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To My dear daughter Rosa

2 March 1853

W. Mac

JOURNALS

OF

A LANDSCAPE PAINTER.





PART OF THE
KINGDOM OF NAPLES.
 Province of
CALABRIA ULTERIORE PRIMA.

F. Lear, Delit.

JOURNALS

OF

A LANDSCAPE PAINTER

IN

SOUTHERN CALABRIA,

&c.

BY EDWARD LEAR,

AUTHOR OF "JOURNALS OF A LANDSCAPE PAINTER IN ALBANIA," ETC.

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PREFACE.



To the present Volume of Journals but little preface is requisite: they were written during tours made in the autumn of 1847, throughout the southern of the three Calabrian Provinces, and in that of Basilicata.

Few places visited by the author have not already been fully described in the accurate and interesting travels of the Hon. Keppel Craven.* Mr. Swinburne has written a notice † of many places in Calabria, though his observations are principally confined to the

* "A Tour through the Southern Provinces of the Kingdom of Naples," by the Hon. R. Keppel Craven. 1821.

† "Travels in the Two Sicilies," by Henry Swinburne, Esq. 1785.

coast; and the western road by the sea has been well and amusingly treated of in a little book called "A Tour in Calabria," by Arthur Strutt.* The older notices† of the province are so confused or so cumbrous, as to be little read or known.

While some villages in this, the most southerly portion of the beautiful kingdom of Naples, have, however, hitherto remained unexplored by Englishmen, and others, till now unillustrated by views, are for the first time made known to the public,—the general aim of the writer to make his journal a Landscape-painter's Guide-Book will stand as an apology for his having sometimes described ground already better treated of in the above-mentioned works.

The mode of travel which I and my fellow-

* "A Pedestrian Tour in Calabria and Sicily," by Arthur J. Strutt. 1842.

† Alberti (Fra Leandro), "Descrit. di tutta l' Italia." Venetia : 1596.

P. Marafioti (Girolamo), "Antichità di Calabria." Padova : 1601.
Giustiniani, "Dizionario del Regno di Napoli." 1797.

wanderer adopted while these journals were written, was the simplest, as well as cheapest — we performed the whole tour on foot; except that in Basilicata some of the high roads were well got over in a carriage. In Calabria, a horse to carry our small amount of baggage, and a guide, cost us, altogether, six carlini daily* — no very heavy expenditure; but as there are no inns in that province except on the coach-road, which skirts the western coast, the traveller depends entirely on introductions to some family in each town he visits.

The tour in the more northern provinces was undertaken under somewhat different circumstances. The long journeys on the high road, or over the plains near the east coast of Italy, do not offer sufficient inducement to pedestrian exercise. In no country, perhaps, can greater contrasts be found, than between the far-stretched *campagna* of Apulia or the

* Little more than two shillings.

dreary ridges of part of Basilicata, and the fertile gardens, the wondrous coast scenes, or the purple gorges of the heart of Calabrian mountains.

Wishing to confine these journals strictly to the consideration of landscape, I have said as little as possible of events which occurred in 1848, and their sequel. Yet it is but right to add, that some provincial families, whose suspicions and apparent want of hospitality marked them in our eyes as unlike their compatriots, were but too well justified in keeping themselves aloof from any strangers, whose motives for visiting this country were but little understood, and whose presence might possibly have compromised them in the event of disturbances which, they may have been aware, were on the eve of occurring.

LONDON,

September 15, 1852.

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JOURNALS
OF
A LANDSCAPE PAINTER.

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A LANDSCAPE PAINTER IN
CALABRIA, &c.

KINGDOM OF NAPLES.

CALABRIA ULTERIORE PRIMA. (SOUTHERN CALABRIA, OR PROVINCE OF REGGIO.)

CHAPTER I.

Anticipations of Calabrian journeying.—Arrival at Reggio; Police, Dogana, &c.—The “Giordano” inn.—Chances of obtaining goat’s milk.—Beautiful situation of Reggio.—Its gardens.—The Bergamot orange.—The Villetta Musitano.—Friendliness of the Reggiani.—Consigliere da Nava, &c.—Introductory letters.—Plans for visiting the interior.—Search for a guide, —Ciccio the silent.—“Díghi, dóghi, dághi, dà; dógo.”—Absence of pointed hats.—Departure from Reggio.—Road to Motta San Giovanni.—Don F. Marópoti’s house.—Conversazione of neighbours.—Opinions about England.—Hospitable reception.

July 25, 1847.—The very name of Calabria has in it no little romance. No other province of the kingdom of Naples holds out such promise of interest, or so inspires us before we

have set foot within it,—for what do we care for Molise, or Principato? or what visions are conjured up by the names of Terra di Lavoro, or Capitanata? But—Calabria!*——No sooner is the word uttered than a new world arises before the mind's eye,—torrents, fastnesses, all the prodigality of mountain scenery,—caves, brigands, and pointed hats,—Mrs. Radcliffe

* Calabria is situated at the most southern extremity of the Kingdom of Naples. Its division into three provinces (the subdivisions and population of which will be found below) is of very recent date. From the thirteenth down to the end of the last century the second and third provinces were included in a single one under the name of "Calabria," or "Calabria Ultra," while, so late as 1415, "Calabria Citeriore" was known as "Provincia Val di Cratis et Terre Jordane." (See Del Ré.)

Provinces.	Population in 1823.	Principal Town.	Districts (or Sott'Intendenze).
Calabria Citeriore (Northern Calabria, or Province of Cosenza) }	406,359	Cosenza	{ Cosenza Castrovillari Paola Rossano
Seconda Calabria Ulteriore (Central Calabria, or Province of Catanzaro). . . }	298,239	Catanzaro	{ Catanzaro Monteleone Nicastro Cotrone
Prima Calabria Ulteriore (Southern Calabria, or Province of Reggio) }	260,633	Reggio	{ Reggio Palmi Gerace

and Salvator Rosa,—costumes and character,—horrors and magnificence without end. Even Messina derives its chief charm from the blue range of mountains and the scattered villages on the opposite shore,—Reggio glittering on the water's edge,—Scylla on its rock, where the guide-books (by a metaphor) say you may hear (large?) dogs barking across the straits,—the lofty cloud-topped Aspromonte, and the pearl-pale cliffs of Bagnara. Yet this land of pictorial and poetical interest has had but few explorers; fewer still have published their experiences; and its scenery, excepting that on the high road, or near it, has rarely been pourtrayed, at least by our own countrymen.

In the afternoon, having hired a boat to cross the straits, P—— and I were ready to start from Messina. Leaving a portion of our luggage there we took enough for a month or six weeks' journey through the nearest province, or Calabria Ulteriore Prima; and, well supplied with letters to those persons in its chief city who would send us on our way through the interior, we set sail for Reggio, and soon the

lemon-coloured forts of Zancle were far behind us on the deep blue sea. By degrees the furrowed hills around Messina spread out into one long chain, the heights of distant Taormina and cloud-capped Etna closing the scene. Yet, near as Reggio appeared, we did not reach it until the sun had set, an hour when the broad walk, in front of the uniform façade of houses built along the Marina since the last earthquake, was full of evening promenaders. There was a "Sanità" and a "Dogana" to encounter, of course; but having an introductory letter to the Direttore, whose address we casually asked for in a judiciously elevated tone of voice, no one molested us either as to our state of health or property: we went off accordingly, preceded by porters, to the Locanda Giordano, situated in the high street of Reggio, which runs parallel to the coast, and contains some very decent rooms, the largest of which we seized on as our own for the sum of four carlini* daily. Having

* A carlino, twelve of which compose the Neapolitan dollar,

ordered some supper, we forthwith proceeded to report ourselves to the Polizia, the manager of which dwelt in an unsatisfactory house at the other end of the town, and had perched himself at the top of a totally dark and crooked staircase, the ascent of which was disputed step by step by an animated poodle. After this we went to deliver the Duke of ——'s letter to the Direttore, an old French gentleman who was playing at whist, double dummy. "What could he do for us?—we had but to command." We begged for letters to Bova and other out of the way places in the toe of Italy, all of which he readily promised. Another letter of introduction we delivered to Consigliere da Nava, who proved a great ally.

July 26.—If you wish for milk at breakfast-time in these parts of the world, you ought to sit in the middle of the road with a jug at early dawn, for unless you seize the critical moment

is worth fourpence farthing English money. There are ten grani in a carlino, or Sicilian tornesi, a copper coin frequently used in Southern Calabria.

of the goats passing through the town, you may wish in vain. If you have any excursion to make, and require to start early, you may as well give up the idea, for the "Crapi" are "not yet come;" and if you delay but a little while, you hear the tinkle of their bells, and perceive the last tails of the receding flock in vexatious perspective at the end of the street.

At sunrise I set out on an exploring expedition, and was soon dodging here and there to find the best views of Reggio among its endless cactus and aloe lanes, fig gardens, and orange groves. Reggio is indeed one vast garden, and doubtless one of the loveliest spots to be seen on earth. A half-ruined castle, beautiful in colour and picturesque in form, overlooks all the long city, the wide straits, and snow-topped Mongibello* beyond. Below the castle walls † are spread wide groves of orange, lemon, citron, bergamot, and all kinds of such fruit as are

* Mongibello, the Saracenic name of Mount Etna, is generally in use among the Sicilians and Calabresi.

† In an old picture of Reggio, in Pacichelli, the whole town is represented as walled.

called by the Italians "Agrumi;" * their thick verdure stretched from hill to shore as far as the eye can reach on either side, and only divided by the broad white lines of occasional torrent courses. All the fulness of Sicilian vegetation awaits you in your foreground; almond, olive, cactus, palm tree, † aloe, and fig, forming delightful combinations wherever you turn your steps.

In the afternoon we went to the Villetta, a country-house about a mile distant from the town, with a letter of introduction to its

* The Bergamot orange, from the peel of which the well-known perfume is extracted, is cultivated to a great extent round Reggio, and the fruit forms a considerable article of commerce. There are several notices on this subject in Swinburne's Travels.

"The spirit is extracted by paring off the rind of the fruit with a broad knife, pressing the peel between wooden pincers against a sponge; and as soon as the sponge is saturated, the volatile liquor is squeezed into a phial and sold at fifteen carlini the ounce. . . . There is a small sort of citron set apart for the Jews of Leghorn, who come here every year to buy them for three tornesi a-piece. As they are destined for some religious ceremony, the buyers take great care not to pollute them by a touch of the naked hand."—*Swinburne's Travels in the Two Sicilies*, p. 360.

† Mr. Swinburne states that in the days of Saracenic dominion at Reggio "stately groves of palm-trees" adorned the territory, but that many were cut down when the Reggiani repossessed their town, as being memorials of infidel usurpation.

proprietor, the Cavaliere Musitano, who resides there during summer. If one were a neighbour it would be difficult not to covet that garden-home—at once the most agreeable as to its situation, and the most superior to all others in the district as to the quality, quantity, and arrangements of its botanical contents. Strange fruits are hanging on every side (though none of them particularly eatable); one magnificent palm raises its airy tuft above all the green level of shrubs; a broad vine-covered trellis shadows the court in front of the villa where, in rows of little cages, many exotic birds were rejoicing under the surveillance of a large red and blue macaw; in a word, the Villa Musitano, one of the great lions of the province, is full of agreeable materials, and the friendliness of its possessor was not among the least of the pleasant impressions left on our minds by the visit.

At Ave-Maria we returned to the city to make calls with other letters of introduction, and otherwise to prepare for our excursion into the interior of the province.

