach to the town of Cerreto, situated three miles farther within the recesses of the mountain ; and became the residence, as well as the principal feudal tenure, of the Sanframondo family, who bore the title of Counts of Cerreto, and possessed all the surrounding territory. Guardia received, from this circumstance, the additional appellation of Sanframondo, which it still retains ; though more usually designated

by that of delle Sole, from a manufacture of coarse hides for the soles of shoes, which occupies a great portion of its inhabitants,—about four thousand in number.

The houses of this town, which is small for this population, are huddled above one another on the rugged and irregular surface of the hill, leaving between their rows narrow and dark lanes, rendered still more impracticable by occasional flights of dilapidated steps. The road is carried through one portion of it which is evidently of more recent construction, and offers the only level surface it can boast of; and here I found a very tolerable small inn.

The exterior of Guardia, which in its position bears a great resemblance to Cajazzo, is extremely picturesque; and the views from it, particularly to the south and eastward, equal, if they do not surpass, the most celebrated prospects in Italy. In these directions, it commands the course of the two rivers Voltorno and Calore to the point of their junction, as well as the plain beyond it, under Mount Taburnus: on the other side it reaches nearly to Piedimonte, through the beautiful valley of

Faicchio, on the flank of the Matese, whose higher regions, glittering with snow, and broken into bluff masses or fantastic peaks, offer a majestic contrast to the softer beauties which grace the midway belt of forest that intervenes between the bare and sublime extremities of the mountain and the cultivated lands that enrich its roots.

These lower slopes show, between their clumps of olive and fruit trees, the windings of a little stream called the Titerno, which, at this distance, have the effect of so many silver pools; while a limited proportion of villages, and occasionally a ruined castle or white-washed monastery, appears upon some isolated projection thrust forth by the roots of the mountain into the numerous dark and mysterious glens that border them.

Several springs, which rise just above Guardia, supply the town with numerous fountains of the purest water: these unite in forming a small river, called Loratino, which rushes down the steeper flanks of the hill, and enters the Calore.

The environs of this place are well culti-

vated, principally with olives and vines : the latter produce a good but strong liquor, which furnishes the natives with what they deem a plausible excuse for the hot and quarrelsome disposition they are said to possess, productive of frequent and sometimes sanguinary affrays. A tragical event, resulting from one of these altercations, had occurred on the evening previous to my arrival at Guardia, which had caused a deep, and apparently salutary impression on the natives. One of them had a dispute with another about the trifling sum of five grains, (about two pence English,) and, under the excitement produced by liquor, pursued his antagonist with sufficient violence to induce this last, who was unarmed, to conceal himself. The former, disappointed of finding him in a house where he had sought him, ran down the stairs in a state of increased exasperation, when his foot slipped, and he fell on the very knife which he carried for the purpose of revenge, in such a position that it pierced him to the heart, and he died in a few minutes. The body was lying at the office of the commissary of police, waiting for the decision of the



Bishop of Cerreto as to the mode of its interment, the priest of the town not having ventured to grant it Christian burial under such peculiar circumstances.

I quitted Guardia early the next morning, and following the upper flank of the mountain, along a good and level road which skirts it on this side, soon entered the *Contado di Molise*, or, to speak more classically, the ancient Samnium, across a ravine, over which a very fine arch has been erected, near the little village of Santo Lupo. A more northern direction assumed by the track I pursued, transfers its course from the valley of the Calore to that of its tributary stream the Tamaro; and enables the traveller, by seeing beyond the foot of Mount Taburnus, to catch a distinct glimpse of Benevento, to the south-west, in the flat beneath that mountain.

After this, a long succession of tedious ascents and declivities ensue, through a tract of country as varied in its produce and fertility as in its surface; sometimes presenting a clayey cold soil, poorly cultivated and devoid of trees, and exhibiting at others portions of forest scenery growing round huge isolated blocks of

grey limestone, and interspersed with patches of vineyards and richer vegetation.

A village, called Ponte Landolfo, is passed to the right of, and very near, the road; its aspect is extremely picturesque: and in a glen, just below it, stands one of the above-mentioned masses of rock, rising in a pyramidal form to a very considerable height, and terminating in a very acute point or spire, which gives it a most striking and fantastic appearance.

Soon after this, and a long descent, I reached the banks of the Tamaro, which I followed for some time, leaving the respectable-looking town of Morcone about two miles to the left, on the side of the mountain; while another village, in nearly a similar position on the opposite side of the valley across the river, bears the name of Santa Croce di Morcone. The former possesses near it some vestiges of antiquity; to which circumstance, and a faint analogy of name, it once owed the honour of representing the ancient Murgantia, a city of some importance, belonging to the Samnites Pentri: but some more recent discoveries have fixed its site at a place called Baselice, about ten miles distant;

leaving to Morcone the diminished distinction attached to the remains of Mucræ, a spot unknown in history, and only mentioned by Silius Italicus.

The Tamaro, now reduced to a scanty mountain stream tumbling wildly over a rocky bed, is soon after crossed; and on the left, at no great distance from the road, the little town of Sassinoro shows itself in a pleasing situation, near a clear and rapid brook that bears its name and falls into the Tamaro: after which, an ascent of some steepness brings the traveller into a wider valley of a colder and less attractive aspect, and the river is crossed again.

Shortly after this, I stopped at a solitary tavern by the road-side, about two miles from the town of Sepino, situated on a higher bank to the left. I availed myself of the time employed in refreshing the horses to visit the ruins of the ancient Sepianum, under the hill on which the modern town is placed. The path leading to these remains afforded a most agreeable ride, skirting the base of the mountain along rich meadows that owe their luxuriance to a quantity of clear fells winding be-

neath some fine oaks. The spot which is looked upon as the ancient Sepianum is now called Altília; an appellation it probably acquired in the early ages of Christianity, but of which the derivation is not known.

The complete preservation of the wall that encircles the existing vestiges, points out the exact dimensions; and these are not equal to the idea that must naturally suggest itself of a city which held a prominent rank among the most distinguished of Samnium, and could offer the determined and protracted resistance against Papirius Cursor, and his experienced troops, which Livy has recorded.

As a Roman colony was established at Sepianum under Nero, and it became a *municipium*, it is not improbable that a new form was then given to it, by inclosing only a particular portion of the ancient town within the boundaries of the existing walls, and rendering it thereby a fort or citadel. The masonry of these walls, and the style of most of the remains which they encircle, which is of Roman and not very remote execution, may corroborate this supposition. The fragments are, nevertheless, ex-

tremely interesting, as much from their number as from some peculiarities they exhibit, among which nothing is more remarkable than the regularity of line in the walls, and that observed in the situation of the four gates, placed at the four cardinal points, at exact distances from each other, with two straight roads, running between them, intersecting each other exactly in the centre of the inclosure. This last describes a perfect square with the angles slightly rounded off, and the line of walls, which are of the best species of *opus reticulatum*, is entire in its extension, though ruinous in many parts.

The gates, of which the piers in all four, and the whole arch in one, are extant, were faced with fine large slabs over a mass of masonry of smaller ones. Their depth, solidity, and the massive square towers which flanked each of them, give them, even in their dilapidated state, a most imposing aspect. The soil has accumulated round the basements with the lapse of time, as well as throughout the whole interior circuit, which has been converted to the uses and purpose of a grazing farm, and in which

several modern rural edifices have been constructed. One of these conceals, in a dark cow-stable, the vestiges of a theatre: the portion allotted to the spectators, which, as usual, was semicircular or oval, seems to have ended on each side in a square vestibule, or *atrium*, of four arches supported by pilasters. Both these are extant; but appear, though of similar form, to have been erected at different periods, as the masonry offers very essential varieties. That which is the most ancient is formed of immense blocks, equal in structure to any existing specimens of the same nature; the other is not only inferior in size and execution, but the quality of the materials is not the same.

Besides these, there are many other substructions and vestiges of buildings, some of which are pointed out as temples; and numberless broken shafts of marble columns, as well as fragments of sculpture of all kinds, and inscriptions, which last have all been collected, and inserted into the wall of one of the modern edifices.

I was fortunate enough to meet the owner of these premises, who is a proprietor of Sepino,

and kindly accompanied me in my investigations, in which he seemed to take much interest and some pride. He showed them to me in detail, and lamented that the tenure of the property, in which he only had a life-interest, did not allow him to remove the buildings which placed such impediments in the way of effecting farther discoveries; and likewise prevented his altering the nature of the cultivation from pasture to arable, which would admit of advantageous excavations. He had, however, made several whenever the possibility of so doing had offered itself; and one of these had brought to light the subterranean course of a fine aqueduct, the contents of which, oozing through the herbage, had, until then, been looked upon as a natural spring rising at this spot.

The zeal of preceding antiquaries has, fortunately, preserved, and transmitted to posterity, the knowledge of the most interesting relic existing among the ruins of Sepianum, the present condition of which is such as to render all satisfactory examination of it impracticable. This was an inscription of considerable length,

placed on the eastern gateway, the letters of which are so entirely defaced and corroded by the effects of time and weather, that they have for many years past been illegible, though the lines can still be traced. Both Gruter and Muratori have published this inscription, consisting of an admonition to the magistrates of the city of Sepianum, ordering them to protect the drivers and proprietors of the flocks which annually passed through the town from the rudeness and ill-conduct of the soldiers of the garrison, as well as of the inhabitants; citing the complaints that had been transmitted to Rome of these abuses and irregularities, as contained in two letters to influential personages in the capital, the contents of which are copied verbatim. This document not only corroborates, what was already known, that the periodical migration of the herds from Apulia to the mountains is of most ancient origin, but it proves that they observed the same line of route which they follow to the present day; the road that runs from the east to the western gate of this inclosure, falling into the line of the *tratturos*, or sheep-paths, exclusively



allotted to the use of the flocks in their annual journeys.

The necessity of continuing mine within a limited time withdrew me from the ruins of Sepianum, which I quitted with much reluctance after gratefully acknowledging the kindness of their proprietor, who strongly pressed me to make some sojourn with him at his mansion in the modern town of Sepino; an invitation which I could willingly have converted into a residence in one of the rural dwellings erected among these monuments, which, from the interest they offer, and the amenity of their local position in verdant meadows, shaded by well-grown oaks, and irrigated by fresh and transparent rills, present a more than common degree of attraction.

The tavern where I had left the carriage, and which bore the name of Sepino, though four miles distant from it, is a lonely building, sufficiently spacious to afford accommodation to travellers; but has, naturally enough, acquired a bad name through the misdeeds of one of its occupiers some years back.

This man, who had been at considerable

expense to fit it up with such conveniences as rendered it superior to all the other resting-places on the same road, had imagined to make his guests pay for these luxuries, not only by the ostensible charges he made as innkeeper, but by robbing them, through the means of emissaries of his own, at a short distance in advance of his residence, after they quitted it early in the morning.

This practice had been carried on for some time without suspicion or detection, when a scheme of improvement in his habitual mode of depredation brought his iniquity to light. A lady of some rank, who was journeying from Campobasso to Naples, carrying with her a considerable sum of money, stopped at this tavern for a night, for the purpose of not exposing herself to the chance of robbery after dusk; and the master of the house prevailed upon her to deposit the specie in a cupboard, or press, in the wall of his own room, as the safest receptacle for the night, requesting her to keep the key of it. Before morning, a gang of banditti burst into the house, bound the master hand and foot, broke open the cupboard, and

departed with the money-bags. In the general alarm and confusion caused by this occurrence, one of the lady's servants preserved sufficient presence of mind to observe, assisted by the light of the moon, from a window under which the depredators passed while departing with their booty, that two of them bore a strong resemblance to some men he had seen in the kitchen during the earlier part of the evening ; and his mistress, having been made acquainted with this after she had quitted the spot on the following day, obtained assistance from the next station of gendarmerie, and returned unexpectedly to the tavern, where the master was found dividing the spoil with his agents, among whom the two principal were his own sons, and was with them seized, and in course of time suffered the punishment due to his crimes.

At some distance beyond Sepino, or rather the fore-mentioned tavern, the road ascends a long and tiresome hill, quitting the valley of the Tamaro altogether, and, on the other side of it, the village of Cerza Maggiore and Cerza Piccola, near which this river takes its source.

The country then changes to an undulated tract, little remarkable for either fertility or picturesque beauty.

The well-built village of S. Giuliano is placed in an agreeable situation; and, soon after passing it, a road of recent construction, leading to the town of Bojano, branches off to the left at a very abrupt angle.

The main track winds for some miles through a series of hills so barren and repulsive to the eye, that I could fancy myself among the clay mountains of Basilicata.

The approach to the city of Campobasso is somewhat improved by some patches of oaks; but the first aspect of the town is by no means equal to the notion one is apt to form of the populous capital of a province. The principal access to it is through a suburb, composed of buildings erected within the last six years on an extensive flat; the level surface of which, as well as the greater regularity of the houses, and their style of architecture, confer upon it a much more attractive character than that retained by the city itself, which is afterwards entered by a gateway, leading into a narrow,

dark, and dirty street. In the former quarter are situated the cathedral, of a simple and dignified style of architecture; the barracks, prisons, a college, and several other public establishments. Here also I found the inn, which became my residence; and in which, though of considerable magnitude, I found some difficulty to obtain accommodation.

It was far beyond mediocrity, and I remarked with surprise that it is the only town in the kingdom possessing an establishment of the kind which has evidently been constructed for no other purpose than public accommodation. The number of rooms, the manner in which they are rated according to their respective merits, a tariff relative to the meals and wines which are offered to the traveller, and a variety of other convenient regulations, show that the concourse of strangers is frequent, if not habitual, in the town of Campobasso.

It is reckoned to contain about nine thousand inhabitants, a population apparently numerous in proportion to the limited surface it occupies. They seem industrious and well-disposed: at the same time, the local position

of Campobasso is not such as to account satisfactorily and clearly for the comparative degree of importance it has attained, being to all appearance but indifferently situated for carrying on any internal branch of commerce; for, except the high road to Naples, it is provided with no direct or efficient means of communication with the rest of the kingdom, and the coast of the Adriatic. A road originally intended to secure this last advantage, by communicating with the little port of Termoli on that sea, has hitherto been carried no farther than fourteen miles beyond Campobasso, in the direction of Larino, a town on the edge of the flat country of Capitanata, the representative of the ancient Larinum, of which some extensive and well preserved ruins of Roman form point out the site.

Campobasso is, nevertheless, considered the entrepôt of all the corn-trade between the capital and the provinces of Apulia and Abruzzo Citra; and this circumstance has, above all others, contributed to the prosperity it has enjoyed for some years back.

It is, moreover, celebrated throughout the

kingdom for its manufactures of cutlery, which I expected to have been pointed out as the principal objects of public attention and curiosity. Great was my surprise, therefore, at finding that the various articles of that nature, which are so abundantly disseminated for sale throughout every portion of the realm, are all fabricated in detached small workshops, containing little more than a common blacksmith's apparatus, and possessing so contracted an assortment of articles, that I could with difficulty obtain a selection of a dozen knives and scissors. They all work by commission for dealers in the metropolis and other large towns, with such limited means and capital, that they are entirely incapacitated from executing and maintaining in their laboratories a collection exhibiting anything like variety or choice.

The absence of all mechanical assistance, and the want of efficient instruments and tools to abridge and perfect their labours, renders their final result a matter of surprise and even wonder, and reflects considerable credit on the skill and perseverance of the individuals who follow this profession. It is but justice to add, that the

implements of husbandry they fabricate are good and cheap; but those which aim at a higher degree of execution or refinement are dear when compared with similar articles of British manufacture.



## CHAPTER II.

*Campobasso. — Paintings in the Churches. — Produce of the Country. — Theatre. — An unsuccessful Prima Donna. — Derivation of Molise. — Nicolo Monforte, Count of Campobasso. — City of Agnone. — Vinchiaturo. — The Matese. — The ancient Bovianum. — Bojano. — Its depopulation. — Climate. — Passage over the Matese. — A bridal cavalcade. — Telese. — Sulphureous stream. — The ancient Telesia. — Casale. — L'Amoroso.*

THE origin of Campobasso is not of remote date, and it is placed on the abrupt declivity of an isolated hill, the upper extremity of which was occupied by a feudal castle of considerable dimensions, its ruins still covering a large space of ground.

The streets that lead to this edifice are dark, narrow, and filthy in the extreme; and, though tolerably well paved, inaccessible to carriages and even horses, not merely from their steepness, but from the frequent recurrence of flights of steps at regular intervals of distance.

The city is not walled, but all the exterior buildings join one another, having but few doors outwardly, so as to form a continued rampart of walls of no inconsiderable strength. The line of this bulwark is broken by five several gateways, each still provided with an ancient tower. The best houses are placed in this position, possessing, besides the advantage of a more commodious interior access, windows that look over the surrounding open country.

The churches, except the cathedral already mentioned, are all mean and small, and only one of them advances any claims to notice: this is dedicated to Sant' Antonio Abbate, and contains several very good paintings; one of which in particular, representing St. Benedict exorcising a monk, is of very superior execution. The author of these works is unknown, but tradition records him as having executed them while enjoying refuge in this town from temporary pursuit or persecution, and Guerino has been named as the painter. I am not aware of any part of his life according with a similar circumstance, but the manner and colouring have much affinity with his.

Another church, belonging to a monastery of Capuchins, about half a mile to the east of Campobasso, contains a curious painting representing the reconciliation of two factions, which for a lapse of many years had, after the fashion of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, distracted the peace of the city by the constant recurrence of sanguinary feuds. They bore the names of *Guisci* and *Cavagni*, derived probably from families so called; and, in the year 1588, were finally induced to bury their animosity in eternal oblivion, through the friendly interference of a friar of that order. As a work of art the record has little merit, but there is much truth in the countenances, which were mostly portraits; and the church where the ceremony occurred with all the solemnity of a religious rite, has acquired the appropriate name, which it retains to this day, of S. Maria della Pace.

The atmosphere of Campobasso is accounted healthy, and the environs are free from malaria; but the climate is variable, and very cold in winter. Corn is the principal produce of the immediate vicinity of the city; but there is a sufficiency of oil and wine in other parts of the

province to supply its own wants. The latter, however, is far from good, the grapes being gathered in an unripe state, to escape the early frosts, and the juice is boiled to soften its asperity and render it susceptible of preservation: the result of this operation is what is termed *vino cotto*; a beverage scarcely to be endured by palates unused to it, and but slightly partaking of the generous and salutary qualities of wine in general.

The town is furnished with a public walk honoured by the title of Botanical Garden, the vegetables of which speak but unfavourably for the nature of the soil and temperature; which, however, are not uncongenial to the growth of northern fruits, among which are numbered above seventy different sorts of apples and pears.

The surface of the country is as little adapted to picturesque scenery as the soil is suited to advantageous cultivation, and the general aspect of the scenery is dull and dreary. The village of Ferrazzano, about a mile from Campobasso, in a more elevated situation, has, however, something striking in its exterior appear-

ance; and those of Pietracatella, Montagano, and Oratino, placed at no very great distance, show that the district is not deficient in population.

Campobasso possesses a theatre, much too small for the number of its inhabitants, and probably the more frequented on that account by a population who seem to take particular delight in the amusement it affords. The period of my arrival was one of peculiar excitement, caused by the failure of a *prima donna*, and the high expectations raised by the debut of her successor, whose appearance was looked to with general impatience and anxiety by the public, but who had not yet arrived from the capital. My carriage had not unfrequently been stopped, as I drew nearer to Campobasso, by several respectable persons, to inquire if it contained this important individual; and once by the criminal judge, whose duties called him to some distance for the purpose of investigating the circumstances of a recent highway robbery, who most peremptorily stopped my progress, and, very unceremoniously, as I thought, put his head into the vehicle without

previous inquiry, and said, "Dov' è la prima donna?" It was with reluctance that he received my assurances that I was not the personage he sought, and could give no tidings of her; but she was expected from Naples that day, and actually to sing in the evening, having been sent for express by the municipal powers to supply the place of a performer who, though young, and preceded by the laudatory voice of fame, failed in the principal requisite of her profession, namely, an organ that could be heard even in the limited precincts of the theatre of Campobasso. This deficiency had even been admitted by her own avowal, though attributed to local indisposition, and temporarily relieved by the talents and intelligence of a secondary performer for a few nights.

Of all this I was subsequently informed after I was established in the inn, where my approach had excited the same exhibition of eager expectations, and subsequent disappointment, as on the road.

The voiceless heroine was actually occupying this very residence, and waiting the arrival of

her more fortunate successor, (to avail herself of the return of the vehicle which should bring her,) with becoming resignation and even cheerfulness, if I may judge by the incessant roulades, cadences, and volatas in which she indulged at intervals, and which kept me awake during the first part of the night, which she had devoted to a farewell supper to her operatic companions, and led me to fear that a Campobasso audience must be afflicted with incurable deafness. The final appearance of the long wished for *prima donna* on the second day, the punctilio observed on either side as to which of the *virtuosas* was entitled to the first visit from the other, and lastly, the departure of the unsuccessful songstress on the third, were circumstances, attended as they were with local and characteristic details, which forcibly recalled to one's recollection the amusing scenes in Goldoni's *Ballerina*.

The last of these was perhaps the most effective to an impartial spectator, when the discarded artist, who was both young and pretty, appeared at the door, clad in plaid silk of most brilliant hues, with a black velvet travel-

ling-cap and gold tassel, over ringlets disposed of in the picturesque but formal manner peculiar to the coiffure of the middle ages. On her left hand rested a grey parrot; the right, thrust through the steel chain of a weighty embroidered reticule, rested moreover on the arm of a gentleman of substantial attire and mature age, whom she frequently addressed as *Signor Barone*, and whose attentions, joined to those of a retinue of younger but equally respectable attendants, proved that, however unfortunate the lady had been in securing the applause of the public, her merits had been more successful in the attractions of private society.

Her professional companions were likewise present at this interesting juncture, and formed a second group round her at the carriage door, where she waited some time while sundry packages of wondrous dimensions were placed, or rather forced into the vehicle; one of which, as she assured the baron, contained thirty-two white calico curtains. Then another tedious interval elapsed, during which the lady's mother, who, as she somewhat pettishly remarked, *si fa sempre aspettare*, was paying,



or rather disputing, the amount of the landlord's bill, and sweeping up into a basket all the remaining items inseparable from a dramatic establishment. Mamma, after being heard for a long while, appeared at last, assisted by the footboy or *giacchetto*, the materials of whose travelling-cap, as well as the border of the matron's petticoat, bore testimony of identity with those of the young lady's attire, and did honour to her munificent disposition. Nothing now seemed likely to cause farther delays to the departure, except the introduction of a hamper containing a greyhound mother and a litter of puppies, a cage with another parrot, a second with some canary-birds, and lastly, another hamper containing an heterogeneous mass of ingeniously packed provisions, the fundamental elements of which shone conspicuous in the form of Bologna sausages, pomegranates, and tallow candles.

The ladies were ushered into the carriage at last, not without considerable exertions on their own part and that of their suite; the *giacchetto* mounted the seat, and perched himself on an indescribable amalgamation of band-

boxes and small parcels; the coachman uttered a volley of those reproachful sounds which, in these countries, prove the only successful stimulants to unwilling or jaded horses. The ladies waved embroidered handkerchiefs in sympathetic accord with the exaltation of all the hats belonging to their friends; the bare-legged urchin, usually denominated *quaglione*, banged the door of the vehicle to with a thundering crash, which effectually drowned an involuntary and painful exclamation of the baron, whose fingers narrowly escaped forcible incarceration in the hinge-joint; the bipeds and quadrupeds set up a loud yell, and the ponderous equipage was dragged off at full gallop, in a cloud of dust, amidst the vociferations of the lower orders, which, though qualified by some allusions (to me incomprehensible) with regard to parrots and pigeons, must, upon the whole, have been considered as complimentary to the travellers.