July 27.—Assiduous drawing passed away the morning rapidly. Owing to the obstructions of cactus or aloe hedges, walls, &c., it is no easy matter to get a good general view of Reggio; one of the best I could obtain was from the loggia of a poor man's house, who obligingly allowed me to sit in the open doorway, although his wife was still in bed, and so close to my elbow that my drawing was accompanied by her illustrative remarks. At two we dined with the Musitano family, who kindly wrote several introductory letters for our tour. Our friend Consigliere da Nava was indefatigable in our interest, and had on our return to the town already prepared fifteen notes to the principal proprietors in towns we should pass through. Then, after the usual ices, indispensable at sunset, Don Gaetano Grisi (Cav. Musitano's nephew) took no little pains to procure us such a guide and mule as we wanted,—not always an easy task. There is this objection to taking one individual into your service for the whole of a long tour, viz., that he may not be acquainted with the remoter

parts of the country to be visited ; yet, on the other hand, there is this advantage, that if he be tractable he soon gets into the way of knowing your habits and plans, and thereby saves much of the trouble which a change of guide or muleteer at every fresh halting-place must necessarily occasion.

July 28.—Occupied in finishing drawings already commenced, and in procuring more letters, &c. There is one of the most beautiful views of Reggio from the north end of the “Marine Parade ;” looking towards Etna, the straits of Messina appear like a lake shut in by the giant volcano, at its southern extremity. A stroll to the Musitano Villa ; a visit to Signor Capelli, who gave us introductions to the convent of S^{ta} Maria de’ Polsi, situated amongst the most picturesque scenes of Southern Calabria : these, with fresh attempts at *combinazione* with a Vetturino, left little of the evening undisposed of. A man must be guided pretty much by hazard in arranging a tour through a country so little visited as this : the

general rule of keeping near the mountains is perhaps the best, and if you hear of a town, or costume, or piece of antiquity anywise remarkable, to make a dash at it as inclination may devise, sometimes to be repaid for the trouble,—as often the contrary.

July 29.—We could get no guide until noon, an arrangement not ill-fitting with our plan of sleeping the first night at Motta San Giovanni, on our way to Bova: so at two we prepared to start. We had engaged a muleteer for an indefinite time: the expense for both guide and quadruped being six carlini daily; and if we sent him back from any point of our journey it was agreed that his charges should be defrayed until he reached Reggio. Our man, a grave tall fellow of more than fifty years of age, and with a good expression of countenance, was called Ciccio,* and we explained to him that our plan was to do always just as we pleased—going straight a-head or stopping to

* “Ciccio” is short for “Francesco,” in the Neapolitan kingdom States. In the Roman States it is “Cecco.”

sketch, without reference to any law but our own pleasure; to all which he replied by a short sentence ending with—"Dógo; díghi, dóghi, dághi, dà"—a collection of sounds of frequent recurrence in Calabrese lingo, and the only definite portion of that speech we could ever perfectly master. What the "Dógo" was we never knew, though it was an object of our keenest search throughout the tour to ascertain if it were animal, mineral, or vegetable. Afterwards, by constant habit, we arranged a sort of conversational communication with friend Ciccio, but we never got on well unless we said "Dógo si," or "Dógo no" several times as an *ad libitum* appoggiatura, winding up with "Díghi, dóghi, dághi, dà," which seemed to set all right. Ciccio carried a gun, but alas! wore no pointed hat; nothing but a Sicilian long blue cap. Our minds had received a fearful shock by the conviction forced on them during our three days' stay at Reggio, namely, that there are NO pointed hats in the first or southern province of Calabria. The costume, though varying a little in different

villages, is mainly the same as that throughout Sicily, and it is only in the provinces of Catanzáro and Cosenza where the real (and awful) pyramidal brigand's hat is adopted. Ciccio tied four packets (one of vestments, &c., another of drawing materials for each man), plaids, umbrellas, &c., on a quiet-looking steed, touching whose qualities its owner was wholly silent, thereby giving me, who go by contraries in these lands, great hope that it might be worth a good deal, for had it been a total failure one might have looked for a long tirade of praises: and so, all being adjusted — off we set.

The road led over the torrent-bed and by the Villa Musitano, through suburban villages for two or three miles, and for a considerable distance we passed numerous odoriferous silk factories,* and many detached cheerful-looking houses, with lofty pergolate † or vine trellises

* The cultivation of silkworms is carried on to a great extent in Calabria, especially in the territory of Reggio.

† Pergola, or Pergolata, is the general name for any balcony or trellis covered with vine.

spanning and shading the whole public road from side to side. Beyond, the broad dusty highway was uninteresting in its foregrounds, but the blue straits of Messina were ever on our right, with Etna beyond, while on the left a wall of hills, with Castel San Nocito and San Vito perched on their summits, sufficed for men who were all alive for impressions of Calabrese novelty. Always in sight also was the town of Motta San Giovanni, our night's resting-place, but so high up as to promise a stout pull to reach it.

When in fullest sight of Mongibello, we turned from the coast and began to ascend the hills. For a while the path lay on the northern side, and at every turn we looked over a wider expanse of the beautiful garden-plain of Reggio, broken by the lines of its white torrents, and backed by the straits and hills of Messina; but afterwards we wound up a path closely shut in betwixt high sandy banks, or placed on the edge of clay ravines looking over slopes thickly planted with dwarf vines. High winds prevented our making any drawing, and indeed it

was nearly Ave-Maria* when we had risen above the weary sandy gorges immediately below the town, which stands at a great elevation, and overlooks earth and sea extensively. With little difficulty we found the house of Don Francesco Marópoti, who received us with hospitality, and without show of ceremony, only apologising that, owing to his being alone in this his country residence, our reception could not be in point of fare and lodging all he could wish. Indeed this worthy person's establishment was not of the most recherché kind, but I had warned my companion (hitherto untravelled in these regions) that he would probably meet with much simplicity, much cordiality, and heaps more of dirt throughout Calabria. There is always in these provincial towns a knot of neighbours who meet in the house of the great man of each little place, to discuss the occurrences of the day for an hour or two before supper; already a long

* Ave-Maria is half an hour after the sun sets at all times of the year, when it is then dark in Italy, and the computation of hours, 1, 2, 3, &c., recommences.

perspective of such hours oppressed me, loaded with questions about Inghilterra and our own plans and circumstances. “Cosa c’è da vedere in Bagaládi?”* said our host’s coterie with one voice, when they heard we wanted to go there,—and one elder was fiercely incredulous, proposing that, if, as we said, we were in search of the beautiful or remarkable, we should set out directly for Montebello or Mélito, or any place but Bagaládi. He also explained the position and attributes of England to the rest of the society, assuring them that we had no fruit of any sort, and that all our bread came from Egypt and India: and as for our race, with a broad contempt for minute distinctions, he said we were “tutti Francesi,” an assertion we faintly objected to, but were overruled by—“in somma—siete sempre una razza di Francesi: è lo stesso.”†

At last the clique departed, and we sate down with Don Francesco to supper, an unostentatious meal, accompanied by tolerable

* What should there be to see in Bagaládi?

† In a word, you are a sort of Frenchmen; it’s all the same.

wine, but with a rural style about the service, &c., more resembling that in the remoter villages of the Abruzzi than of the towns near any of the provincial capitals of the northern Neapolitan provinces. There was, however, no want of good will or good breeding, and we were neither bored by questions nor pressed to eat, nor requested to sit up late; so we soon retired, and, on perceiving very clean beds, were not slow in congratulating ourselves on the prosperous commencement of our Calabrian tour.

CHAPTER II.

Landscape round Motta San Giovanni.—Second day's tour.—The "toe" of Italy.—Extensive prospects.—Lofty mountains.—First view of Bova.—Fiumaras, or dry torrent-beds.—Peasants of the district; their complaints of the devastation of the rivers.—Reach Bagaládi.—Speculation as to our hosts there.—Don Pepino Panutti and his agreeable wife: their cordiality.—We remain at Bagaládi and postpone Condufóri till tomorrow.—Striking scenes in the valley.—Village of San Lorenzo.—Cheerful comfort of our host's house.—Travels of his wife, and the cause thereof.—Repose of night scene.

July 30.—How like a vast opal was Etna as the sun rose and lighted up the immense prospect from our southern window! But alas! a world of cloud rose also, and soon threatened rain.

P—— and I had a discussion as to what plan we should pursue touching domestics in this our "giro,"* and we agreed that it would be right to offer something: but although we had a good opportunity while our host was inditing

* Tour.

an introductory letter to a relative at Bagaládi, our proffered coin was decidedly though respectfully refused.

After coffee Don Francesco lionised us over the little town, the older part of which is half deserted and crowned by a ruined chapel commanding a world of distant view ; the lower half of Motta San Giovanni is composed of detached houses, forming very picturesque groups, which combine beautifully with the severe and decided forms of the hills around ; already I begin to perceive that Calabrian scenery has a character peculiar to itself. By six we were ready to start, our friendly host begging us to wait on account of the inevitable rain, but we were proof against fears and entreaties.

The outskirts of Motta are beautiful, and there are many scraps of Poussinesque landscape which I would fain have lingered to draw, but a drizzling rain, augmenting rapidly, forbade delay ; so we followed Díghi Dóghi Dà along lanes and paths, over the slope of bare hills, and up a long ravine, till the weather

cleared, and we arrived at an elevated plateau, whence the whole "Toe of Italy" is finely discernible, a sea of undulating lines of varied forms down to the Mediterranean; a few towns glittered here and there, and towering over the most southern extremity of land, a high cluster of rocks, the wild crags of Pentadátelo, particularly arrested our attention. Before us, eastward, is the lofty chain of mountains, on the last or southernmost peak of which, Bova, whither we were bound, is visible: but when we asked whether we should reach that town to-day, the silent Ciccio turned up his chin and shook his head with an air of decided negative which rendered language wholly unnecessary. The sun came out as we descended a steep mountain path towards a white fiumara or dry torrent-course, along which we toiled and broiled patiently for an hour or two. Lonely places of devastation are these fumaras: blinding in their white or sandy brilliancy, barring all view from without their high cliff-sides, and recalling by the bare tract of ground right and left of their course how

dismal and terrible the rage of their wintry watery occupant has once been throughout its destroying career. Bagaládi was yet far distant, and we were glad to meet in a garden of pear-trees some chance labourers, who gave us as much fruit as we wished. Bitterly they complained of their abodes—"We do not know what we are to reap; sow we never so much, the torrent swells and carries away all our work." Even with the bright blue sky above, I confess to a heart-heavy feeling among these stern scenes, where nature appears independent of man, and where any attempt on his part to set up his staff permanently seems but allowed for a season, that his defeat may be the more completely observable after years of laborious cultivation.

One more ridge yet remained betwixt us and the valley of Bagaládi, and from its crown we beheld an opposite range of loftier and more thickly wooded heights, with the aerial Bova above, still, as it were, in the very clouds: then, descending to the level of another torrent, we arrived by lanes among pear-gardens at the

village, which stands in two scattered portions on either side of the broad fiumara; that had, indeed, destroyed a great part of this lonely little spot of inhabited earth in the preceding autumn.

It is always a great amusement to us to speculate on the reception we are likely to meet with from our unknown hosts on arriving at any new place, and on who or what they may prove to be. In the present case, as the family Panutti had dined (it was 2 P.M.) and were all in bed, it was some time before we gained admission to a small cottage annexed to a large house in process of building; but, notwithstanding our unseasonable arrival, Don Peppino Panutti (a good hearty fellow, capouurbano* of the district), and a very pretty little woman, his wife, received us in the most friendly manner imaginable, and soon refreshed us with a substantial meal of maccaroni, &c., good wine, and sparkling snow. Much did these good people press us to stay all night.

* Head of the rural or district police, established in the Neapolitan provinces.