The province of Molise, comprising the principal part of the ancient Samnium, derives its modern appellation, not from a small town of that name about ten miles from Campobasso,

but from one of the Norman families settled in the kingdom at different periods of immigration after the first conquest by Robert Guiscard.

The adjunct of De Molise, or De Moulins, is by no means of rare occurrence among the companions of William the Conqueror, and it is probable that Normandy possessed more than one branch of the family who bore it. It appears that a certain Hugo de Molisiis had, in the twelfth century, become possessed (probably by a sovereign grant) of almost the whole of Samnium, and his descendants retained to a much later period several of the principal fiefs which composed it; among which, Campobasso, though of comparatively modern origin, had already attained a primary importance. By marriage it passed into the house of Gambatesa, and subsequently into a branch of that of Monforte, descendants of the renowned Simon de Montfort, the exterminator of the Albigenses, and of his no less celebrated son, better known in British history as the Earl of Leicester, whose children and relatives accompanied Charles of Anjou in his successful expedition against Manfred of Stauffen.

This restless and ambitious family continued to possess, as Counts of Campobasso, large domains in this province, and exerted such extended influence throughout the realm as to render them the objects of the alternate protection and jealousy of its sovereigns.

Nicola, or Cola, Monforte, the last who bore the title under the Aragonese dynasty, appears foremost in the ranks of the formidable phalanx of unruly vassals who, by lending their assistance to the princes of the second line of Anjou, and securing that of the reigning Pontiff, threatened the overthrow and destruction of Ferdinand I. The efforts of this association of influential and warlike feudatories offer, in their continued and uncertain course, one of the most singular narratives presented by the History of the Neapolitan dominions during the middle ages, and have been recorded more concisely in a work entitled "*Congiura de Baroni*," by Porzio, a native writer.

The names of the Princes of Salerno, Bisignano, Venosa, and Melfi, those of the Duke of Sessa, the Counts of Campobasso, Sarno, and other powerful noblemen, were arrayed against

the tyranny of their liege lord ; but their mutual jealousies, divisions, and want of good faith, finally undermined the cause they had undertaken and upheld for a length of years, and the king's energy and superior cunning triumphed over their machinations.

Most of the leaders suffered death or exile ; others were thrown into captivity, and their domains confiscated. The Count of Campobasso's name stood so high during the successful part of his career, that he assumed the power of stamping coins with his name and arms, some of which are still extant. After his flight from his native land, and the sequestration of his property as a rebellious subject, the military fame he had acquired secured him a post of high importance in the armies, first of the Duke of Lorraine, and afterwards of Charles the Bold of Burgundy. Tradition has branded him, however, with the stain of treachery, in consequence of a reproof (some say a blow) received from his new master, whose defeat and death at the battle of Nanci have always been attributed to the defection of the Count of Campobasso.

His son succeeded afterwards in recovering the favour of his legitimate sovereigns, and was reinstated in his hereditary estates and honours ; but, having taken part with the French in the expedition of Charles VIII, he was finally banished from Naples, and died in obscurity ; leaving two sons, from the eldest of whom, Antonello, descended a second line of Monfortes, who, deprived of their ancestral titles and possessions, were said to exist in the town of Nola till about the middle of the last century.

There are other cities in the province of Molise, which, as episcopal sees, claim the next rank to Campobasso ; but that which, in point of population, commerce, and consequently affluence, has the fairest right to such a distinction, is one called Agnone, containing more than seven thousand inhabitants and several manufactories. It is, nevertheless, but little known ; being situated in a mountainous district, remote from any high road, and having but very indirect communications with that of the Abruzzi at Castel di Sangro. There is a project in contemplation to establish a road between Campobasso and Agnone, and to carry it on to

Castel di Sangro, which would be a much nearer line of communication than that now executing by Bojano to Isernia, of which I shall give some account.

Leaving Campobasso shortly after the departure of the *virtuosa*, I resumed my way towards the capital ; but diverged from its main course, about eight miles farther, to go to Bojano, situated five miles from the turning. This is the track lately constructed for carriages, to open the communication between Campobasso and Isernia, on the great road from the capital to Abruzzo, for the mutual advantage of the contiguous provinces of Molise and Capitanata.

The face of the country is soon much improved by large patches of forest scenery scattered irregularly over it.

The village of Vinchiaturo, pleasantly situated amidst verdant meadows, plentifully watered and shaded by large trees, is discovered shortly afterwards, and the road is carried through it. Its aspect is flourishing and cleanly, in consequence of recent construction and restoration ; its original representative, of much more considerable extent, having been entirely destroyed

in the earthquake of the year 1805, which so peculiarly devastated this province.

A winding descent leads to a long and chilly-looking valley, entirely cultivated with wheat, through which several streams that have their springs in the Matese are seen winding till they join the Biferno, which rises close to Bojano. One of these, called Il Rio, rushes from a deep ravine under the little town of Guardia Regia, which, as well as two others, Campochiaro and Santo Polo, are placed on lower eminences branching out from the larger mass of the mountain, the northern flank of which stretches along the whole of the vale of Bojano. Its aspect, on this side, is as impressive as gloomy: dark and yawning recesses, extending apparently into the bowels of the mountain, protrude huge buttresses of naked rock into the flat; while these narrow glens are thickly clothed with impenetrable thickets, which appear to climb up the higher fissures as far as the most elevated point, called Monte Miletto, rising above Piedimonte to the south, and overlooking Bojano in the opposite direction.

I arrived at this last place quite early enough



to visit all that remains of its ancient importance and magnitude, now limited to several portions of polygonal walls, which are of somewhat difficult access, the modern buildings having been constructed above them. The only fragments of this kind within the town are near to each other, though in different parallels; one in a dry well, another in a cellar of the same house, and the third in the court of an adjoining habitation. As specimens of that particular mode of construction, they are remarkable; being composed of very large blocks closely united, with the smaller interstices filled up with singular exactness and even nicety.

These stupendous labours, of which other relics are to be seen along the lower region of the mountain above the scattered habitations of the modern town, are calculated to impress the observer with a notion of the superior strength of the fortifications of the ancient Bovianum. It is, therefore, not surprising to find Livy allude to it as bearing the rank of metropolis, among the four principal cities belonging to the district of the Samnites Pentri.

The reputation which it had likewise acquired, of being the most opulent, might probably awaken the cupidity of the Roman invaders ; and, in the successive contests between these and the natives, its occupation was ever considered an achievement of such vital importance, if not absolute necessity, that the utmost efforts of their military skill and power were combined to overcome the resistance opposed by its triple line of fortifications.

In the Social War it became the last asylum of the different nations that had united to resist the unbending system of aggrandizement and usurpation which characterized the policy of the Roman Republic.

After their defeat and expulsion from Corfinium, and subsequently from *Æsernia*, the allied forces established their head-quarters at Bovianum, and illustrated it by the ultimate ineffectual struggle they maintained against their foes. It finally became a Roman colony ; but neither under that form, nor, later, as a Christian episcopal see, did it ever recover any vestige of its ancient splendour or importance. Pliny, indeed, mentions it as if divided into

two portions bearing the same appellation; but Strabo clearly says, that neither Bovianum, Venafrum, Telesia, nor Æsernia, could in his days be ranked as cities.

In the year 642, Alzecus, the leader of a horde of Bulgarians, came over to this part of Italy, and obtained in grant from Romuald, Duke of Benevento, the territories of Bovianum, Sepianum, and Æsernia, under the jurisdiction of a Castaldate, a species of military fief established by the Lombards. As such it continued to exist until the invasion of the Normans, when, as has already been observed, it became more distinctly the property of the family of Molise, who bore the title of Counts of Bojano previous to that of Campobasso.

The unproductive quality of its soil, and the peculiarity of its local situation, under a steep mountain of such elevation as to deprive it of the influence of the sun for several months in the year, might tend to the continuance of the state of depopulation to which it had been reduced; but the frequent and devastating physical convulsions to which its territory has been subjected, have probably exerted a still

more pernicious effect. In 853, one of these commotions converted nearly the whole of the valley into a lake, and destroyed a great portion of what remained of the city. The former was drained off in the course of time by the workings of nature; but not a century has elapsed without some fresh calamity arising from similar causes, namely, the frequent recurrence of earthquakes, which have more particularly ravaged the base of the Matese.

It is singular enough that a mountain of such magnitude, and in such a position, should not be noticed by any of the ancient geographers or historians in a more specific manner. So complete has been this omission, that the investigators of ancient topography are compelled to look upon the name of Tifernus, which is twice alluded to by Livy apparently only as a very inconsiderable part of the Matese, as having been the denomination likewise conferred on its whole extension.

The same appellation was also given by the ancients to a Samnite town, and to the river now called Biferpo, which rises from several clear and chilly springs close to the modern

Bojano. In this spot it abounds in excellent small trout; and, after a winding course of about forty miles, discharges itself into the Adriatic near Termoli. The flat surface which it irrigates near Bojano is thereby maintained in such a swampy state as not only to be very unproductive, but to impregnate the atmosphere with a degree of dampness which prevails at all seasons of the year, and manifests itself by repeated and lasting fogs. The climate is therefore far from genial: but the absence of a corresponding proportion of heat, which in these latitudes usually confers fertility on a marshy soil, has probably likewise prevented the generation of accompanying malaria; for, notwithstanding the coldness and humidity of climate for which Bojano is proverbial, its inhabitants, amounting to little more than fifteen hundred, are said to enjoy excellent health, and offer not unfrequent examples of longevity.

The bishop, for it is an episcopal see, resides at Campobasso, and the place itself has a poor and depopulated aspect. Several Latin inscriptions, and some fragments of indifferent sculpture, grace the modern cathedral; an edifice,

the simplicity of which amounts to meanness. —It may seem strange, after this description, to add, that the situation of Bojano is not destitute of picturesque beauty; but as such it struck me, perhaps from the contrast with Campobasso; and when I viewed the serrated peaks of the towering Matese, the magnificent forests that stretch along its indented and precipitous flanks, and the transparent rills that issue from its roots and meander over a surface of verdure such as is never seen in the summer of the South, I felt that the landscape had an original character which was not without considerable attractions.

The little town of Colle d'Anchise, containing three thousand inhabitants, is situated on the opposite range across the valley, and forms a pleasing object.

The road leading from the main track was finished as far as Cantalupo, about four miles beyond Bojano, in the direction of Isernia; to which, nevertheless, it is possible to go in a carriage during the summer months. It was expected that a year would suffice to bring it to completion, which has since been effected.

Rugged and impracticable as the passage over the highest extremities of the Matese may seem, it is in use at almost every season of the year by the natives of the south and northern sides of the mountain, who drive their beasts of burden, laden with various articles of commerce or produce, close to the most elevated of its pinnacles. The ascent from Piedimonte to that point which it is requisite to pass, does not employ more than five hours; and much less is required to descend into the valley of Bojano, to which there are three different paths; so that the saving of time and expense secured by this communication must ensure the continuation of the practice.

The height of the Matese is estimated at 9700 Neapolitan palms, about 2300 less than that of the Gran Sasso; and its circumference reckoned to measure seventy miles. The view from its summit, when favoured by a clear atmosphere and serene weather, (circumstances of rare occurrence,) is extremely extensive; embracing both seas, and, it is said, occasionally the coast of Dalmatia beyond the Adriatic.

It seemed as if my excursion to Campobasso

and Samnium was destined to be illustrated by a train of occurrences characteristic of some peculiarities of habit and manners in the middle classes, which were perhaps more amusing than instructive.

I had scarcely regained the high road to the capital, when my carriage overtook and passed a numerous and joyful party of horsemen, whose miscellaneous aspect, as well as the varieties exhibited in the animals that bore them, could not but attract attention and curiosity. My surmises as to their different callings, and the object of their peregrination, were satisfied at the tavern where I baited at mid-day; and they shortly joined me, likewise to rest for some time.

I then learnt that they mostly belonged, in unequal capacities, to the establishment of the criminal tribunal at Campobasso; the Cancelliere, or principal clerk of which, had (like many individuals of more illustrious rank) recently been married by proxy at Naples, the duties of his station not allowing him leisure for a journey thither, even upon so important an occasion. All the persons employed in the



same department had been anxious to testify their respect to the bridegroom, (who was past the bloom of youth,) and had offered their services in accompanying him to meet his spouse, who was to sleep that night at Guardia delle Sole, on her way from the capital and her native home. But, unfortunately, the principal personage had, very early in the morning, and just as he was preparing to mount a horse kindly lent to him by the president of the supreme court, been assailed by a complaint, assuredly most ill-timed, which, though variously and forcibly described by his sympathising companions, could evidently in every language be designated by a very technical though ordinary appellation.

This indisposition, which, they added, could prove of no very extended duration, was nevertheless so inconvenient as well as painful, as entirely to preclude the possibility of his attempting the intended expedition that day; and his friends, being all ready to attend him, volunteered proceeding in the form of a deputation, invested with his direct sanction, to receive the bride, alleviate the shock of dis-

appointment and alarm by a succinct and reassuring statement of its causes, and escort her with all due honour on the following day to the capital of Samnium and the abode of her expecting consort. All this was related to me by the person who appeared to take the lead in the embassy, and who was, as I learnt from some of the subalterns, one of the principal jailors. They ordered a substantial repast of maccaroni and eggs; after which it had been determined to resume their progress, to anticipate, if possible, the arrival of the bride at Guardia.

Whether the malady which had so *mal-à-propos* inflicted itself on the Cancelliere was tainted with some contagious influence, or the fatigues of the journey operated in a morbid manner on persons unused to such undertakings, or the refreshments they had perhaps indulged in too luxuriously had something deleterious in their composition, it is difficult to verify; but almost the whole party, before I quitted the tavern, declared themselves severally incompetent to continue their route, from the same causes which had afflicted their worthy

colleague. After offering all the advice and recipes which my limited experience in pharmacy afforded, I left them with a promise to execute to the best of my power the painful task of submitting these untoward events to the consideration of the disappointed bride. I was, however, spared this unpleasant commission in the sequel; for, having reached Guardia early enough to provide a comfortable meal, and to rest myself till the cool of the day, I had the satisfaction of seeing the entire cavalcade enter the little town, apparently completely recovered from their indisposition, and repair to a private house destined to receive the lady for the night whenever she might arrive.

Shortly after this, I walked out on the high road in the direction of the capital, and it fell to my lot to be the first to catch a glimpse of this interesting person, who, it seems, had left her father and mother in the carriage which had brought them from Naples, resting under the influence of slumbers so potent as to defy the repeated shocks occasioned by the forcible contact into which their corpulencies were rudely brought by the joltings of a newly gravelled road.

The young lady had preferred another mode of travelling, and was mounted on a little Calabrian pony which had carried the servant boy, now promoted to a seat by the driver; and under that form, (rather unexpected, all circumstances considered,) I first beheld her, preceding the vehicle by about two hundred yards, and apparently not embarrassed to adapt her attire (albeit unsuited to such an undertaking) to the peculiar mode of horsemanship she had selected, which did not admit the advantage of a side-saddle. A pair of nankeen trousers, tied at the ankles with blue ribbon over striped jean half-boots, must however have proved the most commodious, as they were the most conspicuous, portion of her costume; the remainder of which was disposed after a fashion more convenient than graceful. The body of her upper garment was of shot silk, *couleur gorge de pigeon*, surmounted by gigot sleeves of white starched muslin of considerable dimensions; and her countenance, by no means unattractive, was shaded by a Leghorn bonnet and artificial flowers: the hand that held the reins bore also a scarlet umbrella;

and the other brandished a large green fan, which was occasionally used as a whip. Her general appearance did not seem to produce so peculiar an impression on the natives of Guardia as it had done on me. I followed her and her respectable parents into the town; and had the additional felicity of seeing the latter carefully slung out of their carriage, and the bride gallantly lifted off her horse by the members of the deputation, who all kissed her hand, and, as far as I could make out, carried the trio up the staircase amidst expressions of mixed regret and congratulation.

It was satisfactory to learn that the whole party quitted the place at daybreak the following morning for Campobasso, with no greater inconvenience than the prolonged journey of the father and mother thus far to place her in the keeping of her husband. I likewise had resumed the course of my journey, but, previous to crossing the ferry under Solipaca, deviated from the high road to examine the ruins of Telesia, a city of some note, belonging to the Samnites Caudini, afterwards a Roman colony, and still bearing, in its present state of depopu-

lation and devastation, the dignity and title of an episcopal see.

After following for about two miles the line of a bad swampy road, running parallel with that of the Calore, I found myself in a row of wretched hovels, which constitute all the existing habitations of the present city, situated about a mile from the ancient one. These are not unpleasantly situated on a gentle slope of richly cultivated and wooded ground, rising insensibly from the bank of the river; a view of which it commands, backed by the dark forests of Taburnus.

The ruined church, which was once, and is still called, the cathedral, exhibits a number of Latin inscriptions upon its walls, and some fragments of architectural sculpture of very superior execution. These were probably conveyed from the site of the ancient city to this, its Christian representative.

Not far from this edifice stands the only ruin which is remarkable in point of construction, and which the peasants call a castle. It probably was a sepulchre; its form being that of a truncated cone, faced with large square blocks.

of grey lime-stone, and vaulted in the interior.

The spot occupied by these remains and the huts above-mentioned, is copiously watered by various branches of a sulphureous stream rising from abundant springs at a short distance, in the direction of the Matese. It emits a very powerful and nauseous odour, to which is attributed the existence of the malaria which pervades the whole district. But this calamity is more probably derived from a marsh, formed by other springs that ooze from the soil just behind the present village in a kind of basin, the bottom of which is lower than the position of the habitations, so that a great portion of these waters are in a continual state of stagnation, producing an immense crop of rushes and reeds, which, in their annual fall and reproduction, add the baneful effects of their pestilential exhalations to those of the putrid pool.

The tradition of the natives reckons, with these causes of insalubrity, others still more fatal, in the form of gaseous vapours that issue from the earth in various places, and, like those of the Grotto del Cane and Lake of Amsanctus,

are powerful enough to kill birds, reptiles, and animals.

A pond of very limited dimensions is honoured with the name of Lake of Telese : its waters, fringed by large elms, have a pleasing aspect of depth, transparency, and freshness, and are said to produce very large tench and eels.

The site of the ancient city is about a mile to the north-west of the cathedral, and is easily identified by the line of its walls of *opus reticulatum*, of octagonal shape, unbroken in its extension of a mile and a half, and in many parts preserved to its original height ; the gateways have fallen in, but their position is marked by square towers on both sides of each. The space inclosed within these walls is now entirely given up to cultivation, but several heaps of bricks attest the existence of large edifices ; and on the outside, at no great distance, may be traced the vestiges of a circus, and some more indistinct relics pointed out as those of a theatre.

Several ancient authors mention this city as one of the principal among those of the Samnites, and it is likewise recorded in the Itineraries as being in the line of the Via Latina.



During the successive contests which illustrated the nation to which it belonged, it acquired considerable renown from having at different periods given birth to two celebrated generals, each bearing the name of Pontius: the first commanded the army which subjected the Romans to the disgraceful defeat in the Caudine Forks; and the second, at the head of seventy thousand men, in the Social War, approached so near to Rome as to threaten it with the worst of perils. In the dark ages it produced a writer, known as Alexander, Abbas Telesinus, whose chronicle of the deeds of Roger the First is referred to with confidence by modern historians.

I had proposed, under our coachman's guidance, to have proceeded along the banks of the river as far as the next ferry, which was to replace us in the high road; but the track we followed to effect this became gradually so much less practicable, that, after some progress, we preferred following a smoother but more circuitous path to a village called Casale di S. Salvatore, situated on a higher level at the foot of the Matese, through which we went,

over a pavement that threatened destruction to our vehicle.

This village, situated at the immediate base of one of the projections of the mountain, picturesquely crowned by the ruins of a castle of considerable strength and size, presented in its interior aspect one of those anomalous spectacles which are not of unfrequent occurrence in these realms. It consisted but of two streets containing probably little more than two hundred inhabitants, but these bore an appearance of ease and activity for which it was difficult to account. Here existed a spot surrounded on three sides by a belt of malaria, backed by precipitous and inaccessible mountains on the fourth, cut off from the more populous and healthy parts of the province by two rivers and a swamp, through which all communication is nearly intercepted during half the year: yet it contained an industrious and comparatively affluent population, several coffee-houses, a theatre, and many houses of superior architecture, with extensive gardens laid out in a good, though perhaps antiquated taste, and adorned with marble fountains, vases, and statues.

From Casale we changed our direction, turning again towards the river, and reached it after going through another village, called L'Amoroso, which, though larger than the former, by no means presented so satisfactory a picture. It is placed very near the sharp angle formed by the confluence of the Calore and Volturno. The immediate banks of the former, and indeed the whole range from Telesse to Casale and L'Amoroso, bear the most unequivocal marks of volcanic operations; but the structure of the Matese in the same line of extension is entirely calcareous.

A ferry called Del Torricello, placed half a mile from the last village, carried us over the Calore; and a hundred yards more brought us into the high road, a little way beyond the turning to Solipaca. From this I returned back to Naples the same way I had come, and completed an excursion which, in its limited extension, comprised many objects of interest and attraction.

**E X C U R S I O N**  
**INTO THE PROVINCES OF**  
**PRINCIPATO CITRA AND ULTRA,**  
**BASILICATA, TERRA DI BARI,**  
**AND CAPITANATA.**



# EXCURSION

INTO

## PRINCIPATO CITRA AND ULTRA,

&c. &c.

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### CHAPTER I.

*Passes through the Apennines.—Excursion to Nola by Sarno. — Scafati.— The Virgin of the Baths.— Sarno.— Military contests.— Roman Aqueduct.— Palma.— Nola.— Pass of Monteforte.— Fountain.— Village of Monteforte.— Family of De Montfort.— Snow-pits.— Avellino.— The ancient Abellinum.— Monastery of Monte Vergine.— Montefusco and Montemiletto.— Eilanum.— Grotta Minarda.— View from Frigento.— The Pool of Amsanctus.*

THE first station I had in view on quitting Castellamare, in the autumn of the year 1829, was the town of Avellino; and, to attain it, several roads, or rather tracks, were open to my choice, by either of which I might reach the foot of that branch of the Apennines which surrounds the plain of Naples, the valleys and passes of which are open to a traveller's progress in many more spots than he is aware of, on a transient survey of the apparently formidable impediments that encircle this province.

The short and very practicable causeway cut through the tufa near S. Agata, on the Roman road, may perhaps not deserve to be numbered among these outlets ; but there are two others, likewise in a northern direction, behind Capua and Caserta, which, though equally accessible, are little known to the common class of travellers, and break most unexpectedly on any observer whose eye follows the naked and fantastic peaks of Mount Tifati, and sees no opening through the steep and weather-beaten flanks of that dreary range. These two defiles, leading at no great distance from the above-mentioned towns to the plain of Cajazzo, are described in another portion of this work ; and I shall therefore point out a third, perforating the line of hills behind the town of Maddaloni, and probably more familiar to the casual visitor as conducting to the celebrated aqueduct built by Charles III. The continuation of this road leads to Campobasso, the capital of the province of Molise.