Condufóri, the next village, was yet several hours' distant; nor could we be sure of meeting with so clean a dwelling and such agreeable hosts; so we agreed to remain, and make the cloud-capped Bova our next day's journey; besides, we had footed it for more than seven hours under a hot sun and had need of rest, which we were glad to obtain after dinner.

On waking from our siesta, the sun was already low, but I rushed out to get at least one recollection of this curious Calabrian home, and though surrounded by wondering gazers, I contrived to do so before it actually grew dark. It is a wild scene; the shattered houses still hang ruinously over the shivered clay sides of the mighty torrent-track, a broad sweeping line of white stone, far, far winding through the valley below; above rise the high hills we have to cross to-morrow, half in golden light, half in purplest shadow; and among the topmost furrows and chasms sparkles the little village of San Lorenzo—atom signs of human life made more striking by their contrast with the solitude around. We returned to our

humble but very clean home, and sate us down at a little table to pen out some of our sketches as comfortably as if we had lived at Bagaládi for the last five years. The evening closed with a very agreeable supper, when, in addition to our host's pretty young wife, his eldest daughter by a former helpmate made one of the party. The very superior manner of our hostess and of her household arrangements surprised us less when we found she was a Livornese by birth, and moreover had seen Malta, Constantinople, and various other parts of the world, having gone for awhile to join her father in some remote place, whither he had fled from Livorno on account of what Donna Giacinta Panutti quietly called "Una piccola disgrazia, cioè, un'omicidio." *

At night the moon was full; the wide valley was all still, save for the twitter of its myriad hosts of grasshoppers;—a solitary region, but beautifully majestic.

* A little accident; that is to say, he killed some one.

CHAPTER III.

Leave Bagaládi, and set out for Condufóri.—Fatiguing hills.—Bova once more—a long way off yet.—Woodland scenery.—Tracts of beautiful landscape.—Cicadas.—Descent to another fumara.—Arrive at Condufóri.—Greek language spoken.—House of Don Giuseppe Tropæano—repulse therefrom.—Alarm of the hostess.—Our retreat to an osteria.—Forlorn Calabrian accommodations.—“Turchi” spectators.—Unprepossessing Cyclopean girl.—Pursue our way.—Intense amusement of the silent Ciccio.—Ascent to Amendolia.—Magnificent prospect.—Laborious ascent.—Good-natured peasants.—Bova is reached at last.—House of Don Antonio Marzano.—Another hospitable reception.

July 31.—By sunrise, the little Livornese lady had given us our coffee, with some orgeat and abundance of little confetti.* Ciccio, who, as far as we have yet gone, seems the prince of faultless guides and attendants, was in complete readiness, and Don Peppino Panutti accompanied us down the fumara on our way. Short as had been our visit, we regretted leaving these friendly people. A long pull up winding paths

* Sugar-plums or sweetmeats.

led to the hill below San Lorenzo, and our last night's quarters looked like a cluster of dominoes far below. From the summit, once more the blue distant Bova soared aloft in apparently unreachable dignity; yet we could now discern a sort of castle, and peaks of rock, and fringes of forest. Between us and it were beautiful tracts of woodland, groups of fine trees, tumblings of earth, and not a few of those painful fumaras through which we knew full well we were doomed to toil ere we commenced our ascent to the Greek town; for Bova is said to be the last remnant of Magna Græcia, still, with four adjoining villages, preserving the language and some of the habits of its ancestral colonisers.

The morning's walk was most delicious: at every step its scenery became grander, in vast mountainous extent of distance, and close oak-filled vales. All my hopes of Calabrian scenery are fulfilled. Stopping here and there to make an outline of what most struck us (though these are landscapes not to be hastily drawn), we arrived about ten on a sunny height, where,

beneath a spreading oak, we halted to draw a glorious seaward view, where rock and ravine, wood and vale and water, were so mingled as to form one of the finest of scenes. The whole atmosphere seemed alive with cicadæ,* who buzzed and fizzed, and shivered and shuddered,

* The cicada (*C. Plebœia*), or cicala, is the most noisy of insects, and during the heat of the day, throughout the months of July and August, the clamour made by the infinite numbers of this small creature in Southern Italy is most remarkable. I cannot remember ever to have heard them sing (so to speak) before sunrise or after sunset; but as soon as the first ray of morning warmed the tops of the olives in the glens at Tivoli, or the red rocks of Amalfi, earth and air resounded with the lively insect armies. At the latter place the children often catch them, and tie them by twos and threes to their ears, when the effect produced must strongly resemble a scissor-grinder's wheels in full action on each side of the head. While at Reggio it did not occur to us to test the truth of the report, that, on that portion of the west side of Calabria, cicale never make any noise, which they are said not to do by ancient authors as well as moderns; and various causes have been assigned for the different behaviour of these unmelodious songsters on the Reggian and Locrian territories. Marapóti notices a popular version of the subject, that St. Paul, while preaching in Rhegium, was so disturbed by these perverse creatures, who would not let the congregation hear his sermon, that he anathematised all that generation of Rhegian cicale; and their descendants have been mute ever since. "But this," says the judicious Marapóti, "I cannot believe to be true, because the cicale only appear in June, and St. Paul was at Rhegium in the month of March."

and ground knives on every branch above and around. At eleven we began to descend towards Condufóri, by paths which even the alert and accomplished horse of Ciccio found very unsatisfactory;—beautiful are those wild oak woods!—and at last we lost sight of the eternal Bova, and were once more threading a fiumara like a furnace between white cliffs, speculating on our reception at Condufóri, and devoutly hoping our next host might not have dinner ere we arrived. On our asking Ciccio as to the properties and characteristics of the village and its habitants, we could get nothing from him but “Son Turchi,”* except that we construed into a negative testimonial his volunteering the information “that we had done well to sleep last night at Bagaládi,—díghi, dóghi, dà.” So we thought too; for our walk of this morning would have been too much to have added to that of yesterday, not to speak of the loss of such scenery after dusk.

Condufóri, a little village, wedged in a nook

* They are Turks.

between two hills, the torrent at its feet, and the mountain mass of high Apennine threateningly above it, was at length reached, and the house of Don Giuseppe Tropæano discovered. Alas ! the master was away at the Marina,* or Scala, and our appearance threw his old sister into such a state of alarm, that we speedily perceived all hope of lodging and dinner was at an end. We stood humbly on the steps of the old lady's house, and entreated her only to read the letter we had brought—but not she ! she would have nothing to say to us. “Sono femmina,” “Sono femmina,” she constantly declared—a fact we had never ventured to doubt, in spite of her immoderate size and ugliness—“Sono femmina, e non so niente.” † No persuasions could soften her, so we were actually forced to turn away in hunger and

* All or most of the hill towns on the coast of Southern Italy have a sort of port, or quay, or haven on the shore, where, in default of roads, they embark and disembark goods, and the produce of their territory; this “port” they call the Marina, or Scala di — &c., the town to which it appertains.

† I am a woman, I am a woman, and know nothing about anything.

disgust. As for Ciccio, he merely took his short pipe from his lips, and said, "Son Turchi —dóghi, dà."

Neither man nor horse could proceed further under the broiling heat, and unrefreshed by food; so we found a most vile taverna, where, for want of better accommodation, we prepared to abide. Ciccio,—the Phoenix of guides,—stowed away the horse and baggage, and set the "Turchi" to get lots of eggs, which, with wine and snow, made our dinner. It was more difficult to find a place to eat it in, and we truly congratulated ourselves on not having come on to Condufóri last night. The wretched hut we were in was more than half choked up by the bed of a sick man, with barrels, many calf-skins filled with wine, and a projecting stone fireplace; moreover, it was as dark as Erebus; so in the palpable obscure I sat down on a large live pig, who slid away, to my disgust, from under me, and made a portentous squeaking, to the disquiet of a horde of fowls, perched on every available spot above and below. The little light the place rejoiced in

was disturbed by a crowd of thirty or forty "Turchi," who glared at us with the utmost curiosity, and talked in their vernacular tongue without ceasing. We had also a glimpse now and then of our Hebe handmaid, the assistant or "waitress" in the establishment, a woman with one eye, whose countenance struck both of us as a model of a Medusa: nor was her mistress (the hostess) much better. Spite of all this, we nevertheless greatly enjoyed our roasted eggs, and were soon ready to start again; for although the heat was great out of doors, yet it was nearly as much so within; besides, Bova was a weary way of, and Díghi Dóghi Dà made signs of impatience, so he paid for our lunch, and off we went once more into the blazing fumara.

We had not gone far, before a chuckling sound was heard to proceed from the hitherto imperturbable Ciccio, who presently went into convulsions of suppressed laughter, which continued to agitate him for more than an hour, only broken by the words, "Sono femmina, e non so niente,—díghi, dà," by which we were led to

perceive that the rude reception given us by Mrs. Tropæano had made a forcible impression on our quaint quiet guide's imagination.

Leaving the dry river-bed of Condufóri, we climbed the second ridge, and descended to another fiumara, which runs to the sea below Amendolía,* a castellated, but deserted town, half way up to the skies, as it were, and yet far below Bova. Here we entered the Distretto di Gerace,† and were ordered to halt by some gendarmes, who came from a hut and inspected our passports, after which delay we began to climb the ascent to Bova in earnest, and for many an hour. But still we wearily worked on and up, Bova seemed always like the phantom bark—never the nearer:—we had long passed the level of the Castle of Amendolía, and were looking down into its empty courts,

* Amendolía, by some authors considered as identical with a Chalcidian city—Peripolis, said to be the birth-place of Praxiteles, produces honey, and mushrooms, and asparagus, all the year round; spoken of by Pacichelli as a considerable place in his time; by Swinburne as a poor village.

† The province of Calabria Ulteriore Prima is divided into three Distretti—Reggio, Gerace, Palmi. See page 2.

yet the unattainable peak was still far above us,—and truly magnificent was the view, looking back from the points of rock where we frequently halted to rest, after passing the thick oak woods which encircle Bova. With these objects below our feet, the immense perspective of diminishing lines and torrents, finished by the complete and simple outline of Etna beyond the sea, is certainly one of the very finest scenes to be found even in beautiful Italy. While drawing it, numerous groups of picturesque peasants passed us, on their return homewards, and almost all stopped and offered pears, in the most good-natured way possible. After a last hard climb, we arrived at Bova, as the evening had made all things dark and alike, and we were unable to perceive “what like” was the palazzo of Don Antonio Marzano, who, with his wife, received us with the greatest hospitality, on reading the recommendatory letter furnished us by Don Antonio da Nava. The greatest penance of this roving life is the state of exhaustion and weariness in which you arrive at your evening abode ; and as you feel

very properly obliged to play the polite for a certain time to your entertainers, the wrestling between a sense of duty and an oppressive inclination to sleep is most painful. The good people, too, persist in delaying supper (in order that they may provide a good one) till you are reduced (ere it comes) to a state of torture and despair, in the protracted struggle between hunger, Morpheus, and civility.

CHAPTER IV.