At Arienzo, another defile, more worthy of this denomination from its form and extension, forms the communication between that town

and the villages of Arpaja and Montesarchio; and has, by the majority of antiquaries, been regarded as the celebrated Caudine Forks.

Following the base of the Apennines, which now draw nearer to that of Vesuvius, Nola and many other towns are seen placed at the commencement of a fifth and much more formidable pass, which is that of Monteforte, leading to Avellino and all the eastern districts of the kingdom: this, from its length, steepness, and winding course, is perhaps the only important one in a military point of view. After this, no carriage-road is constructed through any break of the mountains till beyond Nocera, when one, little used or known by foreigners, runs through an open valley to S. Severino, and, having from thence a communication to the right with Salerno, once formed the principal, if not the only line of connexion between that city and the capital. The newer road by La Cava, being much shorter and more beautiful, has very naturally superseded the use of that by S. Severino; but though, strictly speaking, it may be looked upon as a mountain pass, I am unwilling to place it on the same rank



as the above-mentioned tracks, from the circumstance of its not forming a link with an interior valley, like most of the others.

The reader will pardon this digression from my journey at its very outset, and accompany my progress to Nola by the way of Sarno: which I offer to his attention in preference to the less circuitous, but more monotonous track through the sandy vineyards that extend between the roots of Vesuvius and the foot of the Apennines. To gain access to either, the high road must be re-entered near Pompeii, and followed as far as Scafati; to which place, however, another leads from Castellamare, through the little town of Angri, under Mount Lactarius. At Scafati the Sarno is crossed near a picturesque church and shrine of the Virgin of the Baths, whose festival is celebrated by her votaries plunging in crowds into the river; a ceremony which the season renders far from unpleasant.

Should the traveller be inclined to follow the shortest direction to Palma, and avoid Sarno, he will turn off suddenly to the left before the bridge of Scafati, and by keeping

along a succession of deep sandy lanes, communicating with and intersecting each other in rather a puzzling manner, he will finally reach the object of his journey, after passing through the large well-built village of Poggio Marino.

The road I took, which is excellent, quits the main track at an abrupt angle, likewise to the left, some way beyond Scafati; and winds through a flat but rich and well-cultivated country, by the villages of San Marzano and San Valentino; which last is remarkable from a church with several small cupolas clustered together, bearing the unusual, but highly picturesque appearance of an eastern mosque.

Sarno is a well-built and flourishing town of ten thousand inhabitants, sufficiently elevated above the level of the plain to enjoy an uninterrupted view over the whole of its surface as far as the sea. A street of great extent stretches along the foot of the mountain, whose parched and sunburnt sides denote the effects of a southern aspect and summer sun. This exposition, and the effluvia from the adjoining flat, combine to render it as a place of residence unfa-

vourable, if not absolutely unhealthy, during the hot months.

The river Sarno is formed by three distinct springs, one of which rises a little way beyond the town on the road to Nocera; the second gushes from a rock under a ruined tower in the centre of the town, and supplies all its wants; but the third and most copious has its origin at about a mile to the west of Sarno, where it oozes from the limestone rock, through no visible aperture, in great abundance and transparency, but, as it is immediately dammed up, and divided into several channels, much of the picturesque beauty usually adherent to similar scenes is destroyed. The spot is, moreover, devoid of trees; nor do the ruins of a monastery of considerable dimensions, but clumsy and ineffective architecture, on one side, and a mill with its overshot channel on the other, add any redeeming features to the landscape. One of the canals above-mentioned is of very ancient construction, and conducts a considerable body of water to the fertilisation of the country round Torre della Nunziata; while a secondary branch deviates to

Pompeii.\* The others, though turned into various courses for the purpose of irrigation, are united before they reach Scafati; after which they are crossed by the bridge on the road to Castellamare, and finally flow into the sea just opposite the little island of Revigliano.

The town, the river, and the mountain, all bear the name of Sarno, and it is not worth ascertaining from which of the three the appellation of the others was originally derived. Some antiquaries have quoted Virgil's line,

*"Sarrastes populos, et quæ rigat æquora Sarnus,"*

to prove that the denomination of the inhabitants partook of the same origin. What appears less doubtful is, that the size and position of the stream rendered it of some consequence, as dividing the territory of Campania from that of the Picentini, (as it now does the province of Terra di Lavoro from Principato Citra,) and forming at its mouth a maritime emporium for the use of Nuceria, Pompeii,

\* The works of the gunpowder manufactory in that town are likewise animated by it. It is in contemplation to remove this establishment altogether to the source of the Sarno.

Stabia, &c. The depth of its waters will admit of small vessels reaching the bridge above-mentioned; but the facility with which these can load at all the towns in the bay, would render all expense to improve its navigation superfluous. Giustiniani in his Dictionary says, that it was navigable as late as the reign of the Aragonese kings; but that a Count of Celano, proprietor of Scafati, turned off the water in several courses for the use of mills, thereby impoverishing the stream and poisoning the air.

The town of Sarno, and its immediate vicinity, have been at different periods the scene of some remarkable military contests. The first which is recorded was in 553, when Narses defeated the Goths, commanded by their last king, Teja; and by this victory and his death put an end to the rule of those northern invaders in Italy, which had lasted about sixty-four years. The second action was at a much less remote period, during the minority of the Emperor Frederic II, King of the Two Sicilies; and is remarkable as having, through the death of Walter of Brienne, who had, in right of his

wife, claimed the possession of these domains, secured them to his successful, and undoubtedly more legitimate antagonist. The third encounter was in the reign of Ferdinand I. of Aragon, who, after having been surrounded by the forces of John of Anjou, succeeded not only in escaping from the dangerous position in which he was placed, but in finally overcoming the army of this prince, and driving him out of the kingdom. This event was considered of such vital importance as to induce this monarch, at no time remarkable for either gratitude or liberality, to reward those who had furnished assistance to him in the hour of peril by various grants and concessions. The town of La Cava in particular, whose syndic had strenuously exerted himself on this occasion, was largely endowed and recompensed, as recorded by an inscription still existing in the little village of Duppino, of which place this magistrate was a native, and where his descendants probably obtained leave to erect this memorial in the time of Charles V, whose name, by a singular error and anachronism, is mentioned in lieu of Ferdinand's.

Soon after leaving the last and most copious of the sources of the Sarno, the remains of a row of brick arches are seen. These belong to the great aqueduct which was constructed by the Romans for the purpose of conveying the waters of the river Sabato from Serino, where it rises, to Pozzuoli, and afterwards to the Piscina Mirabile at Baja; from which line a secondary branch deviated into the city of Naples, which it entered near the spot where now stands the gate called Di Constantinopoli, and was the same which facilitated the entrance of the soldiers of Belisarius into the town: other ramifications of this work extended to Posilippo, S. Elmo, &c.

A curious document has been published by Giustiniani, which was written in the sixteenth century by a certain engineer named Pietro Antonio Lettieri, who had been directed by Peter of Toledo, then viceroy of Naples, to make minute and elaborate researches on this subject, with a view either of restoring the fabric or effecting a new one to answer the same purposes.

The road, following the curvature of the mountains, brings the traveller, a few miles far-

ther, to Palma, a depopulated and much smaller town than Sarno, but pleasantly situated, exactly facing Ottajano, on the slope of Vesuvius.

The most remarkable object in it is the baronial mansion, now belonging to the king, with a wooded territory rising behind it, crowned by the ruins of a very extensive Gothic castle. Here the other road from Scafati, by Poggio Marino, before mentioned, joins that to Nola, which is reached at the distance of about four more miles, leaving the picturesque village of Lauro on the right.

The low unpleasant position of Nola offers a singular contrast to the well-chosen sites of several monasteries and the episcopal seminary in the vicinity; most of which are placed on gentle rising grounds among woods, with handsome avenues of large elms leading to them. Two miles beyond this, the track I had hitherto followed falls into that leading from the metropolis into Apulia, denominated, as such direct communications habitually are, *Via Consulare*; on which, it should be observed, Nola is not situated.

Shortly after, I stopped to bait at a large



tavern, called *Le Anime del Purgatorio*, from a church so termed standing opposite to it.

The rain, which fell heavily, precluded any investigation of the surrounding country, which however, from the flatness of its aspect, and the monotonous though fertile character of the mode of cultivation, could have afforded but a slight degree of interest. On resuming my progress, Cardinale, Bajano, and Mugnano are passed, substantial, well-built villages, especially the two last; soon after which, a picturesque bridge, named *Ponte a Quattro Occhi*, crossing a deep ravine, marks the line of division between the provinces of *Terra di Lavoro* and *Principato Ultra*; which last is entered at the foot of the long, tedious, but not very steep ascent leading up to the pass of *Monteforte*. The volcanic quality of the soil continues unchanged along the whole of this acclivity, and its rugged surface shows even blacker and less questionable symptoms of its origin than in the plain; a character by no means concealed by the altered vegetation which clothes it, and probably greatly tends to give it a singularly wild and gloomy aspect.

The lateral hills, rising on each side in fantastic crags, are thickly covered with forests of sweet-chestnut trees, which appear to grow with peculiar vigour on the slopes of all volcanic mountains, though seldom seen in masses on the flats : an observation which must strike all those who make excursions among the numerous craters of extinct volcanoes that surround the capital ; such as Agnano, Astrumi, the steeps of the Camaldoli, and the still more singular succession of volcanic basins forming the territory known by the name of Quarto, which extends under the hill of the Camaldoli and Monte Barbaro, (anciently Gaurus,) near Pozzuoli.

About half-way up the hill of Monteforte, a heap of masonry of imposing magnitude presents to the spectator the confused architectural remains of a fine fountain. The supply of water which it still affords to the way-worn pedestrian, or the panting herds, betrays in its diminished and scanty stream the workings of time and neglect ; but retains stronger claims upon their gratitude than the diffuse high-flown inscription, which has better withstood

the attacks of years and weather, and informs the traveller that it was erected by Charles III.

Such monuments, recording the construction of roads, fountains, and bridges, are of frequent occurrence within a certain distance of the capital ; and appear to have been most common during the rule of the Spanish viceroys : but their dilapidated condition, as well as the sometimes entire annihilation of the undertakings and works which they are meant to commemorate, prove that the spirit which prompted their structure has not been hereditary ; or that more recent labours have engrossed the care and attention necessary to the preservation of ancient works ; so that the name of *Epitaffio*, usually affixed to these recording monuments, sounds to an English ear as peculiarly adapted to their present condition and aspect.

It has often been remarked that one of the characteristic features of Italy, and, perhaps, more especially of its southern division, is the appearance of modern decay (if I may so call it) which stamps all the productions of human industry, art, or labour. The villas, the gardens, the palaces, always betray in some of their com-

ponent parts, and not unfrequently in all, the want of that conservative inspection which alone can secure mortal edifices from the ravages of time and climate. Notwithstanding the picturesque effects which are produced by this very neglect, the sensations they create are always mournful; associated, though perhaps unconsciously, with the painful ideas attached to premature decay, or arising from the spectacle of untimely dissolution in a robust frame.

The village of Monteforte is about four miles distant from the first point of ascent, and placed on the declivity of the northern side of the mountain; but many of its houses, and the ruins of its baronial castle, are scattered on the higher flanks of the eminence, and command prospects of great extent in either direction: these last are extremely picturesque, but retain at the same time the gloomy colouring which marks the whole district. It does not appear that any town of consequence ever existed on this spot; but its position, from which the name was probably derived, rendered it a post of importance at all times.

Charles of Anjou bestowed Monteforte, with a proportionate grant of lands, on one of his bravest commanders, Guy de Montfort; stimulated, as some authors suppose, by the accidental similarity between the two names, but urged more probably by the wish of signally rewarding the individual in question. Three generations of this illustrious race appear to have been destined to fill high stations in various parts of Europe; and in their different positions acquired equal notoriety for ambition, valour, pride, and ferocity; qualities which, in those warlike days, but too frequently moved in unity.

The famous Simon de Montfort commanded the bloody crusade against the Albigenses. His son, bearing the same name, became the well-known Earl of Leicester, who contended successfully against our Henry III, and wrung from him that acknowledgment of the rights of a British subject which laid the foundation of the Magna Charta of that sovereign.

His son Guido and his nephews accompanied Charles of Anjou in his unjustifiable invasion of the kingdom of Naples; one of the two

last, Philip, was appointed governor of Sicily, and by his tyrannical and overbearing conduct greatly roused the vindictive spirit of resistance which so frightfully disclosed itself in the Sicilian Vespers.

Guy, or Guido, above-mentioned, besides the territorial recompenses bestowed upon him by Charles of Anjou, was appointed vicar-general in Tuscany; and it was while holding that rank that he rendered his name execrable, even in that æra of unrestrained ferocity, by the murder of Prince Henry of England, perpetrated by his own hands in the cathedral of Viterbo, in the presence of the Kings of Naples and France.

The direct line of this family was not of extended duration in the kingdom of Naples; for, although there are some who still bear the name, it does not appear that they can prove their descent from the ancient stock.

In more recent times, Monteforte has acquired a painful celebrity as the spot where the first symptoms of the Revolution of 1820 openly manifested themselves, and to which the different armed assemblages bent their way from

other parts of the kingdom to establish a constitution. They had fortified, or rather strongly guarded, the bridge of Quattr' Occhi, before-mentioned, as the first step to the pass; and had intended to have made there the first stand against the royal troops. Their head-quarters were subsequently transferred to Avellino, in which town the Spanish constitution was first proclaimed, and from which afterwards all the insurgent forces marched peaceably into the capital.

The distance from Monteforte to Avellino does not exceed four miles, on an abrupt and continued declivity; and the face of the country, both as to soil and cultivation, presents quite a different spectacle from the Terra di Lavoro. The mountains, which are on a grand scale, are entirely covered with chestnut woods; while the intervening flats are divided into extended fields inclosed by hedges of elder. But what most particularly characterises this district, are the clumps of filbert, mixed with other fruit-trees, which are planted at regular distances in all the inclosures, and are evidently trained and attended to with much care and

attention. Between these the vines and maize are cultivated as usual, but the produce exhibits in its appearance the operations of a much less genial climate. This is also strongly exemplified in the numerous *neviere*, or snow-pits, which are dug in these fields. They consist of square or circular excavations of some depth, surrounded by a wall supporting a low roof, with two doors for entrance and egress. The snow is merely swept or shovelled in during the winter season, and covered with straw or leaves. Some are not even provided with a covering, and many are close to the road side. We met several carts laden with it journeying towards the capital, which, however, derives the greatest portion of its supplies of this indispensable article from Castellamare.

The approach to Avellino offers nothing remarkable: some straggling mean houses, increasing in number and magnitude, gradually assume the form of a long street, leading to the Intendenza and other public edifices, irregularly seated round a large square: this is succeeded by the main body of the city, which covers but a limited extent of ground, being



composed of narrow streets thickly inhabited, and animated by an aspect of industry and bustle which is not unpleasing. The inhabitants are active and laborious; and Giustiniani observes, that most of the individuals who carry on in Naples the confection of that object of vital necessity, *maccaroni*, are natives of Avellino or its diocese: it has, moreover, some manufactures of very indifferent cloth, and lastly, of sausages, whose superior excellence has long been admitted. It is supposed to contain about ten thousand souls, and is the seat of a bishop; but the cathedral is very unequal to the magnitude of the town.

The diocese was established in 884; but the Lombards having destroyed the ancient city, it was rebuilt on the present site in 887: Roger, the first king of Sicily, was crowned there by the anti-Pope Anacletus. The only building worthy of notice is the ancient baronial mansion of the princes of Avellino, (the principal branch of the Carraccioli family,) now forsaken by its proprietors, and adapted by government to the temporary occupation of the customs and excise, to which purpose its

position in the market-place is well suited. This edifice, apparently constructed under the rule of the Spanish viceroys, bears the vestiges of considerable architectural taste and labour, and its front is adorned with many statues both ancient and modern.

The Abellinum of the Romans, the original town, of which a few ruins still exist, stood a mile farther, near Atripaldi, now a large and flourishing village, watered by the copious and rapid Sabato, which greatly contributes to vivify its manufactures, in the various forms of iron-foundries, copper-works, paper and fulling-mills. It contains about four thousand inhabitants, and is noted in the province for a weekly market for cattle, which is the rendezvous of all the wealthy proprietors in the vicinity. A smaller rivulet runs along the south flank of Avellino, and afterwards under a wooded bank, thickly studded with villas and farm-houses, which adds great beauty to the surrounding scenery. Indeed, it would be difficult to find an inland landscape that can vie in picturesque effect with that which presents itself to the traveller who approaches the town

from the eastern entrance ; that is, the opposite approach from the Neapolitan side.

The richness of the woods that cover the surrounding hills, the town itself filling up the flat ground between them, and the boldness of the background formed by the outline of Monte Vergine and its apparently inaccessible sanctuary, are well worthy of the artist's attention and pencil ; but a peculiar gloom overhangs all the picture, which, though not very clearly defined, is sufficiently remarkable to give it a striking character, and which I can only attribute to the absence of the sun from a great portion of the general landscape.

The town of Avellino, as the foregoing account may show, boasts of little that can excite the curiosity of a stranger ; but an excursion to Monte Vergine will perhaps compensate this deficiency. There is a tolerable carriage-road in the flat behind the city, between it and the first buttresses of the mountain, as far as the large village of Mercogliano ; at the entrance of which is situated the *Ospizio*, belonging to the monastery, which in point of size and convenience far exceeds the establishment itself. Most of

the large communities placed in very high, and consequently cold expositions, were provided with an appendage of this kind, where the delicate or the convalescent might occasionally repair, and where the superior, without any of these claims, usually makes his habitual residence. The rigid effects of the temperature of Monte Vergine are considered so severe, that the monks only pass eight successive days at a time in the monastery, taking it by turns to inhabit the Ospizio, which, however, is of modern construction and somewhat fantastic architecture: the interior offers nothing remarkable but the archives, which were respected when the community was suppressed by the French, and rank in importance and interest next to those of Monte Cassino and La Cava.

At Mercogliano horses can always be procured for the ascent of the mountain, which extends in zigzag lines, for a distance of three miles, along a very stony path winding under fine chestnut-trees, but furnished with scarcely any other vegetation. Indeed, the whole aspect of the mountain on this side bespeaks the operation of a damp, cold, and variable climate.

Of the last quality I twice made the experiment, having been drenched at two very distant periods with a deluge of rain on my way downwards, which drove in my face with so much violence, and washed down the road in such torrents, that I was forced to dismount. The clearness of the sky previous to these sudden variations in the temperature enabled me, however, to enjoy the extraordinary prospect which from the summit of the mountain is displayed to the greatest advantage.

The building, which has been allowed to retain much of its original form of structure, is not situated at the highest extremity; but a few minutes of very easy ascent will enable the visitor to reach the uppermost pinnacle, and afford him a bird's-eye view of the entire plain of Naples, the sea, and the islands. This peak, one of the highest among those that are seen from the capital, is always the first to be covered with snow in the autumn, and is the last to lose its wintry garment in the spring. The original founders of the monastery may be supposed to have been actuated by the spirit of self-denial which characterises their

rigid order, when they excluded their residence from the advantages of a southern exposition, and raised its foundations on a narrow ledge exactly facing the north-east, and exposed to all the evils of such a situation on so elevated a spot. It must, however, be admitted, that the view from this side, differing as to features, colouring, and character from that to the south, is perhaps more gratifying and imposing, though it extends over an inland country.

The towns of Avellino and Atripaldi at the foot of the mountain, that of Montefusco on a high and bleak eminence in the distance, and numerous villages studded all over the finely formed and thickly wooded belt of mountains that circumscribe the prospect in all its parts, give it great effect and variety.

A quadrangle, or cloister, stretches at the foot of a flight of steps leading up to the church and monastery ; and a portion of the building that surrounds it is allotted to the residence of a tavern-keeper, who provides refreshment for man and beast, and reaps a plentiful harvest at two different periods of the year, when the

celebration of local festivals attracts an incredible number of devotees and pilgrims from the surrounding districts, and even distant provinces, at Whitsuntide, and the Nativity of the Virgin on the 8th of September.

The fame of this celebrated sanctuary dates from its consecration by St. William of Vercelli in the year 1119, but it was probably founded before this epoch; and advanced rapidly in opulence and sanctity for two hundred years afterwards. But its still greater importance was derived from the special favour shown to it by Catherine of Valois, titular Empress of Constantinople and Princess of Taranto, who placed it under her immediate protection, and, after enriching the community by large grants of land and pecuniary gifts, bestowed upon it a miraculous painting of the Virgin, the work of some of the Greek artists of Constantinople, and ordered that her own remains should be interred within its walls. Her son, Lewis of Taranto, husband to the beautiful, guilty, and unfortunate Queen Joan, appears to have inherited his parent's partiality for the establishment, and is likewise buried

there ; with an unmarried sister, named Mary. A small ornamented chapel contains a modern inscription recording these events, and the pictures of the personages, of so recent a date as to preclude all possibility of resemblance.

The same sanctuary encloses the revered image which gives the monastery its characteristic denomination. It is of colossal dimensions, and, like almost all the paintings of its period, so dark and dingy as to be with difficulty discerned in detail. But it wears, nevertheless, an appearance of better style and execution than the generality of its contemporaries. The face only is coloured ; the body being of dark brown carved wood, supporting an angel with extended wings on each shoulder, which adds greatly to the singularity of its aspect.

The church boasts but of limited dimensions, and presents nothing remarkable, unless an innumerable collection of relics of saints may so be termed, among which are the bones of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, likewise brought from Constantinople. Here also is a Roman sarcophagus with a Latin inscription, on which have been placed two recumbent marble



figures pointed out as the effigies of Catherine and her son. Another tomb, of the same kind, in the cloisters, is probably that of the Princess Mary, above-mentioned ; as the figure, which is of much better workmanship, bears great resemblance, both as to design and costume, to that of Queen Joan in the church of S<sup>a</sup> Chiara at Naples.

A sepulchral record, of probably higher interest to the native visitors, is shown in a glass-case. It is the body of a saint, or rather Beato, belonging to the Verginian order of monks, who died in 1601 ; and is there preserved, if a dried and discoloured skin, tightly stretched over an emaciated carcase of protuberant bones, can be thought to present any appearance of conservation.

From the foregoing description it may be seen, that this monastery is more deserving of notice from its situation, than from any object of art or curiosity which it contains. The building, though exhibiting in some parts marks of recent repairs, has a weather-worn and venerable look ; and this, with its numerous irregular projections, small roofs on differ-

ent levels, and detached masses of masonry, contributes to render its general appearance very picturesque. The library is in a complete state of abandonment and dilapidation; which is accounted for by its contents, and the valuable archives which enriched it, having been removed to the Ospizio at Mercogliano.

There are several inns at Avellino, which I severally tried at different periods; but among these only one has any pretensions to decent accommodation, though it is the first night's resting-place for all travellers from the capital into Apulia.

I continued my progress eastward towards the first stage on that road, through a country which is not surpassed in picturesque beauty by any other portion of the kingdom.

A mountain on the right, called Chiusano, from the district which it overlooks, is most remarkable for its form and height. Before the village of Pratola, about six miles from Avellino, the road crosses the river Sabato, which stream is seen some time before this, meandering in the dells to the right; it then takes a sudden turn in an opposite direction,

and is lost in the valley through which it finds its way to Benevento. There is a short horse path to this last town, which I conclude is carried along its banks, and makes the distance between that and Avellino no more than fourteen miles; but the carriage road, which is that I followed, and which turns off at Montefusco, is nearly double that distance. A very steep and tedious ascent brings one to the level of that town, containing three thousand seven hundred inhabitants, and considered the second in the province, of which it long was the capital. Its very bleak and unpromising situation deterred me from even obtaining a transient glance at it, at the cost of the walk of one mile from the summit of the hill where we stopped to bait at a tavern called La Serra.

From this spot the view to the east, though very extensive, is by no means so gratifying as that which I had left behind me; as the soil appears less fertile, though productive of corn, and the whole wants wood. It has, however, by no means a depopulated aspect, the number of villages in sight being considerable; among

which, Montemiletto, on the right at no great distance, though equally elevated with Montefusco, boasts of a much more favourable exposition. It is dignified with the name of town; has two thousand five hundred inhabitants, and a fine old feudal mansion belonging to the Tocco family, who derive from it the title of prince, and whose ancestors were sovereigns of the island of Cephalonia.

After resuming our way, we passed the village of Venticane, at the bottom of the hill, where the station for post-horses is established; and, proceeding onwards, crossed the river Calore, near the village of Campanarello. This stream, which must not be confounded with another of the same name that rises in the province of Principato Citra; and falls into the Sele near Persano, runs to the left like the Sabato, towards Benevento, where they both unite.

The next stage is Grotta Minarda, where I proposed to stop; but made a previous halt a few miles before it near the little town of Mirabella, placed about a mile to the right of the high road; between which and the said town

are the ruins of the ancient city of Eilanum, one of the most distinguished in the Hirpine region. It likewise acquired some celebrity in the Social War by its resistance to the arms of Sylla, and finally became a Roman colony under the first triumvirate.

If one may judge from the numerous fragments of antiquity which its site has afforded in the form of statues, vases, coins, engraved stones, and jewellery, it must have boasted of affluence. These have been dispersed in sundry directions, but most of the inscriptions have found their way into the museum of the capital; while some fragments enrich private collections, and others (unfortunately a large portion) were yielded to the contractors for the adjoining road, and were literally broken and used for that purpose. In many of the villages through which it is conducted, portions of columns, and broken shafts, are seen forming part of the walls of the meanest edifices.

Nevertheless, it is supposed that excavations, directed with judgment, might be productive of favourable results. The site of the ancient city is recognised, close to the high road, at a

spot called Le Grotte, from the existence of several subterranean structures chiefly of brick. These, together with the faint traces of an amphitheatre, and the vestiges of twelve gateways, form the sum total of the existing ruins.

An arched passage of considerable length has been cleared of the soil, and bears the aspect of having always been an underground fabric, as it only receives the light from square apertures at regular distances in the upper vault. The traces of pipes along the lateral walls point it out as a conductor for water, but its height leads one to suppose that it must have been used likewise as a channel of communication.

An inhabitant of the town of Mirabella, named Guarini, has written an elaborate work on these antiquities, in which all the inscriptions ever found there are recorded. Lupoli, in his *Iter Venusinum*, has also published a great number.

A proprietor of the soil, whom we met on the spot, and who very obligingly accompanied me and my companion in our investigation, informed us that the dispersion, and even destruction of the remains of antiquity which had been

and are still found, may be ascribed to the arbitrary measures adopted by the municipal and superior authorities, who neither allow the landholder to retain what he may find on his territory, or grant him an equitable remuneration for even the personal fatigue incurred in the excavation; so that all objects thus discovered are either concealed, or disposed of secretly at a very trifling price, or broken up for lime and building materials.

A distance of three miles brought us to Grotta Minarda, the next station towards Ariano; and here we stopped as agreed upon. I had been told there was a tolerable inn, and the exterior promise held out by a small but cleanly house seemed to justify this prediction: but we found a landlord who, in a spirit directly contrary to the rapacity of the lower class in these regions as to immediate profit, would only grant us the use of one small chamber; alleging as a reason, that the fair of Salerno had commenced, and it was probable that, before night, several old customers might seek a lodging and be disappointed. It was in vain I represented that we might stay two whole days, and offered

to pay during that time for as many beds as the occupation of three rooms would deprive him of; he was relentless, and would not run the chance of disobliging ancient acquaintance who travelled that road every year. This was said in so firm, though neither harsh nor uncivil a manner, that we gave up the point, and were fortunate enough to find humbler, but by no means bad accommodation in another inn, a little beyond his; and it was not possible to entertain a feeling of displeasure against his unhospitable but frank declaration.

Our abode contained two clean beds in a spacious room, and another in an adjoining one for my servant: we found chickens, pigeons, eggs, and macaroni (which are everywhere to be had); and, as to this substantial foundation we were lucky enough to add potatoes, we could not reasonably find cause for complaint.

Grotta Minarda is a village of about fifteen hundred inhabitants, relying chiefly on agricultural labour for their subsistence. It contains but one good house, which belongs to a priest. The situation is bleak and cheerless, though not elevated; and it is surrounded by ugly clay



hills, producing only corn, and intersected by deep and narrow ravines, through which a sluggish and scanty rill usually flows.

Many villages are seen in all directions; and straight before it, in an eastern line, the town of Ariano, standing on the summit of a conical hill, with the tedious prospect of the steep, and apparently interminably repeated zigzag road leading to it.

On the following day I went to Frigento, a little town of two thousand three hundred inhabitants, once boasting of an episcopal see, long since united to that of Avellino. To this spot there is a good carriage road, diverging from the main track about a mile west of Grotta Minarda. I stopped at a tavern placed at the foot of the knoll on which Frigento stands; and, while donkeys were preparing, enjoyed the very extensive and, in some parts, gratifying prospect which this elevated spot commands.

About a mile below Frigento is seen the smaller, but better peopled town of Gesualdo, with a square respectable-looking feudal mansion among some wooded and cultivated

grounds. Beyond this, in a southern direction, the eye wanders over the village of Torella, and a vast tract of varied country; penetrating into the openings of the mountains that surround it, and reaching as far as the considerable towns of Nusco, S. Angelo de' Lombardi, and Guardia Lombarda, whose names sufficiently denote their origin. On the left, that is, the Apulian side, the range of hills is barren and uninteresting in its aspect; but it boasts of some small towns, among which are Trevico, Pulcherino, Cariti, Zurlo, and lastly Ariano. There are also many single farms, every one of which is furnished with a pigeon-house: the flocks of birds to which these receptacles give shelter are innumerable throughout all this district. But the view back towards Avellino preserves its pre-eminence in picturesque beauty and richness of effect.

Our animals being ready, we set off in a southern direction over a light soil of inconsiderable depth on a stratum of chalk, producing scanty herbage, and occasionally a few oaks. The path which I followed establishes a communication between the high road to Apulia

and some of the distant towns above-mentioned, finally leading to Melfi in Basilicata, whose mountain with its double peak, about twenty-eight miles distant, closes the prospect on that side.

The spot I sought, which indeed formed the principal object of my excursion to these parts, was the Pool of Amsanctus, known in the country by the less classical, but more strictly appropriate denomination of Le Mofette.

*Est locus, Italiæ medio, sub montibus altis,  
Nobilis, et famâ multis memoratus in oris,  
Amsancti Vallis, &c.*

These lines of Virgil have stamped this glen with a mysterious and terrific celebrity, which modern writers have, in their descriptions, rather magnified than extenuated. I am bound to believe the reports of eye-witnesses, many of which had assured me that the spot could not be approached without danger.

Swinburne himself, whose veracity on all points is unquestionable, asserts that the noxious vapour rising from these waters was so dense, and extended so far, that he was compelled to give up a nearer investigation. Gius-

tiniani, in his Geographical Dictionary, enumerates no less than six persons who fell victims to this pestilential exhalation, besides numerous heads of cattle and animals of all kinds; so that, even allowing for some exaggeration, it was not possible to divest oneself of all notion of peril. But when I consider the facility with which I was enabled to obtain access to this formidable pit, I must suppose that particular seasons or atmospheric changes may modify, and probably entirely neutralize, its baneful effects. The guide who showed us the way, and seemed familiar with it, was evidently strongly impressed with implicit conviction of the pernicious nature of the exhalations, and did not fail to cite various examples of their malignity, confined however to quadrupeds or birds; and when, after a progress of three miles, we came rather suddenly on a bank from which the pool became visible at no great distance below us, he stopped short and conjured us to go no farther: an injunction which we obeyed in order to consider the singular rather than terrific spectacle it exhibited.

The lake, as it is called, is placed at the ex

tremity of a narrow ravine, one side of which is formed by the range of low hills on which we stood, while the other, extending a wider expanse of slope, is covered with a copse-wood of some magnitude. A transversal, and very steep ledge, of inconsiderable height, terminates this gully; having at its base a crevice of longitudinal irregular form, of about fifty feet long by thirty in breadth, which presents at first sight the strange appearance of a cauldron filled with lead in a violent state of ebullition.

From some distance we had been directed to observe the vapour suspended over the spot in a thin column of light smoke; but a nearer approach divested it of that appearance, probably from the peculiar brightness of the sunbeams at that hour.

The precipitous ridge that rises along the whole length of the chasm is entirely destitute of vegetation, which is easily accounted for by the exhalations being carried immediately against its surface when the wind blows in that direction; while the opposite bank, above which we stood, is flat, and sprinkled, at a very short distance from the edge of the pond, with

tufts of rushes and coarse herbage. To this platform it was an easy matter to descend, and from thence my companion cast a stone-bottle into the pool with a rope fastened to it, in the hope of seeing it filled, and drawing it out. In so doing, the cord slipped out of his hand, following the vessel; which, being empty, was carried to and fro with the agitated motion of the liquid. I was unwilling that he should approach nearer the edge, for fear of accident, though he said he felt no greater inconvenience from the sulphureous effluvia than he had experienced when first we were made sensible of it on the top of the bank. He was provided with another length of rope, to the end of which having tied a stone, and throwing it over the bottle, it secured its return to the bank, though of course still unfilled.

During this operation our conductor was in a state of apparent despair and terror at his imprudence in venturing so near the abyss, and so repeatedly vociferated that he was risking his existence, that I began to share in the alarm he testified, and earnestly intreated him to return; when our donkey-drivers, who had lag-

ged behind, overtook us, and at once dispelled my fears and doubts by declaring that they had frequently drawn buckets of water from the pool itself; and descended to assist him, which I did likewise. The smell was more pungent, ammoniacal, and even perfumed, than above; but I found no impediment to respiration, except when I bowed my head very near the earth; so that I conceive it to be very much the same kind of gas as that which prevails in the Grotta del Cane near Naples.

The crumbling nature of the soil near the immediate border made it advisable to give up an attempt at a closer approach, which moreover became unnecessary, from the facility obtained of filling our stone-bottle from a round hole a few yards distant from the main reservoir, though evidently supplied by it, in which the liquid boils up with equal violence.

It was indeed evident that we stood on a kind of shelf or crust of no very great thickness, under which the water extends to some distance, and which it probably overflows at particular periods. The dark colour of the liquid is occasioned by its own turbulence,

which is stronger along the line of the precipitous bank than on the opposite flat edge ; but the whole surface is in a state of continued agitation, throwing up portions of black clay, which, mixing with the fluid, both darken and thicken it : these, however, are speedily deposited at the bottom of any vessel in which it is placed in a state of repose, leaving it perfectly clear and tasteless, and of an icy temperature.

I own that this last circumstance must, on the first glance, strike the spectator as most at variance with the other phenomena exhibited ; for nothing can appear more unaccountable than that the surrounding soil should be so hot as to preclude any one from standing barefooted upon it for a few minutes, that it should emit a volcanic vapour, and that the water should show itself in an uninterrupted state of ebullition, and yet be perfectly cold to the touch. All this, however, may be explained by the supposition that it is the gas, disengaging itself from the bottom of the reservoir, which causes the apparent fermentation ; and if so, I think one may venture the opinion that, in so doing, it loses much of its noxious



qualities, and that the vapours exhaled by the earth, and not by the water, are those which are pernicious.

The turbid and restless surface renders it impossible to obtain by the eye a correct idea of its depth, but various other appearances go some way to prove that it is inconsiderable towards the flat edge, and probably not exceeding six feet in any part; so that the tradition of profundity unfathomable by line or plummet may safely be exploded, as may also that attached to it in common with the lakes of Averno and Agnano, viz. that birds cannot fly over it with impunity. Chance furnished me with an incontrovertible refutation of this worn-out fable during my short investigation, as a raven, and shortly after a wood-pigeon, skimmed directly over the boiling cauldron at no very great elevation.

I must, however, admit an opposite instance of the effects of the vapour on the winged tribe of insects, for the whole ground was strewn at some distance round with innumerable dead butterflies of a beautiful yellow colour. We were likewise much struck by the

penetrating qualities of the gas, notwithstanding its facility of dispersion in the open air, which completely blackened every article of metal on our clothes and in our pockets, even to the interior of our watches, which were not only discoloured, but arrested in their movements.

There is no visible outlet for these waters; but at the distance of about twenty yards from the pool's edge, a ravine or gully is formed, through which a scanty and sluggish rill is seen apparently oozing from the soil: this, though offering a totally different aspect, being no longer muddy, but only covered with a yellow film, is said by the natives to possess the same qualities as the waters of the lake. It is collected, about a mile farther, into a large reservoir, whence, being depurated, it is conveyed to some baths at a village called Villa Maina, which are frequented in the summer for the efficacy they possess in the relief of cutaneous and other chronic disorders; the waters being likewise drunk.

After taking a hasty sketch of the scene, which is more singular than picturesque, care-

fully closing the vessel containing the water collected, and carrying away with me some sand, clay, and stones, I quitted the pool of Amsanctus, and resumed the path to Frigento.

On the hill overlooking the crater, there is a hole or well, where we found some shepherds washing their flocks: they told us that the water it contained, and which they considered efficacious in curing the scab in animals, though less powerful, and emitting no vapour, was of the same quality as that we had examined.

## CHAPTER II.

*Road from Avellino to Salerno.—San Severino.—Mercato.—Family of San Severino.—Ferdinand Prince of Salerno.—Site for country residences.—Plain of Salerno.—Church at Giffoni.—Eboli.—A reformed brigand.—Historical notices.—Campagna.—Oliveto.—Road from Eboli to Melfi.—Laviano.—Aspect of Basilicata.—Muro.—A miserable tavern.—The Castle.—Atella.—Rionero.—Barile.—Mount Volture.—Character of the inhabitants of Barile.—Giochi d'acqua.—Dramatic representation.*

I SHALL not recapitulate an account of my journey back from Grotta Minarda to Avellino. I arrived at Avellino on the third day, and departed for Salerno by a road of recent construction, which forms the communication between those two cities, and from the excellent mode of its construction, and the beauty of the country through which it runs, affords to the traveller the pleasantest drive of sixteen miles which perhaps any part of Europe can boast of. The first portion of the way, after quitting Avellino, brings but little change to the ap-

pearance of the landscape: high mountains, wooded to their very summit with chestnut and oak timber, the lower slopes cultivated with Indian corn under festoons of vines or clumps of filberts, single farm-houses, villas standing in hedged fields, with an ornamented gateway and avenue leading to them, form the principal objects.

This valley is little more than a succession of narrow dells, intersected by deep ravines, watered by a scanty but limpid and rapid brook. The view, consequently, is contracted on each side; but, after passing the well-built but execrably paved villages of Bellizze and Contrada, a gradual descent leads to a plain of more considerable expanse and length, that of Forino, likewise highly cultivated, but deficient in habitations: a second declivity, whose height and steepness has necessitated a tedious zigzag course of road through an open grove of oaks, displays the vale of San Severino below with the most happy effect.

This district, as much celebrated for fertility as for the natural beauties which distinguish it, may be about five miles in length, by little

more than two in breadth. It is bounded on either side by ranges of magnificent and variously formed mountains; and its centre is occupied longitudinally by a secondary line of hills, covered by clusters of villages which constitute the tract or state of San Severino: a name attached to none of these in particular, but usually added to the peculiar denomination of each, such as Fisciano, Penta, Sava, Mercato, di San Severino, &c.

The road, after it is brought down to the level of this plain, is conducted along the base of the eastern range which bounds it, having all these villages situated, at no different heights, to the left; thereby gaining a much more favourable view of the varieties of character and aspect which they successively exhibit, than if it was conducted actually through them. There are, however, good carriage-tracks branching off to most of them; but not above three stand close to the road. One of these is Mercato, so named from a weekly market of sufficient importance to place it on a primary rank among the other villages forming the state of San Severino, and which is contrasted with the limited

dimensions it exhibits, and the meanness of its general appearance.

It owes, however, probably as much of its modern consequence to the junction of the high road from Naples and Nocera, which is effected within its precincts; and in feudal times was considered in a still more respectable light, from a very extensive castle and fortress, of which the remains are seen scattered over the most considerable portion of a hill which rises above the valley at its angle with the pass from Nocera, which it commanded, and which has been alluded to at the beginning of this tour.

There have been great discussions among the annalists and genealogists, which this kingdom contains in no small number, as to the spot which may be with certainty pointed out as having conferred its name on one of the most illustrious families of which it can boast,—that of San Severino; whose founders, of Norman extraction, and engrafted in the country with the conquerors of that race, undoubtedly received the feudal denomination, which superseded their original patronymic, from some in-

vestiture granted by the victors. But there are several spots so designated in various parts of the kingdom, which all, at different periods, belonged to this family ; so that it is difficult to decide which of them possesses the best founded claims to this honour.

The castle of San Severino, from its magnitude, the peculiar importance attached to its position, and the additions successively made to it by several members of this house, is supposed by many to have been regarded by them as the cradle of their name and family ; but Antonini, in his *Lucania*, has, with much apparent plausibility, ascribed the right to this distinction to another San Severino in the Cilento, or south-eastern portion of the Principato Citra.

The reader will probably not attach so much interest to this controversy ; so I shall content myself with observing, that as this was a possession to which they evidently attached a very high value during many centuries, and which they frequently made their chief residence, it is not surprising that the remains of some of the proprietors should rest in its principal church.



This building, which, though modernised both exteriorly and inwardly, is in a state of dilapidation, contains the tomb of Thomas San Severino, high constable of the kingdom, the head of the family in the fourteenth century, and the original stock from which the subsequent branches sprung in such number as to possess among them nearly an eighth part of the realm. This monument is in very good preservation; and, though executed in an unequal manner, presents not an unfavourable specimen of the art of sculpture in the year 1353.

The eldest branch of his lineal descendants acquired, in addition to the other vast domains they already enjoyed, the investiture and sovereignty of the principality of Salerno, granted to them about the middle of the fifteenth century through the gratitude or munificence of the Aragonese kings.

It was impossible for a subject to step higher; and the reign of Charles V. saw the termination, or rather the downfall, of a power which could effectually contend with, and not unfrequently baffle, the encroachments of viceregal tyranny in the person of Peter of Toledo.

Ferdinand, or Ferrante San Severino, the fourth and last individual who bore the title and exercised the prerogatives of Prince of Salerno, was, during the whole of a long and agitated career, placed, more through fortuitous circumstances than choice or disposition, in constant opposition to the arbitrary measures and plans of that overbearing but sagacious statesman, who seems to have combined all the resources of his master-mind to ruin and destroy the man who seemed destined to thwart all his designs, either as the leader of a dignified and offended nobility, or the popular chief of a tumultuous rabble.

In these alternate characters the Prince of Salerno betrayed no deficiency of boldness or talent; but an inexplicable inconsistency of character and disposition rendered him incapable of deriving any ultimate advantages from either position, or even of maintaining the high station he had attained. After occupying the highest offices which the armies of Charles V. and his own country could open to him, he gradually not only fell step by step from the eminence on which fortune had seated him,

but, stimulated, as it appears, by artful persecution, and stung by real as well as imaginary wrongs, he finally fled from the kingdom, and, in a moment of despair, suspicion, and resentment, threw off his allegiance to his sovereign, and entered the service of France. This was the signal for outlawry and confiscation; and the principality of Salerno, with all his other domains, was united to the crown. After some years of an unsettled but ignoble existence, he died a Protestant, in an obscure state of indigence, without leaving any children.

The name of this personage is not much known in general history; but an account of his life, connected as it was with the principal political events of Italy during the sixteenth century, and more particularly with those which illustrated the long administration of Peter of Toledo, and signalized his ineffectual attempt to establish the inquisition at Naples, would prove a work of considerable curiosity and interest.

Pursuing the road southward, the little village of Baronisi is gone through, remarkable from a convent of Capuchins placed in a pic-

turesque situation a little on the left. Shortly after this, on an eminence which closes the valley of San Severino, that of Capriglia is passed; from which a third declivity brings one down into a much lower plain, which, somewhat changed in the character of the vegetation which adorns it, shortly admits a view of the sea, to which it gradually descends by gentle slopes.

This last valley yields in magnitude, and perhaps fertility, to that of San Severino; but the agency of a milder climate gives it another character, and probably a greater charm. The olive grows on the lower banks of the hills; while the re-appearance of the orange, myrtle, and caper-plant, and that peculiar luxuriance in the growth of wilder productions which distinguishes a meridional coast, bespeak the vicinity of the Mediterranean waters even before their glitter breaks upon the sight.

The little river Irno, which has its source in the district of San Severino, flows along the centre of this vale, receiving many lateral brooks that enrich it from the mountain on either side; and the road, which is carried at

some height above its level, runs through the villages of Coverchia, Galdo, &c.: these have, almost all, manufactures of coarse blue cloth, which occupy the greatest portion of the inhabitants, and diffuse an appearance of industry and ease. The road finally falls at a right angle into that which leaves the city of Salerno at its eastern extremity, very near the spot where the above-mentioned stream enters the sea.

Not only the portion of the country over which I had journeyed that day, appeared to me one of the most pleasing I had ever beheld, but subsequent visits and observations have confirmed the opinion, that it offers, perhaps of all the situations within the same distance of Naples, the most eligible for a country residence. The facility of a direct communication with the capital, the vicinity of the sea, and that of such considerable towns as Salerno, Avellino, and Nocera, the excellent state of the high road and of those which give access from one village to the other, the number of these villages, their population and the resources they afford, constitute so many artificial but very necessary advantages, which, added to the

natural beauty of the landscape and the salubrity of the air, should render the attainment of an abode in these parts highly desirable.

I remained a couple of days at Salerno ; and, quitting it on the 1st of October, I limited my first day's journey to Eboli, under the oppressive influence of an autumnal sun, whose potency was rather aggravated than diminished by the medium of a thick hazy atmosphere.

This is not unfrequently the case at this period of the year, when the sea-breeze has lost that diurnal regularity and briskness which invariably characterise it from June till September. The road is good, and runs at about a mile's distance from the sea, along the rich but unhealthy plain of Salerno, also called Piano d'Eboli. The view across this flat is, notwithstanding its fertility, somewhat monotonous, being only relieved by the rare appearance of some fine oaks, scattered singly in the fields. But the inland range of hills on the left is well clothed with wood and vegetation, and amply furnished with small towns or villages in commanding positions.

The most distant and important among these

are those of Giffoni, Monte Corvino, Acerno, and Olevano. The three first-mentioned are looked upon as deriving their origin from the destruction of the ancient Picentia and the dispersion of its inhabitants.