Situation and appearance of Bova.—Traditional visit of C. J. Fox thereto.
 —Remarks on the origin of the Bovani.—Changes about to take place in the affairs of Bova.—Its Marina, or sea-port.—The Bishop.—Delightful quiet, and beauty of scenery.—Exquisite view of Etna.—Honey.—Luxuriance of the prickly pear, or cactus.—Remain at the Palazzo Marzano.—Sonnet by Don Antonio.—Arrangement of places to be visited on the route to S^{ta} Maria di Polsi.—We leave Bova with regret.—Descent from the mountain.—The Cyclopean girl of Condufòri again.—Continued scenes of forest or valley.—Mid-day and approach to Palizzi.—Its singular situation, and castle.—Narrow streets and stairs: wild Calabrese town.—Beautiful Palizzana.—Brown Cupids.—The Taverna of Palizzi: its inhabitants and furniture.—Astonishment and questions of the host, &c.—Political motives imputed to wandering artists.—Strange appearance of Palizzi from below.—Prickly pears and other difficulties.—Departure from Palizzi.—Hill of Pietrapennata: its most exquisite forests.—Approach to Staiti: its Calabrian character and singular aspect.—Costume of women.—Don Domenico Musitani: his disagreeable house.—Hospitality qualified by circumstances.—Silkworms and their disagreeables.—Contrast between the various abodes in such tours.

August 1.—Our host was ready, in expectation of showing us some of the best points of view, which around this eagle's-nest of a place are most extraordinary. The great characteristic of Calabrian towns, picturesquely

speaking, appears to consist in the utter irregularity of their design, the houses being built on, under, and among, separate masses of rock, as if it had been intended to make them look as much like natural bits of scenery as possible. The Marzano Palazzo is among the most prominent of the houses here, and, homely and unornamented as it is, stands on its brown crag, looking over worlds of blue wood, and Sicily floating on the horizon's edge, with a most imposing grandeur—and just where a painter would have put it.

Our host, Don Antonio, lives entirely on his property in this remote place, though, like most of the Possidenti hereabouts, he was educated at Naples. Albeit a scholar as regards Greek and Latin authors, his knowledge of English geography and personages is limited, and he refers in rather a misty manner to our “compatriota glorioso il grande Fox ;”* who, he says,

* “Our glorious compatriot, the great Fox. But whether it was before or after he governed England with Lord Pitt ——.”

I have lately learned from Edward H. Bunbury, Esq., M.P., that an uncle of his, who was nephew of the celebrated Charles James Fox, actually *did* visit Bova in 1829, and hence the not very surprising error of our host.



Edward Lear, aq. et lith.

B O V A.
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once came to Bova to study geology; “ma se fosse prima o dopo che governasse l’Inghilterra insieme con Lord Pitt,”—this he did not clearly know. According to our friend, Bova (with the four casali mentioned in page 26, all of whose inhabitants speak a corrupt Greek, and are called Turchi by their neighbours,) is a real old Grecian settlement, or rather, the representative of one formerly existing at Amendolía, and dating from the time of Locris and other colonies. The Bovani are particularly anxious to impress on the minds of strangers that they have no connection with the modern emigrants from Albania, &c. (See “Illustrated Exc. in Italy,” vol. i.) * In no list of these

* Since the above was written, I have referred to the opinions of several authors as to the antiquity of the Greek settlements in this part of Italy. Many circumstances combine to persuade me that the following view, held by the Hon. Keppel Craven on the subject, is most probably the correct one, namely, that although the inhabitants of Bova are not to be looked upon as the lineal descendants of the Locrians or Rhegians, and that their settlements are not to be traced to a more remote era than that of the lower Greek empire,—“previous, it is true, to the invasion of the Saracens, or the settlements of the Normans, yet that they are *infinitely more ancient* than the establishment of the

settlers, as far as I can trace, are any of these southern Greco-Italian establishments

Epirote and Morean colonies, though as distantly removed from those which emigrated in the classic ages of ancient Greece."

1. In the laborious *Dizionario*, by Giustiniani, all the dates of the various emigrations, six in number, are given, whether from Albania or the Morea; and the places of abode are carefully enumerated to the amount of forty-five distinct towns and villages in the various provinces of the kingdom. Among these no mention is made of Bova, or of its adjacent casali, Affrico, Condufóri, &c., although these places are individually detailed in the usual manner in the body of the *Dizionario*.

2. I did not perceive at Bova any of those traces of costume (of the differences of Albanian or Greek dialect I unfortunately could not judge) or manner, which in other of the later Albanian or Moreote settlements which I have visited are so remarkable.

3. Marapóti, who wrote in 1600, and who devoted considerable attention to the description of the habits and manners of the Albanian and Moreote settlers, says that their Church services are celebrated neither in Latin nor Greek, and is very diffuse in notices concerning their wild modes of life, their abode in "Tugurii" or caves, and their mode of dancing (evidently the same as that practised by the modern Epirotes and Greeks), their cooking of sheep whole, &c., which if molested they leave and burn. But he by no means confounds these very distinct people with those around Reggio, of whom he says, "In questi casali (Motta Leucoptera,—the modern Motta S. Giovanni—[Pacichelli],—Sant' Agata, &c.) comunemente si parla in lingua Greca, &c., *che anché s'usa nella più gran parte del' habitationi cònvicine à Reggio,*" p. 61. Here is no mention of Albanesi or Moreoti.

4. Pacichelli (1703) alludes to the Greek language as spoken in the district of Bova, but does not mention the inhabitants having emigrated, as he does those of Barile, &c. &c.

included: their great distance from the more frequented parts of the peninsula, and their consequently scanty intercourse with their neighbours, have, according to their own account, contributed to keep their race distinct. From the same causes—the vast height at which the city is built, and its remoteness from any channels of communication with the capital, even the most ordinary traffic is of necessity tedious and difficult; but a great change seems about to be wrought in the affairs of Bova; for the present Bishop is doing all in his power to attract the inhabitants to the Marina di Bova, an increasing

5. Of Rossano, Mr. Swinburne says, “so late as the sixteenth century, the inhabitants of this city spoke the Greek language,’ &c.; but I find no mention of the inhabitants of Rossano having emigrated from Albania or Greece. It would be desirable to learn on what authority Mr. Swinburne remarks, that the people of Bova “emigrated from Albania only a few centuries ago; many of these Albanese settlements are poor, those in the neighbourhood of Bova remarkably so.” The observation is repeated in Sir J. Hobhouse’s (Lord Broughton) “Journey through Albania.”

Would it not then rather appear that the statements of Keppel Craven are correct? Why should Bova, the largest place of all, have escaped the notice of all Italian writers, and have been unknown by its own inhabitants to be of Albanian origin?

village by the sea-side. Hither, through the episcopal influence, the public offices and residence of the governor, &c., are already removed, and many families follow them, rather than have the present annoyance of the steep ascent. But the old possessors of property in the town thus in process of compulsory migration, cling stedfastly to the site of their ancestral homes, and oppose, as far as they dare, the innovating schemes of the go-a-head moderns. Thus, even in this Ultima Thule of Italy, domestic dissension is rife; and a severe illness having attacked the venerable Vescovo within the last month, the aspirations for his recovery on earth, or his translation to the world above, are less the impulses of abstract charity or piety, than of the feelings which actuate the parties in this Bovan feud.

Our day passed quietly away between lionizing and drawing: the Marzano family, plain, homely, well-bred people, was of the friendliest. At sunset we sauntered in what they termed, "Il Giardino," one of those weed-full disarranged plots of ground, so delightful to the

“dolce far niente” of Italian life, and so inducive of “lotus-eating,” quiet and idleness; —a pergola-walk, tangled with grass below and fig-bushes hanging above over walls of gray rock, commands vistas, among the vine-branches, of the long graceful form of Etna, with clear lines of rock and river sweeping down to the far sea. Then there were hives, with wondrously good honey; for superiority in which product Bova and Amendolía contend as zealously as they dispute their several titles to be styled the birthplace of Praxiteles, the Greek sculptor. The cactus grows in immense luxuriance over every crag and mountain side hereabouts—it is the very weed of the country: the fruit, which at its best may be compared to a very insipid apricot, is greatly valued by the Calabrians, and seems to form no small proportion of the food of the poorer classes.

From the precipices which frown above the numerous fumaras towards the shore, this extraordinary vegetable hangs downward in grotesque festoons and chains of great length, and in many places forms a thickly-matted

surface, which to any fortress on the cliff above would be a complete defence. In early summer its bright yellow blossoms add a charm to its strange and wild appearance.

August 2.—A repetition of yesterday—was passed in drawing about the rock town of Bova. The Bovani take great interest in our performances; and Don Antonio makes a sonnet thereon, which I append,* notwithstanding it is in praise of my sketches, as a specimen of “unpublished” Calabrese poetry.

* ALL 'EGREGIO DISEGNATORE PAESISTA SIG. ODOARDO LEAR, NEL DIPINGERE DELLE VEDUTE NELLA CITTÁ DI BOVA.

SONETTO.

Salve genio d'Albione! oh come è bello,
 Veder natura su le pinte carte
 Figlie del tuo pensier, del tuo pennello
 Dal vero tratte con mirabil arte!
 Io là veggo le roccie, ed il castello
 Le case, il campanile, e quasi in parte
 Tutta la patria mia: e il poverello
 Che dal monte per giù vi si diparte.
 E se per balze e valli, e boschi ombrosi,
 Molto questa contrada all' arte offria
 Italia è bella pur nei luoghi ascosi.
 Ed ivi l' amico lasci, cui il desio
 Di memoria serbar pei virtuosi
 Gli scalda il cor, perché desir di Dio.

Yet, in the elegancies of society, the Marzani are far behind most families of similar position in the Abruzzi provinces, however their equals in every kind of hospitality and good-nature. To-morrow we start for Staíti, San Angelo di Bianco, and San Luca, on the way to Santa Maria di Polsi, one of our greatest objects of curiosity in Calabria Ulteriore I.

August 3.—Hardly could we persuade the domestics to accept of three carlini, even in

A friend sends me the following translation of the foregoing verses :—

Genius of Albion, hail ! what joy to see
 The landscapes glowing on the tinted board,
 Fair children of thy thought, so wondrously
 Drawn with thy magic brush from nature's hoard !
 I see the rocks, the frowning citadel,
 As line by line the well-known shapes unfold,—
 The houses, and the tall tower with the bell,
 And there a peasant wandering down the wold.
 Ah ! if these glens, and vales, and shady groves,
 Yield to the pencil matter without end,
 Among the scenes where artist seldom roves,
 How fair is Italy ! There, O my friend,
 Thou leav'st me, hoping, as a good man should,
 To live within the memory of the good.

remuneration for washing our linen. As we started from Bova ere the earliest sunbeams had changed Etna from a blue to pale rosy tint, the worthy Don A. Marzano bade us a hearty adieu, entreating us to write to him from whatever part of the world we might be in, generally, and from Gerace in particular.

Descending the narrow street of steep stairs,—for whosoever leaves Bova must needs so descend, unless he be a bird,—we passed the public prison, and lo! glaring through the bars was the evil countenance of the woman whom, in the tavern-hut of Condufóri, we had remarked as a species of Medusa: she had been sent hither last night for having murdered one of her fellow Turchi or Turche. The broad dark shades of morning filled the deep valley below the mountain, as the winding pathway led us on from wood to wood throughout a delicious vale, at the lowest end of which a mill and stream, with a few cottages, added a charm to the wild scene; and still through the thick foliage magnificent peeps of overtowering Bova were seen from time to time. And

having passed the fumara at the foot of the ridge crowned by the aerial city, we began to ascend once more a brown cistus-covered hillside, with giant naked-armed oaks in the foreground, and the vast blue forest-clothed mountains of Aspromonte closing the landscape on all but the southern side. As the time for our mid-day halt came on, and the heat began to be rather troublesome, we came in sight of Palizzi, a most singular town, built round an isolated rock commanding one of the many narrow valleys opening to the sea. Coming, as we did, from the high inland ground, we arrived at the top of Palizzi, the castle of which is alone visible from the north side, so that to reach the level of the stream and lower town, it is necessary to descend a perfect ladder between houses and pergolas, clustered in true Calabrese style among the projecting cactus-covered ledges of the parent rock from which they seemed to grow. No wilder, nor more extraordinary place than Palizzi can well greet artist eye. Leaving P—— to finish a drawing I went forward to seek some shelter against the

heat, and, reaching the castle, soon found myself in the midst of its ruined area, where, though full of incidental picturesqueness—namely, a cottage, a pergola, seven large pigs, a blind man, and a baby, I could get no information as to the whereabouts of the taverna; until alarmed by the lively remonstrances of the pigs, there appeared a beautifully fair girl who directed me down to the middle of the town: the light hair, and Grecian traits, like those of the women of Gaeta, seemed to recall the daughters of Magna Græcia.