Nearer to Salerno are La Pastena, Ogliastro, Cagnano, and others. Three streams are crossed : the first is the Irno above-mentioned ; the second, more copious, is called the Vicentino, which has its source behind the village of Giffoni ; the third is the Tusciano, which traverses the road at Battipaglia, where a new and well-constructed track leads to Pæstum.

Near Giffoni an ancient church has attracted the notice of some antiquaries, who have not hesitated to pronounce its site that of the temple of Juno Argiva. But the allusion to this edifice by Strabo and Plutarch as placed on the banks of the Silarus, now Sole, renders such a supposition inadmissible. The form of the building, which is worthy of investigation, assimilates it to some of the earliest constructions adapted to Christian worship from the rites of Paganism.

We went through neither town nor village,

though the skirts of many, such as Cagnano, Pagliara, and Vicenza (the ancient Picentia) reach the road; which however is not deficient in large farm-houses, villas, and taverns. We gradually deviated from the sea-shore as the plain widened, and at Eboli found ourselves thirteen miles from it.

This town is reckoned sixteen miles (two posts) from Salerno; but, from the time employed in reaching it, I should not think the distance more than twelve. A large inn, formerly a monastery, the interior distribution of which is peculiarly well adapted to the purposes to which it is now converted, is placed exactly facing an avenue of trees leading into the town, and obviated the necessity of driving into it. Here we stopped, and found, in the cleanliness of the linen and some other advantages, wherewithal to make up for sluggish attendance and indifferent fare.

The building itself presented a very picturesque exterior, and interesting vestiges of the masonry of the middle ages; while the establishment boasted moreover of the singular particularity of being tenanted by a reformed brigand,



who, having thrown himself on the mercy of the government by what is looked upon as an unconditional, and consequently voluntary surrender, had received a full pardon, and the privilege of passing his old age in honourable retirement.

I was equally amused and edified with hearing this veteran hold forth to a large assemblage of mule-drivers, peasants, and ragged children, on the sinfulness of drunkenness and blasphemy, and descanting with equal vehemence on the loyalty he had displayed in the service of King Ferdinand.

The situation of Eboli, which contains four thousand inhabitants, is more pleasing than romantic or picturesque; but it is sufficiently elevated above the intervening flat to enjoy an uninterrupted view of the sea, and the magnificent forest of Persano with its palace.

Some smooth and well-clothed hills rise immediately behind the town, and some houses and convents placed on this range are very happily situated.

To the eastward the prospect is of a bolder and more extended character, embracing the

line of Mount Alburnus, with the towns of Altavilla, Albanella and Postiglione.

The climate is no less extolled for its mildness than the air is noted for its insalubrity, caused by the marshy soil of the wide plain that extends between it and the sea, whose summer breeze wafts the noxious vapours against the town and its impending heights.

It was a place of some importance in the middle ages. Peter of Eboli, in the twelfth century, wrote a metrical work, which is referred to more for its historical than poetical merits, as containing the only authentic account of the life and deeds of Tancred, king of Sicily, who may be considered as the last male scion of the Norman dynasty.

At a less remote period Eboli belonged in fief to Robert de Cabano, who suffered a cruel death as one of the co-operators in the mysterious murder of Andrew of Hungary, husband to the celebrated Joan. And, later still, it gave the title of prince to the no less famous Ruy Gomez de Silva, favourite and minister of Philip II. It now appertains, with a large portion of the surrounding territory, to a branch

of the Doria family established in this kingdom as princes of Angri.

Leaving Eboli on the following day, I quitted the high road, about half a mile beyond it, by one turning off abruptly to the left. It runs for some distance through an extensive grove of olive-trees, of venerable growth; after which it emerges into a beautiful wild glen, where a stream is crossed flowing from Campagna, a town farther back in the mountains, to which a good carriage road branches off from this spot.

This place boasts of an episcopal see and six thousand inhabitants; and is moreover remarkable for its good oil, and the reputation of having given birth to all the most notorious banditti who have infested this portion of the realm,—an honour, however, which is disputed by Eboli.

A zigzag ascent, the steepness and length of which tried the vigour and wind of our horses, and proved them very unfit for mountain work, leads to a more open level, diversified by clumps of forest trees and patches of olives and cultivated grounds, but bearing a wild and uninhabited aspect.

Here the operation of a colder temperature manifested itself, in the absence of the myrtle and other plants that love the shore, and the appearance of large platforms of fresh-looking turf. From this elevation the extent of Mount Alburnus is again visible, with the windings of the Sele in the distance, under the little town of Palo, picturesquely perched on a rock rising perpendicularly from its stream: on the left, the valley, through which it flows from its source, expands to the eye, and displays another kind of landscape.

The range on the opposite bank of the river, which we were approaching, is high, and surmounted by naked fantastic peaks; below which, first a belt of forest trees, then one of olives, and lastly a third of vines and cultivation, exhibit singular and characteristic features.

We passed through the little town of Oliveto, containing three thousand inhabitants: its interior offers nothing remarkable; but its aspect, on looking back to it, is somewhat striking; having a large baronial mansion as its principal object, rising majestically above the surrounding edifices and large tufts of trees.

From hence the road descends rapidly towards the Sele, which is crossed over a stone bridge, near some sulphureous springs: some very unartificial baths have here been excavated for the use of the natives, who use them in the summer. The wide stony bed of the river gives it the appearance of a torrent, but the stream is nevertheless abundant and perennial.

On leaving its bank, a cross road strikes out of the main branch to the villages of Cogliano and Coglianello, seated very high on the mountains; but the track we followed is carried along their flanks by a very tedious ascent to the little town of La Valva, containing thirteen hundred inhabitants.

I had wished to make it our resting-place, tempted by the beauty of the position and the hope of seeing the extensive gardens which surround the mansion of the Marquis of La Valva. Independently of this wish, strongly excited by the fame these have acquired, the circumstance of any proprietor residing by choice on his estate, and bestowing care and expense on the embellishment of his abode, was

alone sufficient to have arrested attention. But our conductor obstinately refused to halt till he should reach Laviano, some miles farther; which determination, as will be seen hereafter, laid the foundation of all the evils and inconveniences which signalized the remainder of this day's journey.

The owner of La Valva some years back held the office of director of the roads and bridges (*Ponti e Strade*), and availed himself of this situation to plan the present road from Eboli to Melfi, in Basilicata: it has been reproached to him that in so doing, his principal object was to obtain an easy communication from the capital to his own house and estates, to effect which, a considerable deviation from the straight and natural direction has been given to the road. This is probably true, but the general advantages resulting from such an undertaking are so obvious, that it is scarcely fair to record the motive, especially as it is well executed in all its parts; but the want of post-horses and inns, and the depopulated condition of the country through which it runs, are great drawbacks.

In reluctant compliance with our driver's determination, we proceeded onwards to Laviano, five miles farther; to reach which place, we first descended to a level considerably nearer the river, the course of which we then quitted to enter a lateral valley extending in an eastern direction from the northern line we had hitherto followed. We saw at a distance, on the other bank of the Sele, the little town of Senerchia, and beyond it the larger Calabritto, rising proudly from the water's edge; while, at a more remote distance still, we could just discern Capo Sele, whose name indicates the origin of the stream.

A continued acclivity led us through some fine groves of forest trees and sloping vineyards, watered by copious streams pouring from the impending mountains on the right; and, at last, a very steep and long hill announced the approach to Laviano: and here it was that our misfortunes commenced; for the horses, three in number, hired at Salerno, which had early in the day evinced symptoms of weakness and incapacity to encounter repeated mountains, at once refused to stir one step farther, and,

falling down under the reiterated lashes of the driver, left us at about a mile below Laviano, in the apparent impossibility of ever reaching it. We dismounted, and walked up to the village in the hope of procuring some mules to drag up our vehicle; but in this we were unsuccessful, as the only being we found to apply to was a sulky tavern-keeper, who did not possess what we required, and would not stir a step to assist in finding it. He was soon joined by several of the inhabitants of Laviano, situated on an inaccessible peak a few hundred yards higher than the church and tavern where we had stopped; but these, with one exception, (and he was not a native of the place,) seemed equally unaccommodating as himself.

While we were in this state of embarrassment, our carriage made its appearance, drawn by some labourers whom the temptation of a few carlins induced to act the part of our horses, which followed jaded and scarcely able to crawl. A council was then held, and, on learning that the town of Muro was not above thirteen miles distant, I determined to leave my carriage and servant to follow as soon as



the horses were able to do so, and with my companion to proceed onwards immediately, either on mules, if we could procure any, or on foot, if that was impracticable. I was incited to this plan by being led to believe that the Prince of T—'s agent, who was apprised of my arrival, would be expecting me that very evening at a tavern near Muro, where it had been arranged that we were to sleep that night, and where he probably had made preparations for that purpose.

But the tavern-keeper, though much softened in his manner by the unusual apparition of an English carriage in such parts, was so desirous of retaining us on his premises, that he placed every kind of difficulty in the way of our departure; and it was not till he saw us actually begin our journey on foot, with a peasant for our guide, that he produced a donkey from his stable, and with this, and a mule which was returning the same way with its master, we quitted Laviano, to make the best of the four remaining hours of daylight. This last place appeared, from the spot whence we viewed it, as gloomy and desolate as it is pic-

turesque; it contains about sixteen hundred inhabitants, and a feudal mansion, long since sold, with the surrounding territory, by the family to which it gives the title of duke. It is a stately edifice with a round turret at each corner, presenting a deplorable picture of decayed grandeur, with the roof fallen in, and all the window-frames torn out.

Very shortly after the commencement of our evening's journey, the aspect of the province of Basilicata, which we were soon to enter, opened before us under the most unpromising colours. A boundless wilderness of round-topped hills stretched in every direction as far as the sight could reach; and their surface, which had probably borne a copious harvest of corn and Indian-wheat, at this autumnal period presented an appearance of total sterility; not a village, habitation, or building to be seen, except occasionally a hut formed of rough uncemented stones, sustaining a conical roof of dried turf and straw: these are erected to receive the grain when first cut.

The soil is a stiff clay with an intermixture of sand; and in the ravines which intersect the

hills among which the road is conducted, some slow and scanty rills show themselves. The pace of our animals considerably retarded our progress, which was rendered moreover so extremely fatiguing, if not painful, in consequence of the wooden packsaddles and rope stirrups, that we soon preferred the use of our own limbs to such laborious assistance.

Our two guides had very early begun to relate tales of murder and robbery, which, if true, might induce us to regard our present expedition as very injudicious: they qualified their terrific narratives, however, by the assurance that the recent death of the chief of a band of robbers which had infested this district for a long space of time, and which had caused the dispersion of his followers, gave some safety to travellers just at the present time, though they added that there was no learning where the residue of his companions had secreted themselves.

The account of the death of this brigand, by name Zambini, was given by them in a most circumstantial manner, as having occurred ten days before; but, though highly dramatic

and interesting, I shall abstain from repeating it, for it proved a fabrication, as we afterwards learned from the best authority, and had probably been invented and spread to lull suspicion and defence.

The mule-driver quitted us with his beast about eight miles from Laviano, to turn off to a small town called Castel Grandine, the first we had seen, placed on the upper slope of one of the hills, the base of which was cultivated with vines, cut low, and trained to short canes.

Our remaining companion, looked wistfully at this diminution of our party, and testified such unequivocal symptoms of distress and terror whenever we traversed the patches of brushwood which occasionally intervened, that we deemed it advisable to support his spirits by declaring our disbelief of the dangers he apprehended. The partial copses we went through, generally scattered on a bank commanding the road, were indeed aptly fitted to an ambuscade; and to his remarks on the favourable nature of the locality, he added, that we, as strangers, ran only the risk of losing our

money or clothes, but that he, as an inhabitant of the district, likely to know the delinquents and to be called upon to identify them, must probably forfeit his life to their measures of precaution.

Just at sunset we arrived at a spot where the road branches off to Muro, some of its houses appearing in the distance on the right; while the principal track, which we followed, shortly brought us to the tavern, where I had every hope to find the accommodations and persons alluded to above. In this I was disappointed; and although we might have rested there for the night, (and ought to have done so,) the owner's manner was so little inviting, that I preferred proceeding a mile farther to another tavern, likewise called of Muro, which I flattered myself must realise my expectations. But after this additional walk, which took us from a short twilight to as short a moonlight, my disappointment was aggravated at finding the building we reached hermetically closed in every part, and evidently totally deserted. This is frequently the case with this kind of tenements, which are only hired for

short terms, and often evacuated before their expiration, from want of custom and success.

We were now more perplexed than ever with regard to our next proceedings; but although the most prudent step would probably have been to return to the tavern we had quitted, I was so impressed with the notion that *some* person was expecting me *somewhere*, that I resolved to continue my route to a third tavern, said to be situated about two miles farther. This intelligence was given by a few women and children, who hastily crossed the road with some faggots on their heads, and seemed equally surprised and alarmed at our appearance and our questions.

I was moreover urged to this determination by the reflection that, darkness having entirely set in, the danger of travelling was not greater in one direction than the other; and adding therefore as much speed to our movements as our flagging vigour would admit of, we marched on so briskly as to frequently leave our frightened companion and his slow-paced donkey far in the rear, when our compassion induced us to halt till they had joined us; so

that the whole of our nocturnal journey was not much accelerated by our efforts. An hour's time brought us to the object of our ultimate research, which showed itself in so humble a form as entirely to preclude all chance of finding there the person and accommodations which had lured us onwards.

A long and low-roofed building gave but slender hopes of even the most homely hospitality. Two cur-dogs stationed outside, and a feeble light glimmering from within, proved the abode to be inhabited; and the continued barking of the former, united to our own vociferations, at last called forth a tremulous interrogation as to what we wanted, and who we were. Our ready reply did not however seem likely to secure very speedy admittance to us; but, after some demur, and probably an investigation of our numbers and appearance through some chink or key-hole, the asseverations of our guide removed all suspicion; for the door was opened, and we were welcomed by the host and his wife, who, with a pretty little girl, their daughter, and a poor man worn to the last gasp by an intermittent fever, were the only inmates of the place.

It has fallen to my lot, in the course of sundry wanderings through different portions of Europe and Asia, to find myself compelled to seek shelter and a night's accommodation in many a lowly dwelling ; but never did I see anything in the shape of venta, khan, posada, or tavern, that, on a first appearance, manifested such repulsive and hopeless tokens of abject poverty and destitution as this hut. It was evident that the owners, though they bade us welcome and made us sit down, could not immediately shake off the feelings of suspicion and alarm, which their unprotected existence in a district so infested with crime and plunder had rendered habitual ; and it was not till I had played with the child, and presented it a piece of copper, that they yielded without reserve to the impulse of hospitality, added perhaps to the prospect of gain.

The whole establishment consisted of three rooms, if they might so be called, communicating with each other by square apertures without doors in the dividing mud walls, which in no part reached the feeble rafters that bent under a mass of ill-jointed tiles. The



first, or outward compartment, served as a kitchen, where, under the black cap of the chimney, furnished with a drapery of smoky cobwebs, lay the sick man, shivering among some expiring embers. The next division was a kind of retiring-room, in which were placed, probably to be out of sight, the domestic and culinary utensils, and three old wooden chests: on one side, a narrow recess, parted off by hurdles, contained the only bed the tenement boasted of. The third apartment answered the purpose of a hen-house and magazine for fagots, and had a well.

All this was very uninviting; but the *tavernaro* and his wife, by degrees, showed such confidence in us, and at the same time such willingness to render us all the assistance in their power, that we were put in possession of all that it contained in the form of comestibles. These consisted of some maccaroni, three eggs, and one pigeon, to which was added the very worst wine I ever tasted in my life; which defect would not have been very severely felt had not the water proved still more detestable, so that a mixture was indispensable as a reciprocal

disguise for both potations. The table linen, coarse as it was, proved, when extracted from its hiding-place, of exquisite cleanliness; as did the sheets: and hunger and fatigue did all that was requisite to render our meal not only palatable, but savoury.

About an hour after our arrival, a messenger came from the first tavern to inform us of the safe arrival there of my carriage and servant, but of their inability to come farther that night on account of the fatigue of the horses. This was not unwelcome news; nor did I regret the impossibility of their joining us, when I considered the want of stables, and indeed the deficiency of every kind of accommodation, which our present residence laboured under.

We retired to lie down by turns in our clothes on the bed which the good people gave up to us, and passed the night with as much comfort as such short periods of repose admitted. Just before day-break the carriage arrived; and I took leave of our hosts, with a remuneration which, moderate as it was, proved in all probability the most bountiful they had ever received: they were not the less grateful for a

few doses of sulphate of quinine for the fever-stricken man, whom they harboured from mere charity. This was the day of intermission in his disorder, and he availed himself of it to crawl to the tavern-door and wish us a good journey with the rising sun. He looked at the medicine with an expression of hope, in which I was far from participating; and, as the only means of thanking us, pointed to what he probably deemed the most gratifying spectacle in the vicinity. This was the gloomy castle of Muro, whose light-coloured walls, just tipped by the reddening dawn, frowned in silent grandeur above the deep ravine along which the town, not visible from this spot, is constructed.

I cannot recollect to have ever beheld a more dreary landscape than that which unfolded itself round me at that particular moment. Interminable ranges of barren hills, rising behind each other, surrounded the spot; with no peculiar object to relieve their monotonous aspect but a dilapidated village, miscalled Bella, on a conical height about a mile from Muro.

This last town, supposed to stand on the site of the ancient Numistro, still boasts of an epis-

copal see, and contains five thousand souls. The castle, which we saw under such gloomy colours, claims the historian's notice through deeds of a congenial character. The beautiful and ill-fated Joan found within its walls the termination of her eventful destiny; and, if guilt is not atoned for by years of sorrow and repentance, underwent in that abode the merited punishment of her early crimes. Shortly after her removal hither by the order of the ungrateful and unrelenting usurper who had deprived her of her throne, she was strangled by two Hungarian soldiers despatched from Naples for that purpose.

The precincts of this edifice had been sullied, more than a century previous to this event, by a murder fully as atrocious, but attested by less authentic records. Henry of Suabia, youngest son of the Emperor Frederick II. by Isabella of England, who had been named to the inheritance of the island of Sicily, was likewise strangled in this castle through the dictate of his brother Conrad.

A considerable elevation, to which we ascended after quitting our resting-place, admitted a

more extended view of this portion of Basilicata, including, among some distant villages, the town of Picerno and the castle of Lago Pesole, of which I shall have to speak hereafter. The only specimens of verdure which caught the eye were a few holly-bushes of a very beautiful kind.

We stopped soon after to breakfast at a tavern called S. Fele, from being placed at the branching off of a road leading to a little town so named, which is seen in the distance on the left, and contains no less than five thousand three hundred inhabitants.

After remaining about an hour, we resumed our progress on a continued descent into a black and barren ravine, through which ran a small brook, which we crossed. An ascent on the opposite side, of no great duration or steepness, brought us to Atella, about eight miles from S. Fele.

This place, which is dignified with the name of town, is placed on the flank of a hill, at the foot of which a very abundant stream, brought from some distance along a subterranean channel, gushes from the soil with the

refreshing semblance of a primitive spring, turns a mill, and unites itself to the above-mentioned brook.

Atella boasts of ruined walls, and the openings which once were gates ; but the interior presents a most miserable aspect, and the pavement is execrable. It contains fifteen hundred inhabitants.

Three miles farther stands the more considerable though less ancient town of Rionero, some portion of which does not present a much better appearance than Atella ; but its population, amounting to ten thousand inhabitants, is industrious, so that the dirty streets are not without animation. It also contains some good houses ; and the environs are furnished, not embellished, by vineyards and olive-trees, and several large villas.

Barile, the term of our peregrination, stands about two miles farther in a much better situation. Here we stopped, and found excellent accommodation in the mansion of the Prince of T—, whose agent had been taught to expect me, though not quite so early ; the letter specifying the day of my arrival having been

delayed on its route, which accounted for our disappointments of the preceding day. Our reception was all we could have hoped for, thanks to the condition of the house, and the noble owner's friendly directions; and within its hospitable walls we fixed our abode for some days.

It is very unusual in any part of the Neapolitan dominions to find towns placed so near to each other as those of Atella, Rionero, Barile, Rapolla, and Melfi: still more uncommon is it for the public road to be conducted through them, as is the case with the three first, and it can only be accounted for by their comparatively modern origin.

These five are placed on a gently curved line, of little more than eight miles' extension, on the eastern slope of Mount Vulture. This singular mountain, of whose volcanic composition no doubt can be entertained, rises, detached and isolated, from the chain of the Apennines, which here terminates on the confines of Basilicata and Apulia, marked by the course of the river Ofanto, and is seen at a considerable distance from all parts of this last province,

though its elevation does not exceed three thousand feet. Two higher peaks rise above the general mass, which is likewise sufficiently broken and indented to give a fantastic and picturesque character to the outline.

The slope at the foot of which the above-mentioned three towns are situated, is in no part very steep, and cultivation has nearly reached its summit; while the south and western sides are covered with thick forests. The northern flank, which overlooks Melfi, displays a mixture of cultivation and wildness, rendering its aspect very beautiful from that town; which, though designated as placed upon it, stands, in fact, on a detached eminence, divided from Volture by a deep but very narrow valley.

Barile, from which, having secured such comfortable quarters, I proposed making excursions in the environs, may be said to belong more properly to the mountain itself; and, standing on a more elevated site than either Atella or Rionero, enjoys not only a much more extensive view over the flats of Capitanata as far as Mount Garganus and the sea,



but shares, with this advantage, that of a salubrious but cold temperature.

It is, nevertheless, a wretched place, containing a population of three thousand souls, which has been gradually decreasing for several years. This must be ascribed to the natural idleness of the natives, who seem to have inherited it with some of the wild ferocity of their ancestors, who were Albanians. These had originally settled at Melfi at the time when several colonies from Epirus were encouraged to settle in various parts of the kingdom of Naples; but their wild, and probably contentious habits, and perhaps the difference of religion, rendering them not very pleasant visitors or inmates, they by degrees were either expelled, or withdrew, from their first residence, and established themselves in the recesses excavated by the hand of nature along the whole of this base of the mountain, including the territory of Atella and Rionero. They are converted to the use of cellars at these two last towns; but many of them at Barile still serve for habitations to the natives, who all speak and understand the Albanian dialect, while a great por-

tion of the lower orders are acquainted with no other.

One of the principal families, by name Mazzucca, boasts of being descended from one of seven warlike brothers who accompanied Scanderbeg from Epirus into this kingdom.

The inhabitants are chiefly employed in cultivating, in a very slovenly manner, a territory which yearly diminishes in extent and consequence; as the natives of the adjoining Rionero, whose habits of industry and activity offer a singular contrast to those of this idle race, have so increased in wealth and population within the last twenty years, that they are enabled to make frequent acquisitions from the territory of their improvident and lazy neighbours, who will ultimately become entirely dependent upon them for subsistence and support.

These last have sagacity enough to foresee this, but a strange mixture of pride and apathy combines to retain them in this state of deterioration: they seem, nevertheless, contented and happy, and to be of a peaceable and friendly disposition among themselves; though I should doubt their extending these feelings

towards their neighbours, whom they appear to hold in sovereign contempt.