The streets of Palizzi, through which no Englishman perhaps had as yet descended, were swarming with perfectly naked, berry-brown children, and before I reached the taverna I could hardly make my way through the gathering crowd of astonished mahogany Cupids. The taverna was but a single dark room, its walls hung with portraits of little saints, and its furniture a very filthy bed with a crimson velvet gold-fringed canopy, containing an unclothed ophthalmic baby, an old cat, and a pointer dog; all the rest of

the chamber being loaded with rolls of linen, guns, gourds, pears, hats, glass tumblers, puppies, jugs, sieves, &c.; still it was a better resting-place than the hut at Condufóri, inasmuch as it was free from many intruders. Until P—— came, and joined with me in despatching a feeble dinner of eggs, figs and cucumber, wine and snow, I sate exhibited and displayed for the benefit of the landlord, his wife, and family, who regarded me with unmingled amazement, saying perpetually, “O donde siete?”—“O che fai?”—“O chi sei?”* And, indeed, the passage of a stranger through these outlandish places is so unusual an occurrence, that on no principle but one can the aborigines account for your appearance. “Have you *no* rocks, *no* towns, *no* trees in your own country? Are you not rich? Then what *can* you wish *here*?—*here*, in this place of poverty and incommodo? What *are* you doing? Where *are* you going?” You might talk for ever; but you could not convince

* Oh where *do* you come from?—Oh what *are* you going to do?—Oh who *can* you be?

them you are not a political agent sent to spy out the nakedness of the land, and masking the intentions of your government under the thin veil of pourtraying scenes, in which they see no novelty, and take no delight.

Going out to explore the lower part of the town, I could not resist making a sketch of its wonderful aspect from below; the square towering rock of Palizzi seems to fill the whole scene, while the houses are piled up from the stream in a manner defying all description. But to transfer all this to paper was neither easy nor agreeable; the afternoon sun reflected from the crags of the close and narrow valley, making it like an oven; besides that every available bit of standing ground is so nearly covered with intractable cactus-bushes as to be utterly vexatious; and, add to their alarming prickles, and the frying heat, that the stream was full of soaking hemp, the poisonous stench of which was intolerable, and that all the juvenile unclothed population of the town came and sate over against me, and it may be perceived, that to sketch in Palizzi, though it



Edward Lear, del et lith.

PALIZZI.

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be truly a wonder in its way, is indeed a pursuit of knowledge under great difficulties.

We left this town at three P.M., and made for Staíti, where we were to sleep, and, keeping always distant some miles from the sea, began to ascend the hill of Pietrapennata. From the north side, Palizzi appears totally different in form, and is one of those Poussinesque scenes so exquisite in character, and so peculiar to Italy. The village of Pietrapennata contains nothing remarkable, but from the height immediately above it, one of the most glorious landscapes bursts into view. What detached and strange crags! what overhanging ilex and oak! what middle-distance of densest wood! what remote and graceful lines, with the blue expanse of the eastern sea, and the long plains of the eastern side of Italy! The setting sun prevented our sketching, but we resolved positively to return to this most exquisite scenery, from Staíti, which now towered above us on the opposite side of a deep dark gully, filled with wondrous groups of giant ilex. As we slowly toiled up to this most strange

place, wholly Calabrese in aspect, with its houses jammed and crushed among extraordinary crevices, its churches growing out of solitary rocks, and (what forms the chief character of these towns) all its dwellings standing singly—the Zampognari* were playing, and all the peasant population thronging upwards to their evening rest. Here, too, were the first symptoms of local colour in costume, the women wearing bright blue dresses with broad orange borders, and all we saw gave promise of real unmixed Calabrian characteristics, unspoiled by high roads and the changes of all-fusing and assimilating civilisation.

Don Domenico Musitani, the chief man of the place, to whom the never-failing care of the Consigliere da Nava had recommended us, was sitting in the Piazza—an obese and taciturn man, who read the introductory letter, and forthwith took us to his house; which, among many unpleasing recollections, will certainly ever rank as one of the most disagreeable.

* Peasants who play on the Zampogne, a sort of bagpipes used in Southern Italy.

Life in these regions of natural magnificence is full of vivid contrasts. The golden abstract visions of the hanging woods and crags of Pietrapennata were suddenly opposed to the realities of Don D. Musitani's rooms, which were so full of silkworms as to be beyond measure disgusting. To the cultivation of this domestic creature all Staíti is devoted; yellow cocoons in immense heaps are piled up in every possible place, and the atmosphere may be conceived rather than described; for there is no more sickening odour than that of many thousand caterpillars confined in the closest of chambers. Almost did we repent of ever having come into these Calabrian lands! After the usual refreshment of snow and wine, we waited wearily for supper; at times replying to the interrogatories of our host on the subject of the productions of Inghilterra, and right glad when dismissed to what rest might be found in couches apparently clean, though odious from the silkworms all around them; but necessity as well as poverty makes the traveller acquainted with strange bed-fellows.

CHAPTER V.

Explore Staíti.—Feeding among the silkworms—A dinner party.—Silkworm pie, &c.—We resolve to return to forests of Pietrapennata to-morrow.—Sociable peasantry.—Discomforts of Staíti.—Return to the forests.—Extreme beauty and variety of the environs of Pietrapennata.—The Archpriest of the village, and his hospitable welcome.—Return at night to Staíti.—Uncomfortable evening.—Speculations on S^{ta} Maria di Polsi.—We descend to the sea-shore again.—Reach Motta Bruzzano.—Cultivated grounds.—Beautiful bits of scenery.—Good wine at Bruzzano.—The silent Ciccio urges us to proceed.—Good qualities of our guide.—Extreme heat.—Ascent of the hill of Ferruzzano, and descent to the shore once more.—Fatiguing walk to the Convent of Bianco.—Disappointment at the monastery.—Ascent to Carignano, and halt there.—Further ascent by beautiful woods to S^{ta} Agata di Bianco.—The Baron's house.—The usual hospitable welcome—with the addition of luxuries and refinements.—Difficulty of passing the evening hours.—The family supper party.

August 4.—Long before daylight a troop of pigeons came into our room through the ill-shut door, and after them followed fowls, then dogs; all of which visitors we rejoiced to leave, and were soon exploring the town. Staíti has its full share of Calabrian mystery in its buildings, caves, and rocks, and employed our pencils far and near till noon, when we returned

to our hosts to find dinner laid out in one of our bedrooms, all among the silkworms as before. The contrast between the condition of this house of discomforts, and the cleanliness of those of the more northern provincials in the Neapolitan kingdom, is very striking. Donna Angela Musitani, who had not appeared last night, presided at the table, and our arrival seemed the occasion of a sort of dinner-party in our honour; for there was the Giudice of the town, besides a Canonico or two. The former, a well-bred man, when speaking of his "life of exile" here, said, in the saddest of tones, "O Dio! Signori! Fra Napoli e Staíti! fra il Paradiso e l'Inferno!" and, indeed, barring the out-door picturesqueness of the place, few more uninviting abodes than the odoriferous Staíti could be pointed out. Nor did the annoyances of a tribe of spoiled children and barking dogs add charms to the family dinner. But the "vermi di seta" were our chief horror; and so completely did silkworms seem the life and air, end and material, of all Staíti, that we felt more than half sure, on contemplating three

or four suspicious-looking dishes, that those interesting lepidoptera formed a great part of the groundwork of our banquet—silkworms plain boiled, stewed chrysalis, and moth tarts.* Glad we were to rush out, to sit and draw among the rocks, pondering how we should once more revisit Pietrapennata on the morrow. Almost all the peasants had some greeting for us as they passed homeward after sunset. Some gave us pears, which seem the staple fruit of Southern Calabria; † many asked us if we were planning and writing down for our *governo*; and one woman begged me to ask *my* king to ask *hers* to let her have salt cheaper; while another set forth a claim to her house

* By way of illustrating this our melancholy foreboding, and to show that such things have been, are, and may be, I subjoin the following quotation from a recently published work,—*The Ansayrii, &c., by the Hon. F. Walpole.* Bentley, 1851.

“A sort of sherbet is made here [Diarbekr] of the cocoon of the silkworm; it is considered a great luxury, and is exported for a beverage for the rich all over the surrounding country. To me it appeared very nauseous, tasting exactly as the cocoons smell, &c.”—Vol. i. page 366.

† “—— Of which,” suggests a friend to me, “they continue as prodigal to strangers and pigs as in the days of Horace. (Ep. i. vii. 14.)”

being re-roofed, on account of her grandfather having been killed in battle. The Archpriest of Pietrapennata also accosted us, and, finding how desirous we were of revisiting that village and its forest scenery, good-naturedly asked us to dine at his house. Lingered as late as we could, we took refuge with the Giudice, Don Antonio Morano, for an hour, whose comfortable clean room (though not free from the general taint of the town's vermicular atmosphere) was a favourable contrast to our host's home. Thither, however, we at length retreated, to endure as best we might its evils: there we endured more strange food; the children screamed, the dogs howled; and the fat hostess amused herself by catching unwary dragon-flies, and holding them in the candle.

August 5.—An hour before daylight we left the Palace of Cocoons with joy. How exquisite was the sweet morning light and air—the deep ravine full of elix, the mill, and the ascent to the opposite side, where those surpassing woods fringed the park-like glades, or formed

magnificent pictures with their grey trunks, and arms flung out over rock and dell! O rare woods of Pietrapennata! I do not remember to have seen a lovelier spot than the "winged rock"—not unaptly named, feathered as it is from base to summit. None of your dense carpet-forests—your monotonies of verdure, but made up of separate combinations of pictorial effect, such as one can hardly fancy—Claude and Salvator Rosa at every step! All the morning we drew in this beautiful place, and little enough could our utmost efforts make of what would occupy a regiment of landscape-painters for years, if every one of them had as many arms and hands as Vishnoo. At noon, a constant breeze plays among these umbrageous groves, making even the heat of the day pleasant, and we moved reluctantly to the top of the hill, whose crown of foliage spread away in unmeasured lines to the north; hence the forest slopes conduct your eye eastward to Brancaleone and other villages, starry bright against the blue waves. At the hamlet of Pietrapennata we found our acquaintance the Archpriest, Don Domenico

Lucianò, waiting for us in his rustic dwelling, the divine himself clad in an undress of corduroys and a shooting-jacket, the like of which was never seen in the grave Roman States. As all and everybody of the village thronged to see us, we were fain to allow our reverend host to shut us up in a small dark room, where our homely dinner of beans, eggs, and salad was soon ready, and the old gentleman not being of an interrogative turn, his simple hospitality was very agreeable; and although his wine was very abominable, yet we had had the forethought to load Ciccio with a basketful of snow, four rotoli of which, wrapped in cloth, had melted but little, and served to nullify our host's fluid.

About three we set off for Silkworm Hall, taking new paths through those most glorious scenes, but so continually distracted by fresh groups of wondrous beauty that we worked but very little, and arrived late (the later the better) at Staíti, well pleased at having once more seen a place which must always dwell in my memory as the beau-ideal of Calabrian park

or forest scenery. Supper and silkworms once again; screaming children and howling dogs; the fat lady shouted and scolded, and anathematised the daddy-longlegs who flew into the candles; and mine host was savage at our having visited “quel prete di Pietrapennata.” There may, however, be yet many Silkworm Halls in store for us; but, go where we may, we shall hardly find another Pietrapennata to compensate for their evils. What will S^{ta} Maria di Polsi be like? On the map it is most inviting—black and deep among the horrors of Aspromonte. The variety of hope in such tours as these lightens the annoyances of the present hour.

August 6.—Half-an-hour before sunrise: addio — Don Domenico and Donna Angela Musitani! — Staíti is a considerable place, resembling in extent Celano, Magliano, or Pescina, in Abruzzo Ulteriore II.; but woe is me! for the contrast between its habitants and the Tabassi or Masciarelli! Truth compels me to say, though after two days' hospitality it

might be wrong so to feel, that P—— and I grew more lighthearted, step by step, as we left our late host's, and followed old Dìghi Dòghi Dà and his faultless horse down the steep hill through many a lane towards the plain below. The plan of our route was to leave the hills for a space; nor until Motta di Bruzzano* was passed were we to turn once more towards the mountains and S^{ta} Maria di Polsi; so we came again into a land of olives, and sandy paths, and irrigated fields of Indian corn, with the sea on one side and blue lessening hills westward. Here and there, we could not help lingering to sketch some line of Claude-like simplicity. Farther on, we glanced at Moticella, a village at the foot of the hills, but waywardly we did not think it worth a visit; and thus, by degrees, having passed through gardens and fields, and by cottages surrounded with gourds, we arrived below Bruzzano, placed as if arranged by G. Pussino for a picture, on the edge of a great rock rising out of the plain, and built with all

* Bruzzano was the head quarters of the Saracens in 1075, according to Marapóti.

that beauty of simple form, and that independent irregularity, so identified now in our minds with the towns of Calabria. Many charming views are there round Bruzzano, looking through pergolas to the sea and cape, with glittering Brancaleone to the south, and the blue woody hills towards the north. After making a drawing, we lingered, early as it was, at the door of a wineshop, indulging, over a loaf of bread, in moderate libations of the best Calabrian wine we had yet tasted. Well for us, we afterwards found, that so we did. But the day (it was a burning and weary scirocco) advanced, and quoth Ciccio, "If you mean to sleep at S^{ta} Agata, so as to arrive at Polsi the following evening, you must go on—dógo." In all the chances and changes of our tour, hitherto old Ciccio had ever been perfectly, yet judiciously, amiable. If we wished to halt, he said, "Díghi, dóghi, si." If we wished to go on, he said the same. We never differed, only the communication on our side was scanty; the "Dógo" was sufficient.

So, hot as it was, we obeyed orders, and began

to ascend one of those steep Apennine spurs running down from the high Aspromonte chain to the sea. At the top of it, where there was a Bivio,* one road leading to Feruzzano, the other to the plain again, we had to decide summarily where our night's quarters should be. Feruzzano, judging from what one saw hence, was uninteresting; and, moreover, we had no letter to any of its people. S^{ta} Agata, on the other hand, though we *had* a letter to its principal proprietor, the Barone Franco, was a great deal farther off, nor as yet visible, and the day was of the uttermost degree of scirocco heat, without a breath of air. So, at the very top of the narrow ridge, we threw ourselves down under the only shade bestowed us by a few bushes of thick lentisk, and finally decided on this difficult question by that intellectual process of reasoning generally known as "tossing up." Heads? — Tails? Heads, — S^{ta} Agata. Down, therefore, we went into a new scene—ridges and lines beyond lines of chalky-bright

* A double or divided road.

heights, town-crowned heights, and glaringly white fumaras, a great tract from hill to sea of glitter and arid glare. The picking and stealing of some grapes growing near the burning sandy road seemed a light matter to our parched consciences as we pursued this hottest of walks through the plain, towards the first outworks of the steeps, high on which stood the convent of Bianco; the houses of the town of that name being dotted along a narrow ridge of the whitest of chalk—oh how white! how ultra chalky! We became very cross as we crept on in the scorching sun, and passed along the stony fiumara;—

“The river-bed was dusty white,
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against our dazzled eyes.”

The Fiume Verde, a river in winter, was now reduced to a sham of a stream, containing as many tadpoles as drops of water, and barely admitting the least face-washing refreshment; while the little shade, real or supposed, to be gained in the olive-grounds scattered around was barred from us by thick lentisk hedges.

It was as much as either of us could do, aided by some water-melons, to reach that longed-for spot the convent of Bianco, beyond which we looked earnestly to ever-rising grounds with fresh woods and bluer mountains beyond, speaking of air and endurable existence once more.

At last, behold us at the monastery door. O fallacious hopes! All the monks were fast asleep, so we could only penetrate into a courtyard, where, indeed, was a well of clear water, and an iron bucket chained thereto, which neither P—— nor I shall ever forget. Let any philosopher or stoic walk from sunrise till past noon in a Calabrian August on the shadeless low grounds by the sea, and such a well with such a bucket he will remember through life! When the monks arose, we, who had taken no provision of food with us, were aghast at the two small bits of crust which they apoloisingly offered us, the Superiore declaring that they were out of provisions; so off we set again. “Coraggio, díghi, dóghi, dà,” said Ciccio; and we climbed on through vineyards

and hanging woods for another hour to a village, we fondly hoping it would be S^{ta} Agata ;—not at all—it was Casignano, S^{ta} Agata being yet half-an-hour beyond !

From this place, where we indulged in a rest, and more snow and wine, all the rest of the afternoon's march was delightful. Smooth walks led us through rich chestnut woods (such as abound in that most beautiful place Civitella di Subiaco), or along narrow high-banked lanes of red earth, with feathery oak over head, and the eastern sea shining through the branches over the woodland tracts we had last left, and the chalk-white fumaras and golden sandy plain far below. At length our night-halt, the little village of S^{ta} Agata was reached ; a humble place, half of which seemed merged in the Baron's huge old dirty Pousinesque Palazzo. And, as we arrived at the house, the whole baronial atmosphere seemed one of slovenly and lethargic melancholy ; though there was no want of hospitable reception. The drawing-room was very untidy, and there were four very unwashed poets' heads at

the four angles. The Baron's brothers and sons were dirty and sad; and the priest was sad and dirty; the doctor (a professional man of Gerace, the Capo Distretto) seemed the only lively person, and apologised for the Baron's absence; the Baroness being ill. But the will to welcome, which we have not yet found wanting in Calabria (save in Condufóri), was perfectly manifested in an unexpected display of maccaroni, eggs, olives, butter, cheese, and undeniable wine and snow, on a table covered with the whitest of linen, and sparkling with plate and glass, arrangements at variance with the outward appearance of the mansion. After this refreshment, and a half-hour's sketching, evening set in, when cards prevailed (an amusement my ignorance of which I have often lamented in these regions), and P—— and I vainly tried to look polite and sleepless till supper was announced at eleven; a dreary meal, the whole family and party, twenty in number, sitting round a plentifully loaded table in speechless solemnity.

CHAPTER VI.

Descent from S^{ta} Agata.—Glorious scenery: refreshing woods.—We turn towards the Aspromonte mountains.—First sight of San Luca, where a guide for the monastery of Polsi is to be procured.—Descent to a fumara, and long walk in it.—Oleanders.—San Luca.—Welcome at the house of Don Domenico Stranges.—Hearty and jovial family of brothers.—Immense amount of questions concerning the produce of England.—Invitations to remain at San Luca.—Late start for the monastery with a guide, besides Ciccio.—Ascent of the stream: grand mountain scenery.—Heights of Aspromonte.—Magnificent oleander-trees.—Impressive solitudes.—Necessity of haste—the day wears.—Climb among oak woods.—Ascent to the Serra.—Ciccio's forebodings.—Darkness overtakes us.—Light of the Monastery far below.—Descent to its gates.—Pleasant reception by the Superior.—Wonder of the monks.—The Superior's lecture upon England and the English.—The Thames Tunnel poetically considered.—Conventual accommodations of S^{ta} Maria di Polsi.—Storm and wind.

August 7.—We left the Baron's house before sunrise, with many apologies from the family that no one was up and on foot to attend to our departure, the increasing illness of the lady of the house explaining the gloom of last night, as well as the invisibility of the household this morning. Truly delightful was the walk through

the shady chesnut-groves — ahi! — those early hours in Italy! Again we passed Casignano, but, instead of descending towards Bianco, we held on an inland route, facing the high Aspromonte range of mountains, in hopes to reach the sanctuary of S^{ta} Maria di Polsi by night. San Luca—where we were to procure a guide to the convent,—was in view, though we had to walk for some hours up one of those eternal white fiumara-courses, full of oleander-clumps, before we arrived at it. We reached the village at ten. It stands at the termination of one of the northernmost ridges, forming the valley of the great torrent known ere it joins the sea as Fiume Buonamico. Don Domenico Stranges, the chief proprietor, was away at the Marina (for there is generally on the track along the coast some cluster of houses, or a hamlet representing the community whose chief home is in the hills), but no timid inhabitant of the Casa Stranges forbade our entrance as at Condufóri: here a most graceful and handsome barefooted girl, a local Hebe, brought us snow and wine, bidding

us wait and be welcome till her masters came.

In Calabria, as in other parts of the Neapolitan kingdom (see “Excursions in Italy”), the family often continue to dwell together till each of its members marry. One of the Brothers Stranges soon arrived, and a most thoroughly hearty good fellow he was. “You must take what you can find,” said he; “there is no time to get anything: *si signore, non vi sono qui mercati—qui non siamo in Napoli;*” * but there were heaps of maccaroni, and cocuzzi † and pomi-d’oro, and a roast hare, and that is not matter for complaint in the heart of Calabria. Don Giacomo asked, as usual: “In che cosa abbonda l’Inghilterra?” ‡ and we replied, al

* There are no markets here; this is not Naples.

† Vegetable marrows and tomatas.

‡ In what does England abound?

In cows, oxen, horses, corn, &c.

Have you any rice?

No; we import it.

O heavens! Do you make any wine?

No.

O mercy! Then of course you have no fruit?

But indeed we have.

O that is not possible.

solito, "Vi sono belle vacche, bovi, cavalli, grano," &c., &c.

"V'è del riso?"

"Non, signore; si fa venire di fuori."

"O cielo! Dunque—si fa del vino?"

"Non, signore."

"O misericordia! Frutti allora di certo non vi sono?"

"Ma sì."

"O! possibile non è," and a polite grin of incredulity closed the category.

The worthy man pressed us much to stay, to see all the hills. "Since you *are* come to this out-of-the-way place, what difference *can* a week or two make? Stay, and hunt—stay, and make this your home!"

"Alas, good Don Giacomo! so we would gladly, but life is short, and we are trying hard to see all Calabria in three months."

So we slept: but instead of waking at nineteen (five) o'clock, it was half-past twenty* before we were in order to start—leaving only

* In Southern Italy the whole number of hours contained in the day is always spoken of.

three hours and a half for a journey which our Calabrian friends described as “*sommamente feroce.*” *

So we left San Luca, our good-natured host giving us a huge water-melon to help us on our road, and the handsome girl firmly refusing to accept any “compliment” or “remuneration” of coin, great or little.