The produce of the soil is chiefly wine, the town being surrounded by vineyards and a few olive-grounds; but the unremitting occupation of the majority of the inferior class consists in the fabrication of gunpowder, which, though strictly prohibited, is carried on in the most undisguised manner at all times in the caves that surround the town. Their love of sporting, and the inherent attachment to their muskets, which they always carry about with them, may account for this propensity. The inhabitants compensate for the deficiencies reproached to them by a reputation of probity and courage, which is admitted as justly merited.

There are few good houses in the place, among which that in which I resided stood pre-eminent for size and comparative magnificence. It was not originally a possession of the T— family, but was purchased by the great-grandfather of the present proprietor, whose son incurred considerable expense towards rendering it habitable according to the taste of his day; which, however, boasted of

little that would now be called ornamental. In a small square garden, accessible from the court-yard and an apartment on the ground-floor, a considerable volume of excellent water has been conducted, which not only serves for the domestic uses of the house, but has been so distributed through pipes and under-ground channels as to supply a variety of fountains, and likewise to assist in the childish exhibition of what is termed *giochi d'acqua*. These consist of a variety of objects and figures, of wood and tin, which, being by turns applied to the orifice of the tube, and put into motion by the force of the jet forced through it, go through numerous evolutions, enrapturing a large concourse of spectators admitted by special favour at the same time that I viewed this pastime, which terminated by a general aspersion from unseen reservoirs, the contents of which were suddenly forced upwards, in the form of a shower reversed, upon the curious and delighted multitude.

A person appointed for the purpose enjoys an annual stipend from the prince to keep the pipes in proper repair, and is the only indivi-

dual entrusted with the keys, and initiated in the arcana of the mechanism of the performance.

Another entertainment, which in my opinion was more deserving of the name, was a dramatic representation, exhibited by an assemblage of the more respectable inhabitants and their children, in a large magazine or storehouse, which in a few hours was cleared of several tons of corn, and transformed into a theatre. This was proposed with the good-natured intention of breaking through the monotony of the long autumnal evenings; but the piece was not expressly got up for the occasion, as it had been acted some months before, and the scenery and dresses had been preserved, as well as the parts remembered.

The performance was far above mediocrity, and, considering that most of the actors had never quitted their native place, might be looked upon as wonderful; but the most striking circumstance attending it was, that the whole population, who were admitted gratis, repaired to the playhouse completely armed, with their muskets loaded and their belts full of car-

tridges. When a deputation thus accoutred waited upon me to accompany me to the theatre, I thought at first that I ought to be grateful for what I erroneously looked upon as a personal honour; but I soon found that the custom was habitual; and, on my inquiring if there existed any grounded motive for such hostile precautions, I was answered in the negative, but that it was considered better to be always prepared.

Whatever might have been the source of this custom, it struck me as characteristic of the Albanian origin of the people. I was shortly after invited to a very different specimen of their amusements, in the shape of a boar-hunt among the woods of Mount Vulture. I partook of these sports, limiting my share in them to meeting the party at the spot appointed, which I much wished to investigate; but an account of which I shall defer to the period of a second visit, paid to these regions from Melfi soon afterwards.

## CHAPTER III.

*Excursion to Venosa.—The Castle.—Bust of Horace.—Origin of Venosa.—Church of the Holy Trinity.—Remarkable tombs.—Castle of Lago Pesole.—Antique sculpture.—Rapolla.—Melfi.—The Castle.—Fountains.—Geological collection.—Excursion to Mount Volture.—Monte Verde.—A resident Baron.—Craters in the mountain.—Convent of St. Michael.—Course of the Ofanto.—Grotte dell' Abbate Cesare.—Territory of Monticchio.—Value of timber.*

I REMAINED rather more than a week at Barile, most hospitably entertained by the prince's agent, and treated with much attention by the principal inhabitants; during which time, the frequent recurrence of bad weather, and the difficulty of obtaining horses, precluded the possibility of undertaking many excursions I had projected: one of these, however, I was enabled to effect, to Venosa, which, as the birth-place of Horace, and for many other reasons, I was desirous of visiting.

There is a short road across the country from

Barile to this town, which curtails the distance to about eight miles : but I preferred a longer journey, hoping that, the road being good enough to admit of a carriage, some time might thereby be saved ; in which I was mistaken.

I followed, for the first six miles, the continuation of the track which had brought me from Eboli, bearing, like all those constructed within the last hundred years, the name of *Via nuova*. It descends from the slopes of the Volture, on which Barile is situated, into the valley which receives the stream from Atella, and all those that pour their waters into it from the right and left. There is no change in the aspect of the country, which offers to the eye a succession of bare, though not barren hills, cultivated with corn wherever the rocky projections do not impede it, and furnished with patches of vines and scanty olive plantations in the sheltered ravines. The brook is crossed over a small bridge near a large tavern called La Rendina, from which it takes, or to which it gives, its name : this is shortly afterwards changed to Oliveto, an appellation it retains till it falls into the Ofanto, a few miles farther.



The course of the road is maintained as far as Ascoli ; but from La Rendina several lateral branches deviate, on the left to Melfi, and on the right to Lavello, Canosa, and Venosa. That which I followed, in the direction of this last place, is carried along the edge of a slender rill, winding between two ridges of low unfertile hills of mean and even dismal aspect : it was here that I found how greatly I had erred in selecting what was called the carriage-road ; which was so bad, and presented such repeated obstacles to the progress of three very weak mules hired at Melfi, that we found it in every respect more advantageous to alight and walk, whereby we gained nearly three quarters of an hour on our equipage.

Venosa, placed on a much higher level than the glen we had traversed, is reached by a long winding ascent, when the town breaks on the sight under a favourable point of view, chiefly due to the venerable aspect of its castle ; which, though a complete ruin, exhibits such magnitude of dimensions, and regularity of construction, as to form a very striking feature in the landscape.

The town is seated on a perfectly flat, but not very extensive plain, beyond which a range of well formed and richly cultivated hills is seen, together with the distant towns of Maschito, Acerenza, and Forenza. On looking back the way we came, the peaks of Mount Volture, showing themselves above an intermediate line of mean eminences, have a much more picturesque and imposing appearance than when viewed from a nearer point, such as Barile or Melfi.

The walls of the city of Venosa have long since been levelled to the soil; but the gateways exist, and that which gave us entrance is close to the castle above-mentioned. This fabric was erected in the fifteenth century by Pirro del Balzo, Prince of Altamura and Venosa; and, although never completed, the general plan is distinct in the ruins. It was square, with a circular tower on a corresponding bastion at each angle, and surrounded by a deep moat with two drawbridges, one facing the exterior entrance of the town, and the other, leading to the large square on which the edifice is built, opposite an inner gateway that opens to

the principal street. A marble inscription records the founder's name, and is placed above the first bridge, together with an elaborately finished shield bearing the minute details of his emblazoned arms. It now belongs to the Prince of T—, and all that remains of the interior is used as a tavern and stables for muleteers and carriers.

The next object that struck me on pursuing my way into the town, was a bust on the top of a column of rough stone, with the words *Ora . . . . Poet. Venus.*—meant to remind the beholders that it represents the celebrated poet who was born there. The sculpture, which is much injured by time and weather, is of a rough coarse-grained stone, the features much defaced, the costume apparently a clerical habit of the middle ages, and the monument altogether discreditable to the skill of the artist, and the taste of whoever erected it.

No spot in the whole kingdom has so strongly excited the researches, and administered to the dissertations of antiquaries, as the town of Venosa. Besides the numerous observations contained in the works of Antonini, Corsignani,

Egizi, Pratilli, and others, Monsignor Lupoli, bishop of the diocese, has, under the title of *Iter Venusinum*, published a work of great erudition and research on the antiquities it contains, a mine which had probably been previously explored by Cimaglia in his "*Antiquitates Venusinæ*." These productions contain every document and every hypothesis which can elucidate the origin and history of this city, and record, besides, more than one hundred and fifty inscriptions found within its territory.

The reader will not expect me to decide whether it was founded by the Cananeans, Phenicians, Osci, Pelasgi, or Peligni; or whether Diomed, a Greek, built it, and called it from his mother's Latin name; or whether it belonged to Daunia or Lucania: I shall, therefore, limit my description to such objects as more particularly struck me during my short visit; the principal among which is a church and monastery dedicated to the Holy Trinity, erected, in 942, on the site of a temple of Hymen, by Gisulfus, Prince of Salerno, but greatly enlarged and repaired more than a century

afterwards by the celebrated Robert Guiscard, who prevailed on Nicholas II, as he returned from presiding over the Council of Melfi in 1059, to consecrate this edifice in person.

It belonged to the Benedictine order, and its occupiers, probably towards the close of the thirteenth century, undertook to add to it a church on a very extended scale; in the fabrication of which they employed all the materials of the adjoining amphitheatre, which, for magnitude and beauty of architecture, held a distinguished rank among the most noted of Roman edifices. This operation levelled the Roman work with the soil, and its outline is scarcely visible; but that which absorbed the materials that composed it, has never been completed: in its unfinished condition it nevertheless exhibits remains of a singular and not unskilful taste in architecture.

The walls of the whole building are entire, without any roof, and encircle a considerable space. Two low columns, with grotesque but elaborately finished capitals, point out the line of the lateral aisle; and one large pilaster, formed of several united pillars, resembling many of

the Gothic specimens in our English cathedrals, was probably one of four meant to support the dome or cupola: in a straight direction with this, a deep arched niche in the centre of the transversal wall was most likely intended to contain the altar. The stones have all been taken from the amphitheatre in their original form, and are placed, after the manner of the ancients, without any cement; which stamps the fabric with a character unusual to those of the middle ages. Several inscriptions on slabs of immense length are mixed with these, most of them placed with the letters downwards.

The ruin is imposing from its magnitude, and the regularity of its masonry; and its picturesque appearance is much enhanced by a plant of jessamine, the stem of which, about eight inches in diameter, has forced itself through the interstices of the wall, and covers its sides for a considerable distance with a profusion of foliage and flowers.

The date of the original structure does not appear well authenticated, but some more recent inscriptions record that it was withdrawn from the Benedictine order in the sixteenth

century, and given to that of St. John of Jerusalem, of which it became a commandery or baillage: some of the dignitaries who held it are buried in the adjoining church, which, in its simple and even rustic aspect, bears the marks of a remote origin. Two other sepulchres, contained within its precincts, offer no inconsiderable degree of historical interest, as inclosing the relics of personages celebrated in the early annals of the kingdom. One is merely a marble chest and lid, without any ornament, placed in a niche in the wall, and filled with the bones of Robert Guiscard, and his elder brother William Ferrabrach, or Fier-à-bras, Drogon or Dreux, Humphrey, &c. all of whom possessed in the surrounding regions the different domains which their valorous usurpation wrested from the Greek possessors; which territories were afterwards united, together with still more extended acquisitions, into one principality, by the more politic and ambitious Guiscard.

The other tomb, on the opposite side of the church, is that of Alberada, a Lombard princess, first wife of the same Robert, and mother

to his eldest son Bohemund : it likewise consists of a simple marble chest, but is surmounted with a kind of Gothic scroll-work on the arch which covers it, and bears the following inscription :

“ Guiscardi conjux, Aberarda, hâc conditur arcâ;  
Si genitum quæris, hunc Canusinum habet.”

The tenour of these lines proves the sepulchre to have been raised a considerable time after her decease, as it alludes to that of her son at Canosa, who died long after her, having been one of the principal heroes of the first crusade in Syria, where he had founded the principality of Antioch : he did not return to Italy till he had reached a very advanced period of life ; it is indeed believed that he expired on board the vessel that conveyed him to his native land.

In the same church are two very large columns of some very fine and hard material, I should suppose basalt ; but so thickly clad with repeated layers of stucco and whitewash, that it is impossible to ascertain the substance : they are surmounted by marble capitals of very good Roman workmanship. This is all that



the town of Venosa contains which can be considered entitled to notice; as I cannot include as such a quantity of fragments of sculptured lions of the most rude execution, probably relics of the lower empire, which protrude from walls and corners in all directions.

Venosa is reputed to be more affected with malaria than most of the surrounding towns; but the faces and complexions of the lower orders, particularly those of the females, were infinitely more healthy in appearance than at Barile, and some were remarkable for beauty and regularity of feature

Our way back to Barile was very tedious, owing to the incapacity of our mules and the badness of the roads, and we only reached it three hours after sunset; which circumstance put me out of conceit with a plan I had formed of going to the castle of Lago Pesole the next day.

This edifice, which is now possessed, with the territories of Melfi, by Prince Doria Pamfili, is ascertained to have been frequently resorted to by Frederick II. on his sporting expeditions, for which its position among

extensive forests was admirably adapted. This prince is even looked upon as having erected it for that express purpose; but it is probable that it was originally raised by the Normans, and subsequently improved and ornamented by him, when he selected it as a temporary residence. Many of the embellishments thus bestowed upon it, exist to the present day in the various forms of columns, door-slabs, arches, &c.; which render the quantity of marble it still contains very considerable, and not less remarkable for the peculiar style of taste and execution which distinguishes them, but which, not having been able to visit the spot in person, I am unable to describe, as the accounts I received of these monuments was given in a very confused manner.

It is placed on a conical hill, isolated from the surrounding ridges, and of not inconsiderable elevation, which makes it a singular and imposing object from a considerable distance: while its name was derived from a small lake, now a stagnant pool, just beneath it, in which tradition has noted some floating islands, probably masses of weeds and decayed vegetation.

It has survived the devastations which time has been allowed to commit on most edifices of a contemporary date, which have not been saved by their sacred character, and continues to be used as a capacious and commodious habitation. The presence of its illustrious proprietor, at the time I was projecting a visit to it, proved one of the obstacles in the way of such an excursion, besides the others above-mentioned.

Before I quitted Barile, I was much gratified by the inspection of a specimen of very fine antique sculpture, contained in the very mansion which I inhabited, but the existence of which I was only made acquainted with on the day previous to my departure. It was a large trough of white Parian marble, representing in alto relievo the history of Achilles. The heads were all defaced, but the figures and drapery in good preservation ; and the execution is of so superior a quality, that it approaches to the finest relics of Grecian workmanship. The fourth side is turned against the wall of the vault or magazine in which it is very injudiciously placed ; and, the whole being too

ponderous to be moved without considerable labour and exertion, it was not possible to obtain a sight of it. Another has relief, which has been adapted as a lid to it, is of very inferior execution, but less injured by time. It represents a sacrifice, and was probably a sepulchral monument placed upright. On the face of the sarcophagus are engraved the words "Metilia Torquata," which appear of a more recent date, and were probably added when it was adapted to the reception of the dead, as some of the letters (in order to preserve the regularity of their line) have been cut upon the shield of Achilles.

I could never obtain any more satisfactory account of this beautiful relic, than that it was brought to its present station by one of the Prince of T—'s ancestors, from the church of the neighbouring town of Atella, where it had been from time immemorial. The difficulty and expense of having it transported to Naples are sufficient reasons for its continuance in its actual state of obscurity.

I quitted Barile after a residence of ten days, and having, during a short previous excursion to

Melfi, become acquainted with an inhabitant of that city, availed myself of his kind offer of hospitality.

I sent my carriage and servant along the road by Rendina, already described, and proceeded to Melfi on foot, by a path not extending quite four miles in distance. The town, though so near to Barile, is not visible from it, as it is only from the summit of an opposite eminence, divided by a deep ravine, that it shows itself with considerable effect, and holds out a promise of importance and magnitude which a nearer investigation by no means verifies. The track I followed wanders by some vineyards, afterwards through a thicket of stunted oaks, and over a broken surface of uneven ground, till it brings one above a precipitous gully, on the reverse of which stand the scattered habitations that constitute what is still called the town of Rapolla ; which was once an episcopal see, now united to that of Melfi, and contains at present about three thousand inhabitants.

A little rivulet dashes through the dell under the town, and we crossed it after descending

along a succession of the same little caverns that characterise all the villages of this district, and are here used as wine-cellars. The site is wild, and perhaps a little dreary; but I should prefer it to Barile as a residence. I went through it at a pace somewhat accelerated by the threatening appearance of a rainy sky; and confess that the only objects that arrested my attention, were a number of Latin inscriptions, which induced me to suspect that Rapolla contains a poet destined to waste his sweetness on the desert air. Of their merit the following specimens may give some idea.

On the door of a wine cavern :

BACCHUS AD VIATOREM.

Siste, Viator : hìc mordaces comprime curas.

Est hìc dulce merum ; tu bibe, lætus eris.

Si fractum sentis per longo tramite corpus,

Est hìc dulce merum ; tu bibe, firmus eris.

Læthalis verò si morbus presserit artus,

Est hìc dulce merum ; tu bibe, sanus eris.

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On an apothecary's shop :

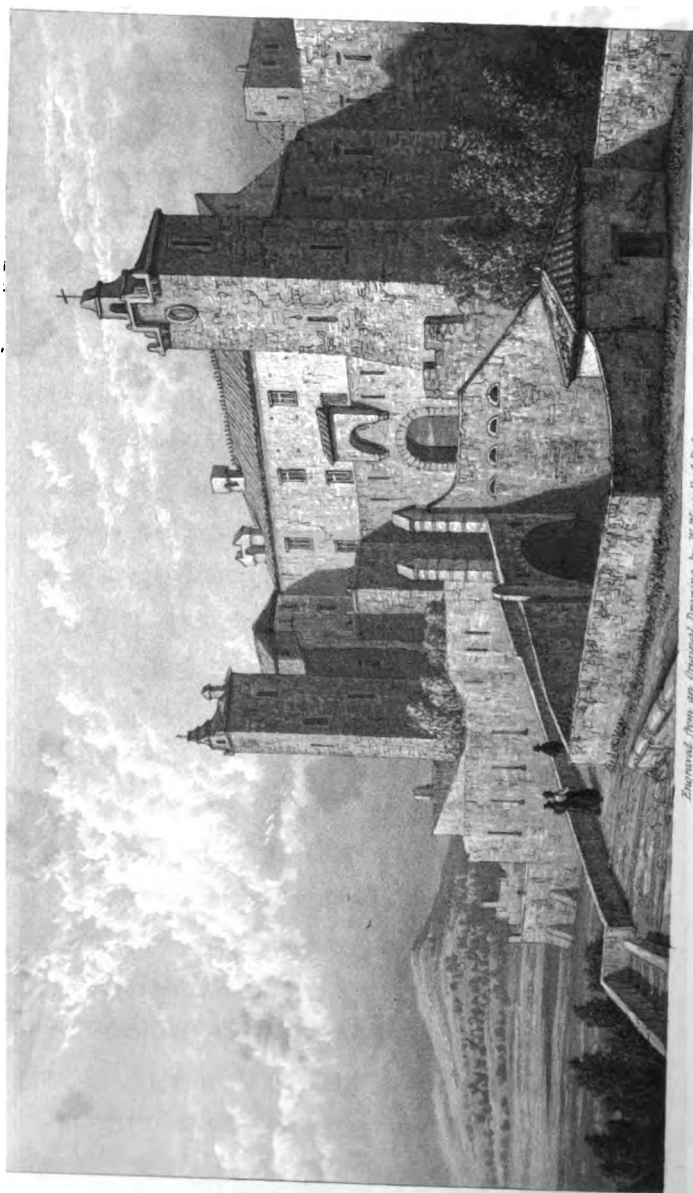
Si dolor, febris, aut malè Venus te excruciat,

Huc propera. En ! opium, Chinaque, Mercurius !

Melfi is scarcely a mile from Rapolla; but the steepness and extreme roughness of the water-worn path which leads to it, renders its access, on this side, very fatiguing: like most others in a commanding and elevated situation, this town loses somewhat of its majestic appearance on a nearer approach to it. It is encircled by crumbling walls which show more breaches than gates; though these last are not few, and most of them are illustrated by high-sounding names and pompous inscriptions. The streets are narrow, ill paved, and dirty; and most of them, as the town is built on the side of a steep acclivity, are impracticable to a carriage. Many of the houses, however, have a respectable appearance, which they owe more to the solidity and simple style of their masonry than to the magnitude of their dimensions. The natives honour these habitations with the name of Norman or French; but it is evident that their construction is too recent to justify this appellation. All those which have any pretensions to regularity present a singular feature in an inscription extending along the whole front between the ground and first floor, recording







*Engraved from an Original Drawing by W. Beard A.R.S.*

# **THE CASTLE OF MELFI.**

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the name of the founder or proprietor, with a variety of extraneous matter. The letters being large, and sculptured in high relief on a hard stone susceptible of considerable polish, produce the appearance of a frieze or cornice, which has a very good effect.

The principal object at Melfi is its castle, which, though in many of its parts fallen to decay, and in others restored in very bad taste, retains an aspect of venerable and imposing grandeur. It is surrounded by a fosse, now converted into gardens, and was entered by a drawbridge, the chains of which still serve as a guard or parapet to that of stone which has supplied its use.

This edifice stands at the very uppermost extremity of the town, from which it is separated by a kind of platform commanding a view of the opposite slopes of Mount Volture. Considerable historical interest is attached to it, as the principal, and probably the first fortress built by the Normans after their conquest of all this portion of the kingdom.

The sons of Tancred of Hauteville, and their companions in arms, constructed Melfi, and de-

signated it as the capital of the various sovereignties into which they had divided their conquests; and within the walls of its castle they held periodical meetings for the purpose of discussing and regulating the interests of their military confederacy; and, subsequently, more than one council of the church was held within their precincts. But it appears, at the same time, to have been more particularly considered as the principal town of the domains that had been allotted to Arduinus, one of these warlike brothers.

The extent of this fabric is considerable; and even that portion, comparatively small, which has been retained for the habitation of its successive proprietors, affords much accommodation. It now belongs, with a large adjunct of territory, to Prince Doria Pamfili, whose principal agent resides there, with many assistants, to carry on the operations of what is called administering the vast estates he possesses in this vicinity. These, which once belonged to a branch of the Caraccioli family, descending from the celebrated Sergianni, the imperious and ill-fated favourite of Joan II, were, after

a temporary confiscation to the crown, conferred by Charles V. on the no less illustrious Andrea Doria.

There is a very handsome apartment reserved solely for the use of the noble proprietors when they visit their domains, which the present possessor, who usually resides at Rome, was in the act of doing for the first time in his life while I was at Melfi.

These rooms are fitted up in the costly and substantial style which characterized the beginning of the eighteenth century. Among a variety of very indifferent paintings, I discovered a portrait, which, though much damaged, was distinguished not only by the touch of a superior artist, but might, from the costume and character of the countenance, have been that of the great Doria himself ; but it was evidently regarded with indifference, having been placed over a dingy chimney in the secretary's office.

The large hall in which the meetings of the Norman confederacy were held, and which afterwards witnessed the Councils of 1089 and 1100, has been converted into a theatre, the

wooden ruins of which offer a strange contrast to the pointed arches and massive walls of the building. Most of the square towers are in a state of dilapidation ; but one, reputed to have been the dungeon, remains entire, and in its height and solidity affords an impressive specimen of the general structure.

At less remote periods of history, Melfi was considered a military post of importance during the various contests which occurred in the kingdom for its possession. In 1528, it underwent a short but calamitous siege, directed against it by a portion of Lautrec's army, commanded by Pietro Navarro, captain of the famous *bande nere*. It was taken by assault ; three thousand of its inhabitants massacred ; and Sergianni Caraccioli, its feudal lord, who had defended it with great bravery for Charles V, retired to the castle, where he capitulated with several other distinguished warriors. Afterwards, having neither been liberated nor rewarded by his sovereign, he entered the service of France, and lost his rank and estates in the realm, which were conferred upon Andrea Doria.