For three miles up a torrent bed was our path at setting out, our guide (for Ciccio did not assume knowledge of the intricate ways of Polsi), clad in the costume of brown cloth worn by the peasants hereabout, going on in advance. As we proceeded up the stream, the rocks began to close in nearer and nearer, till above the high-cliffed gorge, the towering forms of Aspromonte seemed to shut out the sky—the long furrows in the mountain-sides clothed with the densest wood. Now our route lay on this, now on that side of the torrent, sometimes at the level of the river, among blooming oleander-trees, of the largest size I ever saw (not excepting even those at Sortino, in Sicily); sometimes

* Utterly terrible.

at a great height, among the trunks of luxuriant ilex-trees, overhanging the rocks. The sentiment of these scenes and solitudes—the deep, deep solitudes of those mountains! are such as neither pen nor pencil can describe!

We were obliged to walk as fast as possible, that we might arrive at Polsi by daylight, and as we ascended, the labour was not a little severe. It was twenty-two o'clock when we reached a fountain very high up in the mountain, yet the brown-garbed guide said three hours were still requisite to bring us to our night's lodging. Clear streams, trickling down at every step to the great torrent, refreshed us, and soon we left the valley, and began to climb among oak woods, till the deep chasm, now dark in the fading daylight, was far below our feet.

A circuitous toil to the head of a second large torrent, skirting a ravine filled with magnificent ilex, brought us to the last tremendous ladder-path, that led to the "serra," or highest point of the route, wherefrom we were told we should perceive the monastery.

Slowly old Ciccio and his horse followed us, and darker grew the hour. "Arriveremo tardi," quoth he, "se non moriamo prima—dìghi, dóghi, dà!"* But alas! when we did get at the promised height, where a cross is set up, and where, at the great festas of the convent, the pilgrims fire off guns on the first and last view of this celebrated Calabrian sanctuary—alas! it was quite dark, and only a twinkling light far and deep down, in the very bowels of the mountain, showed us our destination. Slow and hazardous was the descent, and it was nine o'clock ere we arrived before the gate of this remote and singular retreat. It was a long while before we gained admittance; and the Superiore, a most affable old man, having read our letter, offered us all the accommodation in his power, which, as he said, we must needs see was small. Wonder and curiosity overwhelmed the ancient man and his brethren, who were few in number, and clad in black serge dresses. "Why had we

* We shall arrive late, if we do not die before we get there.

come to such a solitary place? No foreigner had ever done so before!" The hospitable father asked a world of questions, and made many comments upon us and upon England in general, for the benefit of his fellow-recluses. "England," said he, "is a very small place, although thickly inhabited. It is altogether about the third part of the size of the city of Rome. The people are a sort of Christians, though not exactly so. Their priests, and even their bishops, marry, which is incomprehensible, and most ridiculous. The whole place is divided into two equal parts by an arm of the sea, under which there is a great tunnel, so that it is all like one piece of dry land. Ah — che celebre tunnel!" A supper of hard eggs, salad, and fruit followed in the refectory of the convent, and we were attended by two monstrous watch-dogs, named Assassino and Saraceno, throughout the rest of the evening, when the silence of the long hall, broken only by the whispers of the gliding monk, was very striking. Our bed-rooms were two cells, very high up in the tower of the convent, with

shutters to the unglazed windows, as a protection against the cold and wind, which were by no means pleasant at this great elevation. Very forlorn, indeed, were the sleeping apartments of S^{ta} Maria di Polsi, and fearful was the howling of the wind and the roaring of a thunder-storm throughout the night!—but it was solemn and suggestive, and the very antithesis of life in our own civilised and distant home.

CHAPTER VII.

Mountain mist.—Description of the scenery round the monastery.—Simple peasantry of these mountains.—Lionising the church and convent.—The Superior and his conversation.—We decide on starting for Gerace to-morrow.—Legendary foundation of the Convent of S^{ta} Maria di Polsi.—Praises of our guide Ciccio.—Ascent to the Serra, and descent to the valley and fumara of San Luca.—The brothers Stranges again.—More hospitality and questions.—We set off for Bovalino.—Tiresome journey by the fumara to the sea-shore.—Hot sandy paths.—Olive grounds.—Ascent to Bovalino.—The Count Garrolo—his hospitality and volubility.—Supper and the subdued Contessa.

August 8.—A little rain falls, and great volumes of mist are rolling up the sides of the gigantic well in which the convent seems to be placed; but after caffè with the Padre Superiore, who was again diffuse on the subject of a married priesthood, P—— and I went out to explore, in the teeth of the stormy elements.

Assuredly, S^{ta} Maria di Polsi is one of the most remarkable scenes I ever beheld; the building is picturesque, but of no great antiquity, and with no pretensions to architectural

taste ; it stands on a rising ground above the great torrent, which comes down from the very summit of Aspromonte, the highest point of which—Montalto—is the “roof and crown” of the picture. From the level of the monastery to this height rises a series of screens, covered with the grandest foliage, with green glades, and massive clumps of chesnut low down—black ilex and brown oak next in succession, and, highest of all, pines. The *perpendicular* character of the scene is singularly striking, the wooded rocks right and left closing it in like the side slips of a theatre ; and as no other building is within sight, the romance and loneliness of the spot are complete. Neither is there any other, even the remotest, glimpse of contrasted landscape, as is often the case with secluded monasteries in Italy, which, from their high and solitary place, overlook a distant plain, or the sea. Here all around, above and below, is close wood and mountain—no outlet, no variety—stern solitude and the hermit sentiment reign supreme.

The monks are frequently snowed up for



View of the site

Printed by Hollman & Walton.

STA MARIA DI POLSI.

Engraved by Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, August 1852.

many of the winter months, and must lead at all periods a life of the strictest seclusion ; for, except on a day early in September, when half South Calabria comes to the annual festa, no living soul but the few dependents of the monastery visit it. Some of these—woodmen and labourers—passed us as we sate on peaks of rock above the downward path, wrapped in our plaids, and hardly able to hold our books for the violence of the wind ; and they gazed with breathless amazement at the novel sight—a simple, hardy race of people, with none of that ferocity of countenance which English Lavaters attach by habitual tradition to Calabrese physiognomy.

The noontide hours were employed in sketching in the cloisters, and in examining the relics and treasures of the church under the auspices of the Padre Superiore. The subjects which weigh most heavily on his mind are “*Quel tunnel,*” * and “*Quei Preti maritati ! Vescovi sposati ! o cielo ! Una moglie di*

* The tunnel, and those married priests ! Married bishops—O heaven ! Wife of an archbishop !—O what amazement !

arcivescovo ; O che stravaganza !” The afternoon we passed in strolling about the fine scenes around this hermit-home ; but, though containing endless material for foreground study, its general picturesque character is limited, and we decide on leaving S^{ta} Maria di Polsi to-morrow. We must retrace our steps as far as San Luca, and then make for Gerace, sleeping either at Bovalino or Ardore, as time may allow.

August 9.—The worthy Superior presented us with a medal and a print of the Madonna di Polsi, the original picture having been discovered by a devout ox, who inveigled one of the early Norman Conquerors of Sicily all the way from Reggio to this place, for the particular purpose of inducing him to build a monastery. The excellent ox, said the monk, led on the prince from hill to hill till he reached the proper spot, when, kneeling down, he with his pious horns poked up the portrait of the Virgin Mary, which was miraculously waiting some inches below the ground for its bovine liberator.

A print recording this circumstance was also given to Ciccio, who wrapped it up carefully with signs of devotion: we have never yet had a fault to find with this valuable fellow—he was, as King Charles the Second is said to have said of somebody, “never *in*, nor ever *out* of, the way.”

Having reached the height of the cross we turned to bid a last addio to S^{ta} Maria di Polsi, and thenceforth we enjoyed the magnificent landscape of distant hills now visible throughout this high part of the gorge; we descended to the depths of the torrent bed, and its gay oleander-trees by the ferny glens and ilex ravines, which we had threaded on our way up to the monastery on the afternoon of the 7th; and so we again reached the widening valley and its painful fiumara course of white stones below San Luca. Contrary to our first intention, which had been to push on for Bovalino—we returned into the little town, for our horse had lost a shoe, and the fierce heat demanded an hour or two of rest.

The party at the friendly Don Giacomo

Stranges was increased by his brothers D.D. Domenico and Stefano, who were all delighted to ask questions about the 'abbondanza d' Inghilterra,' while they offered us snow and wine, and a clean cloth being spread, maccaroni, eggs, ricotta,* honey, and pears, soon exhibited proofs of their ready hospitality.

It was two o'clock before the horse-shoe was adjusted, and we started once more from San Luca and its kind homely set of inhabitants, who to the last insisted on giving us letters to Stignano, Stilo, Rocella, and other places at which we might chance to halt.

Our route was a weary one, as it was ever descending straight to the sea in the midst of the stony oleander-dotted water-course—hot and tedious; near the coast we came to sandy roads for two hours, with our old friends cactus and aloe bordering cultivated grounds to the water's edge, from which our halt was hardly a mile distant. Ciccio also growled now and then, having lost one of his own shoes, and

* Ricotta is a preparation of milk, usually sheep's milk, in very general use throughout Southern Italy.

being obliged to ride: he did not like to overwork his horse—he was a good fellow that old Dìghi Dòghi Dà.

It was late when we arrived below Bovalino, sparkling on its chalky height in the last sunbeams, and as we found that to go on to Ardore would have been too far and fatiguing, we turned through olive grounds from the sea, and began the long ascent to the town, which we reached at dusk. Bovalino is a place of considerable size, and we were charmed by its strongly defined Calabrese character, as we ascended the winding pathways full of home-ward-bound peasants, the costume of the women being prettier here than any we had yet seen.

We went at once with an introductory letter to Count Garrolo, one of the chief proprietors of the place, and fortunately found him just returned from the country: the small rooms of his house betokened the literary man, heaps of books, maps, globes and papers, filling up all corners, and great wealth of very old-fashioned furniture, leaving small space for sitting or standing. The Conte himself was a most

good-natured and fussy little man, excessively consequential and self-satisfied, but kind withal, and talking and bustling in the most breathless haste, quoting Greek and Latin, hinting at antiquities and all kinds of dim lore and obscure science, rushing about, ordering his two domestics to and fro, explaining, apologising, and welcoming, without the least cessation. He had come from a villa, a villetta, a vigna—an old property of his family—Giovanni Garrolo, Gasparo Garrolo, Luca Garrolo, Stefano Garrolo,—he had come just now, this very minute: he had come on a mule, on two mules, with the Contessa, the amiable Contessa, he had come slowly—pian, pian, piano, piano, piano—for the Contessa expected to be confined shortly—perhaps to-day—he hoped not; he would like us to be acquainted with her; her name was Serafina; she was intellectual and charming; the mules had never stumbled; he had put on the crimson-velvet housings, a gilt coronet embossed, Garrolo, Garrolo, Garrolo, Garrolo, in all four corners; he had read the Contessa an ode to ancient Locris all along the road, it

amused her, a Latin ode; the Contessa enjoyed Latin; the Contessa had had six children, all in Paradise, great loss, but all for the best; would we have some snow and wine? Bring some snow, bring some wine.—He would read us a page, two pages, three—Locri Opuntii, Locri Epizephyrii, Normans, Saracens—Indian figs and Indian corn—Julius Cæsar and the Druids, Dante, Shakespeare—silkworms and mulberries—rents and taxes, antediluvians, American republics, astronomy and shell-fish,—like the rushing of a torrent was the volubility of the Conte Garrolo—yet one failed to receive any distinct impression from what he said, so unconnected and rapid was the jumbling together of his subjects of eloquence. Nevertheless, his liveliness diverted us to the utmost, the more from its contrast to the lethargic and monotonous conversation of most of our former hosts; and we wondered if the Contessa would talk a tenth part as much, or as loudly. Supper was ready sooner than in most of these houses, and when it was served, in came the Contessa, who was presented to us by her husband with

a crash of compliments and apologies for her appearance, which put our good breeding to the severest test; in all my life I never so heartily longed to burst into merriment, for the poor lady, either from ill-health or long habitual deference to her loquacious spouse, said nothing in the world but “Nirr si,” or “Nirr no,”* which smallest efforts of intellectual discourse she continued to insert between the Count’s sentences in the meekest way, like Pity, between the drummings of despair in Collins’ Ode to the Passions.