This is the nobleman who is recorded by

Brantome, in his *Hommes Illustres Etrangers*, as Le Duc de Melfe.

The next object of curiosity in the town is the cathedral, or rather its high tower, which, according to an inscription on a marble slab incrustcd in its walls, was erected by William, son of Roger, (the founder of the kingdom,) in 1151. This fabric, though of good masonry, presents nothing very remarkable except its height, being like most of our old English belfries, with small Saxon arches for windows. The adjoining church contains a very richly gilt and carved ceiling, added to it in modern times by one of its bishops, who likewise repaired the front of the edifice, and built the *vescovado*, or episcopal residence, in a style of magnificent regularity, and on a scale of dimensions little suited to the present size and importance of the town, which only contains seven thousand inhabitants. At the foot of the hill on which it is situated, just outside of one of its gates, are established the different fountains which supply its waters. Their position is not very convenient to the inmates, but the level of the water prevented a higher station.

They have recently been repaired and added to ; and have very judiciously been adapted, according to their forms, and the greater or less abundance of their respective streams, to the various and separate uses which may be required of them : so that one is solely for watering animals, another exclusively reserved to the drink of the natives, another furnished with a larger supply for domestic wants, and several, much larger, merely for washing.

I never before observed this peculiar mode of distribution, which the abundance of the element has allowed of ; it gives a pleasing character to this extremity of the city. From hence the new track, meant to communicate from Melfi with the great road from Naples into Apulia, is commenced, which will render a journey to the capital much more rapid and easy than under the present form. The prospect from this spot is worth remarking ; as a rapid brook, named the Melfa, runs meandering through masses of fresh cultivation under the lower flanks of Mount Volture, here beautifully diversified by olive-groves, vineyards, and gardens, and enlivened by villas and farm-houses.

To the geologist, that mountain and the detached hill of Melfi offer attractions of peculiar interest and singularity; the town being built on a volcanic mass of heterogeneous composition, presenting a curious mixture of grey lava containing an abundance of lazulites of various hues, intersected by strata of travertine, upon alternate layers of ashes, alluvial sand, tufa, and stalactites in a very decomposed state.

I was much interested by the sight of a collection of the general mineral and geological productions of these environs, which has been formed, during many years' residence at Melfi, by a retired priest deeply versed in those sciences. This assemblage of specimens is so curious and varied, that I doubly regret the inabilities under which I labour to give a detailed and technical account of it.

Melfi has the reputation of being subject to malaria, or something akin to it, which shows itself in the form of intermittent autumnal fevers. The exterior appearance of the natives is nevertheless much more healthy than that of the inhabitants of Barile. The Melfitans themselves deny the existence of this evil; but I



must observe, in support of it, that on rising every morning I found the linen and clothes by my bedside as saturated by damp as if they had been exposed to the action of a heavy mist, and I have no doubt that the position of Mount Volture, exactly to the south of the city, and separated from it by a deep and narrow glen full of rivulets, may greatly contribute to this cause of insalubrity.

The population appears lively, industrious, and active, though there are no particular manufactures: many of the inhabitants deal in cattle and wine, which last I found somewhat less sweet and heavy than the produce of the surrounding towns: it constitutes an abundant article of commerce with the whole of the adjoining province of Capitanata, where, under the name of *Vino di Melfi*, it is sold and held in general use.

The day after I arrived at Melfi was almost entirely devoted to a second visit to the interior recesses of the mountain, having made a previous excursion to it from Barile, on which occasion the weather was so boisterous as to place great impediments in the way of my

researches, and almost to convince me of the plausibility of the reason alleged by Livy for the defeat of the Romans at Cannæ: he says that, although at least thirty miles distant from this mountain, the impetuosity of the wind which was generated in the interior valleys, and which blew directly from it in their faces, was so powerful as to overpower them.

I can only bear testimony to the extraordinary effects of a sort of hurricane, which seemed to issue from the flanks of the interior craters, and rushed through the defiles that unite one with another, with such frightful potency as to render all progress against it quite impracticable at times, and which appeared the more unaccountable from raging with such violence in spaces entirely surrounded by high ridges and sheltered by extensive forests: scarcely five minutes elapsed without some alarming crash being heard, occasioned by the fall of some ancient beech or oak tree, which frequently occurred near enough to threaten danger as well as obstacles to our movements.

My second excursion, however, took place under the most favourable auspices, and afford-

ed every opportunity of enjoying the very peculiar aspect presented by the regions of this ancient volcano.

From Barile I had gradually ascended what may be termed its exterior flanks, to a considerable height, and then dived into the obscurity of its nearly impenetrable forests; but from Melfi the way was less arduous.

It commences at the gate of the fountains, and, after crossing the Melfa, bears a little to the left, skirting the base of the mountain, and passing by several villas in unsheltered positions, among low coppices of chestnut-trees. The country to the right exhibits a gently inclined plane, covered with wheat stubble, and sloping to the bed of the Ofanto, which runs at no great distance in a scanty stream under some high but bare mountains; on the most elevated of which stands the little town of Monte Verde beyond the river, which here divides the two provinces of Basilicata and Principato Ultra. This place was once an episcopal see, but is now reduced to a population of fifteen hundred souls. There is a baronial mansion, the remnant of feudal grandeur; and, what

is more remarkable, it contains a baron who makes it his habitual residence.

I was much interested, perhaps I should not say amused, by the account of this gentleman's mode of existence, which depends entirely on the produce of his corn-fields, and the greater or less advantages he derives from its sale. He was represented to me as a person of amiable disposition and highly cultivated mind, whose only relaxation in this secluded spot was the performance of dramas, in which he and his family bore the principal parts, and of which the whole population of Monte Verde were the spectators; as their next neighbours, the inhabitants of Melfi, though usually favoured with invitations, and only seven miles distant, found the labours of the road too arduous to be undertaken, even with the prospect of such compensation. The baron's numerous offspring, among which the females were all married to various proprietors inhabiting the town, boasted of a sufficient share of talent and acquirements to soar into the regions of operatic melodrama as well as comedy.

To return to my excursion, the road, after

we had lost sight of Melfi, winding somewhat round to the south, led us, at the expiration of an hour, to an opening in the mountain, through which the cool and clear streams, which we had noted as running from that spot, find their way into the flatter country, and the majestic forests, that clothe all the inner regions of the volcano, begin to show themselves. We followed the path which enters this dark labyrinth of foliage; leaving in the distance the town of Carbonara, situated in Principato Ultra, behind Monte Verde; and more to the right, in the plain of Capitanata, that of Candela, nearly its equal in dimensions.

The precipitous sides of the numerous craters that have been scooped out by repeated dateless eruptions, are entirely covered with trees, whose growth would appear to identify their age with that of the soil which produces them: they consist chiefly of beech and oak, of which the former is the most frequent and of the largest dimensions, while the underwood exhibits the usual varieties, among which the thorn predominates. I have seen many more remarkable specimens of timber in our nor-

thern regions; but nowhere have I observed trees of considerable proportions collected together in such numbers, displaying such beauty in their form, or such robust vegetation in their foliage.

These craters communicate with each other by large openings, which, covered as they are with thickets, are scarcely perceptible to the wanderer among their intricate sinuosities, and a correct idea of which can only be obtained by a bird's-eye view of the whole excavation from a very elevated point. The lower parts of these basins have some level surfaces, from which the woods have occasionally been cleared away, to afford more space for pasture, and to erect a few huts, which, with a monastery placed in the widest of the craters, constitute the only habitations which this wild district boasts of.

This last contains a community of Franciscan monks, and is dedicated to St. Michael: it is singularly situated, as if stuck on to one of the steepest slopes, the face of which is broken by volcanic rocks of the most grotesque form, overhanging the building in a frightful manner, and in other parts rising abruptly into

sharp and slender pinnacles and cones, but interspersed with the richest vegetation to the very summit of the mountain. Just below the convent are two lakes, the smallest of which is separated from it by a gentle declivity covered with walnut and chestnut trees: several springs gush from the rocks at its base, and from these, united to others rising from the reputed fathomless bottom of the pool, its supplies are derived.

A ruined church, called Sant' Ippolito, probably the original foundation, stands on a flat intersected by the channel which conveys the superfluous waters of the smaller lake into the adjoining cavity which forms the second, the dimensions of which are nearly double. From this, another rivulet winds through the most intricate portions of the forest, receiving other springs; among which is one of a mineral nature, called, from its salubrious qualities, *Acqua Santa*; and finally works its way out of the interior of the mountain at the opening which had admitted us, and falls into the *Ofanto*.

The monastery offers nothing remarkable except its antiquity and position; and the monks,

who had certainly not included cleanliness in the number of their vows, seemed to take particular pride in the neglect and decay which characterize their abode.

This spot, probably one of the most deserted in the kingdom, is much resorted to on the patron's festal day ; the last celebration of which had been mournfully signalized by the death of one of the votaries, who, stimulated probably by too copious a libation in honour of the archangel, had imprudently ventured alone into one of the unmanageable punts used to take up the lines and nets, and, having lost his balance, was precipitated into the smaller pool, from which his body, probably from the want of proper means, had never been recovered.

The features which distinguish the scenery of this secluded corner of the realm, are as beautiful and original in their aspect, as they are sombre and even awful in their character, presenting in their assemblage all the appendages which the imagination is wont to attach to the gloomy institutions of La Trappe or St. Bruno.

The hand of man was in the act of despoil-



ing the view of some of its most striking ornaments, by hewing down a considerable portion of the trees on the bank facing the convent, for the purpose of restoring the soil to cultivation. This crater, by far the most extensive, is placed at the north-east side of Mount Vulture, that is, below the ridge that rises behind Barile; while the next in size, to which I had proceeded from Melfi, is at the opposite or south-western extremity. This is by no means so deep; and besides its woods, which are not so thick, boasts of nothing worthy of remark except the scanty ruins of a castle, the foundation of which is attributed to the Normans. These relics are inconsiderable, consisting of half a square tower, a portion of wall, and a vault with an aperture at the top, probably a cistern. Its situation, however, admirably adapted it to the purpose of a fortress, or watch-tower, to guard, and at the same time overlook, all the adjoining country.

The view towards the interior of the volcano, that is, to the east and south, is limited by the dark clothing of woods which entirely cover it: but to the west, the eye wanders

over a succession of mountain ridges, rising above one another, and defined with such clearness, that one might, in looking over their extension, fancy oneself glancing over a minutely executed map. In the same direction, in a deep narrow glen worn by the workings of its waters, flows the Ofanto, whose meandering course may be traced for a very considerable distance towards its source, with the successive roots of the above-mentioned mountains springing from its bed, which, flat and sandy, bears the marks of the sudden swells to which this river is subject through the melting of the snows or from any sudden rains. It here divides the province of Basilicata from that of Principato Citra, acting the same part a little lower with regard to that of Principato Ultra, and, farther still, forming the boundary line of Capitanata.

The hill that rises just opposite that which supports the castle, bears very much the same form and character, though less thickly furnished with trees. This appearance of identity is indeed so strong as to induce the belief that it originally belonged to the mass of the Vol-

ture, and was disjoined from it in the lapse of centuries by the operation of the stream. On the left shore of the Ofanto, but much elevated above its level, stands the town of Calitri, with a population of four thousand inhabitants.

The high peaks of the most distant mountains were already covered with snow, fallen about a week before my visit; and were pointed out to me as those that rise above Nusco, that is, just opposite La Valva and Laviano, beyond the Sele, the source of which river is not very distant from that of the Ofanto.

Descending from this ruin, and following a more northern direction along the same ridge, I was conducted to some caves, known in the country by the name of Grotte dell' Abbate Cesare, and distinguished as having been the resort of the noted Caesar Borgia when deprived of his ill-acquired possessions and wealth, and forced to conceal himself from danger and pursuit. This tradition, which has no foundation in the history of that extraordinary personage, is evidently a vulgar error; and a better authenticated origin for this name may

easily be found, by referring to the administration of the Spanish viceroys at the end of the seventeenth century, when a notorious brigand, called Cesare Ricciardi, originally a priest, and from that circumstance retaining his ecclesiastic designation, was, after a chequered career of crime and adventure, outlawed, and finally taken in this very province of Basilicata, where he had concealed himself in the recesses of Mount Vulture and other wild unfrequented districts.

These excavations attract notice at a little distance, from various masses of rock heaped upon each other in rather a singular manner, though of no very great elevation. They stand isolated from any other similar compositions, on a smooth surface of some extent. These grottoes, originally formed by the hand of nature, are numerous, though not very capacious; and the two principal caves communicate by a tortuous and narrow passage, apparently artificial. On a minute investigation of the surrounding locality, other apertures are found, which have scarcely any exterior mark to arrest the attention: one of these is placed

just above the river Ofanto, with so precipitous a descent to it, that no access can be attained from its banks, but only from the impending ridge. The roots of a large ilex, singularly interwoven with the strata of rocks, afforded me the means, not without much difficulty and even danger, of penetrating into a cavern most admirably adapted, from this difficulty of approach, to become the secure retreat of a bandit. A winding passage, so low as to preclude all progress except upon all-fours, and which therefore I had not the power of exploring without a light, seemed to lead from this den in the direction of the larger cavities, and probably established a communication between them. The tufa, of which they are formed, differs from the other rocks of Mount Volture, being full of stalactites.

When these gloomy forests and their impenetrable retreats were still more unfrequented and secluded than they now are, no spot could be found more favourable to the abode of a fugitive; and even in less remote times they have been used for similar purposes.

I was shown, in another part of the woods,

the position of a *pagliara*, or thatched hut, in which several individuals, who had there assembled during a few days for the purpose of sporting, allowed themselves to be burned alive by a much smaller number of brigands, who had waylaid them, and vowed them to destruction from revenge against two of the party, who in a former encounter had killed some of their gang. This had occurred within the last ten years.

The inequalities of the soil, entirely shaded by high trees and overgrown with brushwood, and the multiplicity of narrow paths worn by the cattle driven to feed in the forest, render a march through this kind of labyrinth a matter of such perplexity, that none but the most experienced individuals can venture to guide a stranger through the mazes which it presents; and I observed my conductors sticking boughs from different trees in many passes, through which we were to retrace our progress on our return.

This singular region, comprehending all the forest and grazing land included within the circuit of Mount Volture, is called Monticchio: it

belongs to government, and has long since been assigned to the use of the Constantinian order of knighthood. The territory is let to a small number of tenants for terms of six or seven years, and brings in a rent of fourteen hundred ducats. The lessees repay themselves, and reap their profit, in various ways; such as allowing cattle to feed, at stated times, for so much a hundred, distributed over the surface according to the quality of the food best suited to the different species of animals. Besides this, the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, by paying a yearly stipend, obtain the right of taking away as much fuel daily as a horse or mule can carry at one load; but, in doing this, they must abstain from cutting any timber above a certain thickness, and, besides this, content themselves with what is furnished by the broken boughs or fallen trees: the quantity of these last, however, renders such labour easy.

Some portions of the soil, indeed, are cultivated with different sorts of grain, but these are not frequent; while other districts are fenced off for pasturage, and let by the acre.

The shepherds that attend these flocks are allowed a *rotolo* (two pounds) and a half of bread every day, with a due proportion of salt and oil as seasoning: they receive, moreover, two ducats every month, a sheepskin cloak every year, and a daily bowl of fresh milk during the two first spring months.

I was induced through mere curiosity to inquire what sum the largest tree, beech or oak, might fetch by sale, and was answered that no demand had ever been made for such an article, but that fifteen carlins would probably be considered a fair price: the difficulty of transporting so large a body of timber to any distance, however small, must account for the apparent mediocrity of the charge. But I was afterwards informed, that in other parts of the same province, which, notwithstanding the general nakedness of its surface, contains several very extensive forests, where the vicinity of towns might probably increase the value of the timber, a large tree is rarely sold for two ducats. Among these wide-spreading woods, those of Lago Pesole, belonging to Prince Doria, cover thirty thousand *moggie*,



or acres, more than double the territory of Monticchio; and those of Santa Sofia, the property of my host the Prince of T—, are nearly as large.

After wandering the whole of a day, the beauty of which made such an employment doubly delightful, among the wild regions of Monticchio, I returned to Melfi with some regret.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Route from Melfi into Apulia.—View of Melfi.—Canosa.—Water-tanks.—Castle.—Cathedral.—Tomb of Bohemund.—Early history of Canosa.—Ancient Sepulchres.—Visit to Castel del Monte.—Description of the fabric.—The river Ofanto.—The field of Cannæ.—Cerignola.—Foggia.—Improvements effected there.—Return to the capital.—Val di Bovino.—The town of Bovino.—Ill consequences of farming the posts.—Ariano.*

DURING my stay in Melfi, I lodged in the house of a rich proprietor, whose hospitality was displayed in rather a less overpowering manner than usual: he placed no obstacles in the way of my visiting the mountain; and did not object to my preferring my early night's rest to the entertainment offered by the theatre, which he attended regularly every evening.

The apartment allotted to me was commodiously, and even luxuriously furnished; but it did not appear that any of the family considered a single bed as insufficient for the reception

of three persons; for when I retired on the first night I found no other preparations for my companion and servant, who were ushered into the room at the same time, so that I found myself compelled to inquire if additional accommodation could not be obtained. It was readily granted, but had evidently not been contemplated as a matter of necessity, or even convenience, and accordingly no provision had been made.

The road from Melfi into Apulia, which I followed, quits that town at the gate of the fountains, being the only egress practicable for a carriage: it then turns suddenly to the right, after crossing the Melfa, which, after winding a few miles, continues to run in the ravine: we went through this gully to ascend an opposite hill.

From this elevation, the castle seen in its whole extent, and succeeded by the cathedral and principal edifices of the town, detaches itself in the most picturesque manner from the more distant bank of the Vulture, whose double peak terminates the landscape on that side, while the windings of the stream among patches of rich vegetation and verdant gardens form a suitable foreground to the picture.

After ascending some time, we took an easterly direction on a gentle descent over a most dreary piece of waste ground, with no object to break the monotony of its surface, except the skull of a brigand, exposed in an iron cage at the extremity of a long pole: the features were no longer to be discerned; but a profusion of fine flaxen hair, still adhering to the skull, waved in the breeze through the grating which contained it. This had been one of Zambrosi's band, executed some years back, at an early age, for crimes too numerous and atrocious to bear recital.

The declivity led us to a bridge over the Olivento, into which the Melfa falls at no great distance from this spot; which is likewise but little removed from the tavern of La Rendina, mentioned in my excursion to Venosa. We had, in fact, reached the high road which runs in a northern direction to Ascoli, and thence joins the great Apulian communication; but we speedily quitted it for a track formed by cart wheels, but advancing no better claim to the name of road. It was, however, far from bad, the soil being dry and free from stones, and running parallel with the course of the

Ofanto, showing itself at the distance of less than a mile by a line of tamarisks and trees of higher growth: these, with a few scattered wild and stunted pear-trees, were the only specimens of vegetation visible in this landscape, which, in every respect, presented a most striking contrast to that which surrounds the Volture. Here a perfect flat of about two miles in breadth, totally uncultivated, and bearing nothing but thistles, stretched before us in a most wearisome vista between two low banks of clay not worthy the name of hills. The farm-houses were of more substantial structure and larger dimensions than in the more mountainous district, and their flat roofs indicated a warmer and drier climate.

We entered Apulia, that is, the Provincia of Bari, about ten miles from Melfi, and about as many from Canosa, leaving the town of Lavello on an eminence to the left.

We stopped to bait at a large masseria and tavern, the property of the see of Melfi; from which, on our right, within a recess formed by some higher and uneven ground, we could see, about seven miles distant, the episcopal town of Minervino, containing seven thousand inhabit-

ants, whose extensive line of walls, broken by large towers, and terminated by a castle, presented an imposing aspect.

After a rest of two hours, we resumed our progress towards Canosa, which showed itself at some distance, and the appearance of which improved considerably on drawing nearer to it. We entered this town about four o'clock, after passing several wells, or rather tanks, which, though nearly a mile from the town, afford to the inhabitants the only supply of water they can reckon upon. They are constructed in an oblong shape, and rise four or five feet above the surface of the soil in the shape of a very flat arch, covered with large slabs of stone neatly overlapping each other like a roof on either side. Several flights of steps lead up to square apertures in the centre, through which the water is drawn up in buckets, and distributed by channels into long narrow troughs running along the whole fabric; the dimensions of which, added to the regularity and solidity of its masonry, entitle it to the rank of an architectural structure.

I was provided with letters of recommendation for Canosa, but resolved to try the

chance of an inn before I availed myself of them, and considered myself fortunate when our driver stopped at the door of a clean-looking habitation, having on its sign "Locanda, Trattoria, e Taverna del Leone;" and though the nature of the accommodation it afforded could only be applied to the first of these titles, it was above mediocrity, and the remaining necessary appendages were obtained in the course of a couple of hours, during which I had leisure to walk through the town. I was informed that it contained ten thousand inhabitants, though Giustiniani's Topographical Dictionary gives it only half that number, and its general aspect indicates a smaller population.

It is seated on the slope of an abrupt but not very considerable eminence, on which are placed, as usual, the remains of its feudal castle. These consist of the whole exterior range of walls and towers; the interior having been gutted, and serving now as a fold for cattle. The walls are remarkable for the immense size and regularity observable in the lower courses of the stones, which were, perhaps, taken from some ancient Roman building, probably the amphi-

theatre. There is also a peculiarity in the curtains, which extend from tower to tower, and are convex, or, in fact, so many segments of a circle. The balustrades belonging to the windows of these towers are of a fine white stone resembling marble, and, being almost all entire, give to the whole structure somewhat of a less dilapidated aspect than most others of the same nature.

The houses in the town of Canosa are of good masonry, and constructed with the fine even-grained material above-mentioned, which is the case with most of the towns in the flat or eastern portion of Apulia. Many of these buildings were new, and as many unfinished. The streets are wide and paved with large flags; and the population wears the aspect of health, and the exterior of good humour; in both which they differed from that of the districts I had recently quitted: nevertheless, the place is reported to be subject to malaria.

The cathedral, the first object I visited, stands at the southern extremity of a wide street that runs from one end of the town to the other: it is low, but remarkable from the singular Orien-



tal character of its exterior architecture, chiefly produced by clusters of small cupolas like those on a Turkish bath, and which are said to be anterior to the time of the Normans. The effect alluded to has, nevertheless, being greatly injured by a low square belfry of modern and very incongruous taste and execution.

The dimensions of the interior are contracted, but it contains several objects worth notice : among these must be reckoned an ancient pulpit, or *ambone*, of carved stone, and a chair of similar material, the form and ornaments of which have almost an Hindostanee look.

Many large granite pillars supporting the arches, and surmounted by Roman capitals of very inferior sculpture, are likewise remarkable ; but six verd antique columns, near eighteen feet in height and two in diameter, constitute articles of real value. These were, undoubtedly, furnished by the remains of the ancient Canusinum, celebrated in antiquity for the richness and multitude of its architectural and sculptural monuments. An object less precious in its materials, but more singular from its style, is to be found in the tomb of Bohemund,

eldest son of Robert Guiscard. It is situated in a small area or court opening from one of the lateral chapels, and rests against the outward wall of the church itself.

This edifice, diminutive as it is, presents an eccentric, and not inelegant specimen of the taste which prevailed in the age that gave it birth. Its sides, composed of oblong slabs of white marble disposed of in an octagonal form, support a frieze and cornice of the same substance; above which rises an octagonal tiled roof, terminating in a little cupola, resting on very low pillars which admit the light between their interstices, the interior having no windows. The doors are two sheets of bronze, with engraved ornaments of a circular form and eastern design, and bear, moreover, numerous Latin metrical inscriptions in honour of the hero whose remains they are said to inclose. One of these is a literal repetition of that on the tomb of his mother, Alberada, at Venosa; and another records the construction of the belfry at Melfi, by Roger (first king of Sicily, cousin to Bohemund). This event, according to the inscription on the belfry itself, took place

in 1153; and, in that case, the sepulchral monument of Tasso's hero, or at least its bronze doors, could only have been raised forty years after his decease, which occurred in 1111. His bones are supposed to be contained in a marble chest within the little fabric; but many conflicting opinions exist as to the spot where he expired: some maintaining that it was at Antioch; others at Canosa; while others assert that he died at sea on his return from Syria, and that his remains were consigned to the deep.

So much for the modern state of Canosa: its more ancient celebrity under the various names of Canusinum, Canusia, and Canosa, is frequently referred to by the Latin historians; and, like most other cities in Daunia, its foundation was attributed to Diomed, the head on its coins being looked upon as his.

In the year 456 of the foundation of Rome, Canusium was subjugated to its sway, together with many other of the Apulian states; and it remained faithful to the Republic even after the rout at Cannæ, which gave to the inhabitants an opportunity of showing their attach-

ment to the vanquished in a manner that deserved to be recorded and honoured by the Senate; for we are told by Livy that four thousand legionaries, mostly wounded, and in a complete state of destitution, were hospitably received by the Canusians; and that a rich matron, named Busa, not only gave shelter to a large portion of them in her house, but furnished them with raiment, food, and the necessary provisions for the continuance of their journey.

A verse of Horace, "*Verba foris malis, Canusini more bilinguis*," has induced many antiquaries to suppose that the Greek language had continued in use together with the Latin in this city as late as that poet's time.

After the destruction of the Roman empire by the barbarians who occupied all this portion of Italy, Canosa fell under the dominion of the Saracens for the space of about forty years, that is, from 827 to 867, when they were driven away by the Emperor Louis II. The vestiges of its ancient edifices present little to attract the traveller's attention: the outline of an amphitheatre, the traces of walls in the direction of the river, the remains of a gate and an aque-

duct, and a large edifice designated as the abode of the benevolent Busa, constitute all that exists above ground; but the subterranean structures for the purpose of sepulture present an ample and interesting field to the researches of the artist and antiquary, not only in the peculiarities of their form, but in the number of fictile vases of the most exquisite workmanship which they have usually contained.

One of these sepulchres, opened in the year 1813, inclosed the skeleton of a warrior in complete armour of brass, gilt, and elaborately worked, with his sword by his side, and surrounded by numerous vases of various dimensions, some of which measured eight palms in height, and four in their widest diameter, exhibiting the largest specimens of that kind of article ever discovered.

The political vicissitudes to which the kingdom and its capital were shortly after that period subjected, caused the dispersion of these singular and valuable relics; but an excellent model of the tomb and all its appendages is preserved in the museum of the Studii at

Naples, and gives a most correct idea of their beauty.

Since that, many sepulchres of similar construction, though not so magnificent in their details, have been found at Canosa; and one of these had been recently excavated at the time of my visit, and amply fulfilled my expectations, though already despoiled of all the objects it contained. These were, a large chest full of vases of exquisite taste and workmanship, and several terra-cotta figures nearly the size of nature, chiefly representing weeping females; many other fictile utensils of a coarser kind were likewise found: but the tomb itself, notwithstanding the spoliation it had suffered, was well worthy of notice, having been cut in the mass of tufa with an exactness in its proportions, and a minuteness and sharpness in its details, that baffle all description.

The discovery of this sepulchre having been accidentally effected by perforating the outward coat of stone cut into an arch, in digging for a cellar, this aperture now serves to give access by means of a ladder; but the original entrance was a doorway, to which a flight of

steps, now choked with earth, led from above. The first division is of an oblong form, with a recess on either side; and a second door, facing that of ingress, admits to an inner room, on which much more labour has been bestowed, especially in the upper part or vault, which is carved so as to represent with extraordinary similitude wooden rafters closely joined together, rising in a gentle slope from the lateral walls to a transversal beam that runs along the whole length. This inner division is entirely covered with a very fine stucco; and a window, in a red frame, is painted on each side of the door of entrance.

From Canosa I made an excursion across the country to a spot little known beyond such portions of the surrounding territory as enjoy its aspect, which, on account of its peculiarity of form and position, are not few. This was Castel del Monte, an edifice said to have been raised by the Emperor Frederick II. as a sporting residence; and which, though entirely abandoned very shortly after the extinction of his dynasty, and given up to solitude and neglect ever since, has suffered less from the ravages

of time than from the depredation of man. There is no existing record to ascertain the exact date of its construction; but from the elaborateness of the work, and the expense which must have been lavished upon it, it may not unreasonably be referred to the early and most flourishing part of his reign.

Besides a palace near Manfredonia, and the castle of Lago Pesole, already mentioned, which, from its mountainous situation, was peculiarly adapted to a summer abode, this prince had formed several other establishments for the purpose of hunting and hawking, in the milder regions of Apulia, which he frequented in the winter months: among these are reckoned a residence near Minervino, another at Gravina, and this last in the vicinity of Andria, a town where his third and last wife, Isabella of England, daughter of King John, died in child-bed.

The road from Canosa to this place is for some distance the same which leads to Andria, and is called *finished*, that is, its width and direction are traced, and it is furnished with a thick stratum of broken stones, which,



in a country so unfrequented by carriages or even carts, it will require some years to convert to a beaten track; but, on leaving the road to Andria to follow a straighter and more direct southern course, it becomes one of those paths which the convenience or habit of the natives have marked at will, over the stony flats that stretch from the Adriatic westwards.

On quitting the vineyards, which extend some way beyond Canosa, the range is wild, and little diversified by cultivation, though occasionally intersected by inclosures of dry stone walls round scanty clumps of stunted oaks, the wretched appearance of which seems to stamp the soil as totally unfavourable to the growth of timber, though tradition says that it once was covered with thick forests. We saw but few farm-houses; but these were usually large, well built, and abundantly supplied with magazines for grain, sheds for cattle, outhouses and barns; and apparently in a flourishing condition, as far as one could judge from the number of persons employed on the premises, and the abundance of poultry and cattle feeding within their circuit.

These occasionally relieved the tediousness of a road which soon became so rough and stony as to preclude all progress beyond a foot's pace, so that we were nearly five hours in reaching the object of our research; which, though very early accessible to our sight, seemed from this very circumstance to mock our impatience, and to recede as we advanced. It was not unsatisfactory to meet several persons, apparently of the higher class, travelling on horseback, alone and unarmed; an unusual sight to us, who had so recently quitted the province of Basilicata.

At last we reached the base of the pyramidal hill on which the castle stands, in a stony wilderness, but commanding beyond this unfruitful belt a fine view, towards the sea, of the line marked by the towns of Barletta, Andria, Trani, Bisceglia, &c.

From a distance the building has the appearance of a square castle with a tower at each corner; but, on a nearer approach, it assumes a more interesting form, and strikes the beholder with no small degree of surprise, by exposing four turrets at once within the scope

of vision, being in fact octagonal, and exhibiting great ingenuity in the architectural peculiarities observed to adhere strictly to this form, which stamp the edifice with a remarkable character of symmetrical regularity.

The path leading from the flat up to the castle was too steep and rough to admit any approximation but on foot, and we thus gained the only entrance it possesses, which is a Gothic arch surmounted by a frieze and pediment, in what is usually termed the Grecian style, supported by two pilasters with Corinthian capitals, each resting on a recumbent lion in high relief. The material used in this portal, which is the same as that of the ornamental parts of the lower or ground-floor, is a breccia, probably from Mount Garganus, of mottled red and white, so coarse in its surface as to offer the appearance of a mosaic embedded in an ochre-coloured composition, but at a little distance the effect is rich.

The inner court is, like all the rest, octagonal; and the space left between each of the eight towers, below as well as above, is allotted to one room, every one of which, exactly similar

in all the sixteen, is singular enough in its form : the inner walls, which correspond with the court, being considerably shorter in their extension than the exterior ones, which face the open country ; no part of the room therefore being rectangular.

In every corner of the lower rooms is a semi-column of the same substance as the portal, furnished with a base and a somewhat grotesque capital, from which spring the arches that form the ceiling, traced by a rib or moulding of finely cut stone from the upper extremity of each column to the centre or key of the vault, where they meet, and are united by a large rose of highly relieved foliage. The upper rooms, which, as has before been observed, are exactly of the same form and size as the lower, differ only in the pilasters that support the arches, which are here formed of three slight columns surmounted with a capital composed of palm-leaves, very much in the style of those of the Alhambra. These, as well as the ribs of the arches and all the other ornamental appendages, are of a very fine white marble, as well as a ledge projecting

from the walls in every room, along the whole of each side, probably used as a seat. The door frames are of the spotted breccia above-mentioned, as well as the facing of two narrow oblong niches, placed on each side of the chimney in the rooms which are provided with one: these in number are four, the alternate ones having none, but a window instead, looking into the court-yard, and situated exactly opposite that which opens in the exterior walls; so that the rooms without chimneys have two apertures for light, and the others only one each. These are very small, and so high as to be reached by four marble steps in the thickness of the wall; therefore, by no means adequate to furnish sufficient light to such spacious apartments. The form and ornaments of these windows are of the most florid Gothic taste, like some in our most admired sacred edifices of the middle ages: they are divided in three small arches, supported by carved pillars, ornamented with sculpture and fretwork of great delicacy.

The channel for the smoke is but little indented in the walls, but furnished with a qua-

drilateral cap or case in its whole length, tapering upwards like a funnel, and resting on the piers on each side of the hearth. These coverings were formerly adorned with marble slabs richly worked in various designs; all which have been carried away, together with the squares which formed the pavement.

The Abbate Troyli, who, in the year 1749, published a general and detailed history of the kingdom of Naples, has given a minute and tolerably correct description of this building; and says that the lateral walls were incrustated with marble as high as the capitals of the pillars, and that the ceilings were embellished by mosaic. In either of these surmises it is difficult to agree with him, as the stones on the surface of the walls are so shaped in their divisions as to exhibit a design of considerable lightness and effect, which would not have been executed had it been destined to receive a coating of other materials; and the same may be observed on the upper vault. He is also of opinion that an iron railing or balcony ran all round the interior court; which is possible, as the windows that look to it are not raised

from the floor like the opposite ones, and have not even a stone balustrade.

Four of the turrets were furnished with spiral flights of steps, lighted by loop-holes at regular distances, leading first to the upper floor, and lastly to the terraced roof: two of these staircases are still entire, and give admission into the apartments by small doors in the angles.

The four other towers have each a closet with a cupola roof, the proportions of which are of singular elegance: these occupy the whole interior circumference of the tower, and, like it, are of octangular shape, communicating with the large rooms by a door. The space in the tower above these recesses, which might have served for guards or attendants, was, in each of the four, adapted to the use of a dovecote; and the portion beneath served as a cistern, supplied with rain-water by marble channels from the roof. This last, to which the upper extremities of the spiral stairs give access, consists of a terrace composed of large flat stone slabs closely connected and dovetailed, and rising from the inner and outward walls in a gentle slope up to a line covered

with a strong curb-stone, and extending round the whole edifice. This allows the rain to run off on either side into stone gullies, and from these, interiorly, into a capacious vaulted cistern occupying the whole of the inner court, and, exteriorly, into stone pipes that communicate with the smaller reservoirs in the towers, the summits of which have a circular aperture or mouth, to allow the water to be drawn up to the very top of the castle, through a corresponding tube of masonry. The four apertures for the chimneys on the roof are exactly of the same shape as these for the water, and placed at equal distances from them, only near the inner range of walls, which is not provided with a parapet similar to that on the exterior side.

The court has, besides the portal, three doors giving access to the lower suite of rooms, which served probably for stables, kitchen, and other domestic uses: over one of these is placed a mutilated statue of black marble, which has the appearance of being antique.

On the face of the interior wall, in one of the upper courses of the stones, is inserted a



large marble bas-relief, which, though much injured by time and weather, and not easily examined from the roof opposite, appeared to me not only antique, but of most exquisite design and execution : it contains many figures, one of which is recumbent, and, as far as I could judge, represents a sacrifice.

These are the only two objects that are not in perfect harmony with the rest of the edifice ; which exhibits in all its parts such an unity of design and workmanship, that I cannot agree with Pratilli, who, in his "Via Appia," supposes that it might have originally been a sepulchral monument, converted into a fortress by the Greeks of the Lower Empire, the Lombards, or the Saracens.

The symmetrical regularity displayed in the plan of this singular fabric, however complicated it may appear in the inefficient description I have ventured to give of it, must be my apology with the reader for so long detaining his attention on what he may consider uninteresting details, however forcibly they may strike an immediate spectator, who can scarcely observe the exquisite finish of the

masonry without assimilating it to many of the most celebrated remains in Greece and Asia.

These feelings of admiration are united with sensations of a very different nature when he considers the state of total abandonment and neglect to which this structure is reduced in the present times; as there is not even a rail or bar to the gateway to prevent at least the entrance of cattle, who use the lower division as a place of shelter in bad weather, while the upper part is accessible to every species of outrage and spoliation.

It belongs to the Duke of Andria, who possesses a considerable estate round it; and during our investigation of the spot, limited as it was to a very short space of time, from the necessity of returning to Canosa before night, we encountered a large party of inhabitants of the town of Andria, who had come to see it, and very hospitably invited us to partake of a rural dinner at a neighbouring masseria, belonging to one of them. It was not possible to accept this invitation, from the reasons above-mentioned; which I regretted, as much on account of the friendly unaffected manner in which it

was proffered, as from a feeling of curiosity to find oneself suddenly established on the footing of an intimate acquaintance with a considerable number of individuals whom one had never before seen, and whom it was impossible ever to meet again.

We returned to Canosa that evening, and quitted it the following morning, October 16; taking the high road to Foggia, which I reached the same day at four. A bridge crosses the Ofanto about two miles from Canosa, the stream forming here the boundary between Capitanata and Terra di Bari: a few masses of considerable size, but indistinct form, are seen on each side of the river, and indicate that the ancient city was prolonged thus far. Among these, a brick arch, probably once incrustured with marble, and a square structure of stones, are the most conspicuous. The Ofanto still wore its summer appearance, that of a secondary stream deficient either in copiousness or depth; but the breadth of its course, and the level to which it has worn its bed below the general surface of the soil, bespeak the changes to which it is subject in the winter

season. These might also be judged of by the height of the bridge, which is notwithstanding temporarily overflowed, and, consequently, at such times impassable.

Three miles below this, on the right bank, between Canosa and Barletta, is the celebrated field of Cannæ, the site of which is easily ascertained by the existence of the little river Vergella, mentioned by Florus and Valerius Maximus, and by other local coincidences. A few fallen heaps of masonry also remain, denoting the situation of a small town, which, in the early ages of Christianity, retained sufficient importance to become an episcopal see, though now entirely annihilated.

The town of Cerignola, probably the ancient Cerannilia, is well built, and apparently flourishing. It is surrounded by brick and tile kilns, and situated about six miles to the south-west of Canosa, on the high road that runs from the capital to Barletta, after traversing Foggia. It contains about nine thousand inhabitants, and its environs show isolated houses and farm-houses surrounded by trees and cultivation; much of this ground having been converted to

that use within the last eleven years, when I had first visited the spot.

Before crossing the beds of the rivers Carapella and Cervaro, the former dry, but the other graced with a clear and rapid but scanty stream, we stopped to bait at a tavern called Passo d'Orta, near the village of Orta, once the site of one of those overgrown religious establishments founded by the Jesuits, of frequent occurrence in this kingdom.

One of the tracks exclusively allotted to the transit from, and to, the provinces of Abruzzo, called *Tratture*, runs parallel with the road for some distance; and we saw several herds of black sheep, guarded by snow-white dogs, slowly plodding southwards on their autumnal emigration.

The caper plant grows wild here in great luxuriance, but totally unattended to. I endeavoured to obtain a few, aware of the difficulty of raising them from seed; but was deterred from my purpose by the thickness of the root, and the extreme depth it had acquired, which rendered this operation, without suitable instruments, totally impracticable.

The city of Foggia, the second in the kingdom in point of population and opulence, appeared to me much improved since my last visit, in 1818, which it owes to the care and capacity of the Intendente, Cavalier N. St. Angelo, who, during his administration, had exerted himself to render it, in every respect, worthy of the rank it is entitled to.

Three carriage roads have been opened, to as many portions of Mount Garganus: one by Manfredonia to Monte Sant' Angelo, the principal town of this district; another to S. Giovanni in Rotondo; and a third by San Nicandro to Vico, nearly touching the sea-shore behind the mountain: thereby establishing an easy communication between these places and the capital of the province, and the means of exporting the various articles of produce and traffick furnished by those interesting regions.

The city itself is indebted likewise to this gentleman's indefatigable exertions for many institutions, which must secure to him the gratitude of its natives: among these, a capacious *campo santo*, or public cemetery, out of the precincts of the town, a new prison on an

improved plan, an inclosed promenade, and a theatre, are the most remarkable. This last, whose dimensions are suited to the population of Foggia, estimated at twenty-nine thousand, appeared to me the most complete work of the kind in its plan and execution that I ever saw. Notwithstanding all these improvements, which it would be unjust to underrate, the city of Foggia labours under local and physical disadvantages which must preclude its ever obtaining an exterior aspect of importance, and still less of beauty.

The extreme flatness of its position, sunk in a kind of bowl beneath the surrounding level ground; the meanness and want of regularity of the buildings, which are scattered along every approach to it, so as to render it difficult to ascertain where the town begins; the want of water, and the deficiency of trees, or vegetation of any kind, beyond turf in the winter, and a few languishing vineyards in the summer, must prove insurmountable obstacles to all that can flatter the eye. The interior however offers good houses, well-paved streets,

and well-furnished shops; but there is not a decent inn.

From Foggia I resumed my way towards the capital by the high post-road; the first stage, called Pozzo d'Albero, being one of those solitary stations the peculiar desolateness of which can in all Italy be only exemplified in this province and the Campagna di Roma.

The driver of the post-horses I had taken by no means kept to the high road, but cut across it in all directions when any chance of abridging the distance offered itself, following paths used by carts or cattle, and sometimes none at all; which, after dry weather, in a country so flat and devoid of cultivation, is not only perfectly practicable, but frequently preferable to the main track, the original materials of which, after many years' construction, are not yet consolidated into a smooth surface, from the circumstances above-mentioned. After the first stage, where we exchanged indifferent horses for others that could scarcely drag the carriage, and a postilion whose looks proclaimed him more fit for an hospital than the saddle, the



country becomes studded with the stunted pear-trees peculiar to Capitanata, which in some places assume the form of thickets; the face of the soil becomes more undulated, and the sides of the road gradually rise into hills. After leaving the town of Troja six miles to our right, and that of Lucera, twelve miles behind it, we entered the Val di Bovino, a defile between two wild banks of no great steepness, watered by the Cervaro, the ancient Cerbalus, a stream which issues from this pass, and crosses the whole of Capitanata in a diagonal line, to discharge itself into the salt lakes between Manfredonia and Barletta.

This glen was for many years regarded by travellers, and celebrated throughout the realm, as a spot always infested by brigands; but its terrors have considerably abated by the judicious establishment and disposition of a brigade of gendarmeria, in various stations, along the whole extension of the valley, which terminates at the foot of a hill, where a single post-house, called from its position Ponte di Bovino, is placed.

The episcopal town, which bears the same

name, stands perched on a high mountain to the left bearing the appearance of a desolate village, though said to contain four thousand inhabitants : a seemingly impracticable road leads to it ; and it gives the title of Duke to one of the four illustrious Spanish families that settled in the kingdom with the Aragonese dynasty, that of Guevara. This, and that of Avolos, (Marquesses of Vasto and Pescara,) have survived the extinction of the two others, Cavaniglia and Cardines, and are ranked among the largest landed proprietors in the kingdom.

From the stage next to Foggia, the breed of post-horses, or rather their powers, seemed to retrograde ; and about a mile beyond Ponte di Bovino, those we had taken there, refused, or were inadequate, to draw my little carriage up the ascent which continues the whole way to the next station, called Savignano ; so that we were obliged to have them changed.

This acclivity, along the same defile and stream, is more tedious than steep ; but the scenery on either side, enlivened by woods and cultivation, forms an agreeable relief to the dull flats of Capitanata.

Savignano is a single house, so called from a large village standing above it ; while another, named Greci, is placed exactly in a similar position on the other side of the road. Here, again, we were furnished with such wretched animals by way of horses, that, on their stopping short, after half an hour's progress, we sent back, as we had done before, for others which could but just draw us along, and that so slowly, and with such repeated halting to give them breath, that we arrived at Ariano only half an hour before dark.

The postboy, who seemed as distressed as his beasts, let us into the secret of this deficiency ; which is, that, the posts being farmed from government by a contractor, this speculator, in his turn, appoints to the different stations such individuals as postmasters, as will undertake to maintain the number of horses prescribed by the authorities, at the lowest possible cost. The paucity of travellers is such, that only the number of horses sufficing to the service of the mail, which passes at regular days and hours, is adequately fed to sustain this task ; while all the rest are absolute-

ly starved, and have not the physical powers to drag a vehicle up a hill. The truth of this explanation was proved at Ariano, which being in another province, (that of Principato Ultra, entered a few miles west of Savignano,) and subject to the jurisdiction of a less rapacious contractor, produced horses fully equal to their labours.

Nothing can be more wearing than the road from Savignano to this last town, following, as it does, a continued zigzag and very steep course the whole of the way, to reach the peak of the mountain on which it is perched; a situation which gives it the advantage of being visible to the whole surrounding country, and a temperature of singular rigidity in the winter.

The town of Ariano contains eleven thousand souls, and is an episcopal see: it is, moreover, the head (*capoluogo*) of a considerable district; which circumstance, for no other reason can exist, must have been taken into consideration when the high road was carried through it at considerable expense and labour, without a shadow of reason.

The immediate environs, however, are far

from ugly, cultivated as they are, diversified by woods and ravines clothed with vegetation, and commanding, as may be supposed, extensive views in every direction. That portion of the town through which the road is conducted, for there is a higher division also, has but a mean aspect, from the smallness and lowness of the houses; but I can venture to affirm, that I never beheld in this, or any part of Europe, so many beautiful female faces within so limited a space of time and distance as greeted my sight in the streets of Ariano. There was not one that could be termed ordinary; while the majority combined every requisite of feature, expression, and complexion that can constitute superior beauty.

The inn at the post seemed above mediocrity; but the number of vetturino carriages which had stopped there for the night, being the second resting-place from the capital, induced me to avail myself of the remaining half-hour of daylight, the good quality of the horses, and the continued descent in the road, to push on as far as our old quarters at Grotta Minarda, which we reached, and where we were hospi-

tably received by our former host and his family, shortly after sunset.

From thence we resumed our way, the following morning, towards the capital, by Avelino, the road of which I have given an account at the beginning of this excursion, and which it would therefore be needless to repeat.

THE END.

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