“Scusatela, scusatela,” thundered the voluble Conte, “scusatela—cena, cena, a cena—tavola pronta, tavola pronta”——

“*Nirr si.*”

“Subito, subito, subito, subito.”

“*Nirr si, nirr no.*”

“Sedete vi, sedete vi—(sorella sua morta quattro mesi fa).”

“*Nirr si.*”

* Nirr si, nirr no,—the common way of assent or negation in the kingdom of Naples; meaning the last syllable of Signor si, or Signor no, or etymologicè,—’gnor si, ’gnor no.

“Mangiate! mangiate!”

“*Nirr no.*”

“Maccaroni? pollo? (madre morte, piange troppo,) alicetti si, zuppa si, ove si.”

“*Nirr no.*”

“Signori forestiere prendete vino. Contessa statevi allegra.”

“*Nirr si.*”*

It was a most trying and never-ending monologue, barring the choral *nirr si* and *no*, and how it was we did not go off improperly into shrieks of laughter I cannot tell, unless that the day's fatigue had made our spirits tractable. Instantly after supper the Contessa vanished, and the Conte bustled about like an armadillo in a cage, showing us our room, and bringing in a vast silver basin and jug, towels, &c., with the most surprising alacrity,

* Excuse her, excuse her, supper, supper supper, the table is ready; the table is ready.—*Nirr si.*—Quick, quick, quick, quick. *Nirr si, nirr no.*—Sit down, sit down:—(her sister died four months ago).—*Nirr si.*—Eat, eat. *Nirr no.*—Maccaroni? fowl? (her mother is dead—she cries too much) anchovies? soups? eggs?—*Nirr no.*—Signori strangers, take some wine. Countess, be merry. *Nirr si, &c. &c.*

and although the ludicrous greatly predominated in these scenes, yet so much prompt and kind attention shown to the wants of two entire strangers by these worthy people was most pleasing. For all that, how we did laugh when we talked over the ways of this amazing Count Garrolo !

CHAPTER VIII.

View from the heights of Bovalino.—Last words of Conte Garrolo.—Descent to the valleys of Ardore; pursue our road to the sea-shore again.—Arrive at Torre di Gerace.—Site of ancient Locris.—Ruins.—We strike inland towards Gerace.—Cross the fiumara Merico.—Long ascent to the picturesque city of Gerace.—Description of Gerace: its frequent Earthquakes; its Cathedral, &c.—Norman Castle.—Its inaccessible position.—Extensive prospects.—Palazzo of Don Pasquale Scaglione.—Agreeable and hospitable reception. Large rooms, and comfortable house.—High winds frequent at Gerace.—Beautiful views of Gerace.—Constant occupation for the pencil.—Vino Greco of the Calabrese.—Locrian coins.—A treatise on ancient Locris, and our appreciation thereof.—The Medico of Gerace.

August 10.—The rising sun shone brightly into the eastern loggia of Count Garrolo's house, and wide is the view therefrom: eastward, the sea and broad lines of plain; and westward, the long mountain ridges in succession, with Ardore, and Bombili, and Condajanni, and, clear in the blue distance, Gerace on its hill,—successor to old Locris, and in the present day, a Sott' intendenza,

or provincial sub-governor's residence, and Capo-distretto.

The bustling Count whisked us all over the town, into the church, the castle, the lanes, —showed us the views, the walls, the towns, the villages, manuscripts, stables, the two mules, and the purple velvet saddle and crimson housings, with coronets, and Garrolo, Garrolo, Garrolo—tutto-tutto-tutto,—put us in charge of a peasant to show us a short cut to Ardore,—shook hands fifteen times with each of us, and then rushed away with a frantic speed: “Scrivere alcuni pensieri poetici, ordinare la servitú (those two servants how they must have worked!) vendere un cavallo, comprare grano, cogliere fiori, consolare la Contessa. Addio! addio!”* Addio, Conte Garrolo! a merry obliging little man you are as ever lived, and the funniest of created counts all over the world.

A broad valley intervenes between the ridges

* To write down some poetical thoughts; to give orders to the servants; to sell a horse; to buy some grain; to gather some flowers; to console the Countess.

of Bovalino and Ardore,* and by pleasant lanes we descended to delightful vineyards, cornfields, and figgeries (if there be such a word), where our peasant-guide loaded us with fruit, and left us. We decided on not going into the town of Ardore, as it had not a very prepossessing exterior, and to see *all* the towns of Calabria would have occupied too much time; so, ascending the hill on which it stands, we crossed the narrow ridge, and descended once more towards the sea—a wide tract of cultivation now separating us from Gerace on its remarkable hill. About noon we rested at a roadside osteria, for the sake of shade and water melons, (you buy three of the largest for $2\frac{1}{2}$ grani); and, continuing to plod along the broad, dusty level road, we passed Condajanni on our left—apparently very picturesque—and shortly afterwards came to the Torre di Gerace, a single tower of the Middle Ages, standing on the edge of the sea-shore, at the spot which antiquaries recognise as the indubitable site

* “Ardore was,” says Pacichelli, “called Odores, from its many flowers.”

of ancient Locris. Foundations of antique buildings exist for a great extent in all the vineyards around, and innumerable coins are dug up by the labourers. Very pretty is that gray tower, standing all alone on the rock by the blue waves, with a background of the graceful hill of Gerace, and the many lines of more distant and loftier mountains. Round the foot of the Locrian tower, and all over the sandy spiaggia, or beach, grow abundance of the whitest amaryllis, filling the air with their delightful perfume. At half-past one we left the sea-side, and, soon arriving at the broad fiumara, the river Merico, which runs below Gerace, we crossed it, and thence began the extremely long and gradual ascent leading to this grand and most picturesque place, where we arrived at half-past four, P.M.

Gerace,* one of the three Sott' intendenze,

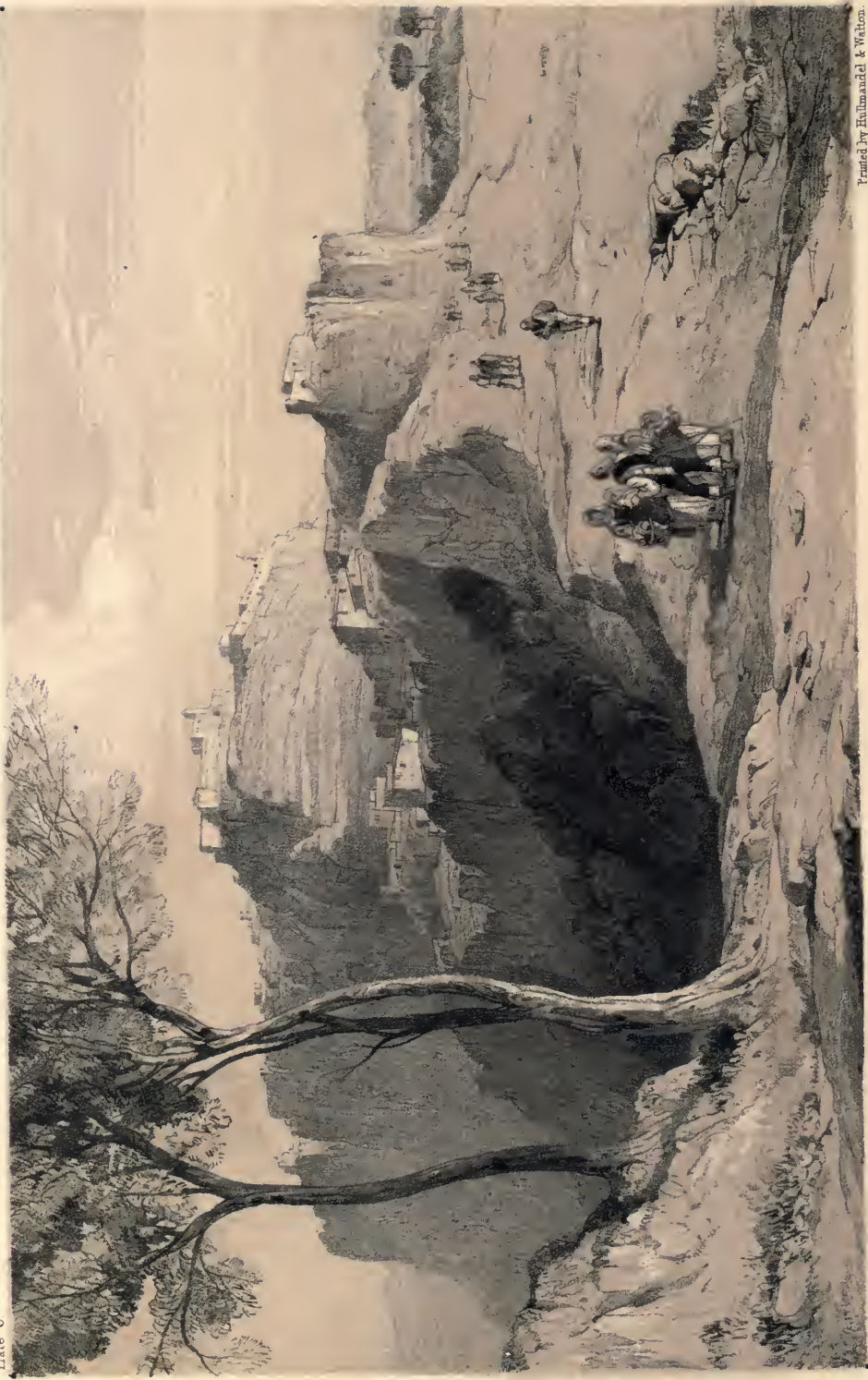
† Gerace, Gierazzo, (Fra Alberto,) Hieraci (Mazzella). Not a bad plate of it in Pacichelli. All antiquarians agree that it represents Locris, though it seems uncertain if the Greek city stood close to the shore, or on the slopes of the hill on which the modern town is built. Frequent mention is made by several old authors, that manna is found along the Locrian territory;

into which Calabria Ulteriore I. is divided, is a large cathedral town, full of beautifully-placed buildings, situated on a very narrow ridge of rock, every part of which seems to have been dangerously afflicted by earthquakes — splits, and cracks, and chasms, horrible with abundant crookednesses of steeples, and a general appearance of instability in walls and houses. Towards the north-west, the sharp crest of rock ends abruptly in a precipice, which on three sides is perfectly perpendicular. Here are the dark and crumbling ruins of a massive Norman castle, from which, by a scrambling path, you may reach the valley below ; but all other parts of the town are accessible only by two winding roads at the eastern and less precipitous approach. The great height at which this place is situated, and its isolated site, give it a command of views the most wide and beautiful in character : that towards the sea being bounded by Rocella on the north, and Capo

Marafioti speaks of “manna which falls from the sky,” as commonly abounding in the woods of the eastern side of Calabria, and particularly in the vicinity of Gerace and Bovalino.

Bruzzano to the south; while the inland mountain ranges towards the west, are sublimely interesting. In fact, Gerace is by far the grandest and proudest object in general position, and as a city, which we have yet seen in Calabria.

Consigliere da Nava had given us a letter to Don Pasquale Scaglione, who inhabits one of the largest houses in the city, overlooking the whole eastern sea view from its windows. Don Pasquale, a prepossessing and gentlemanlike person, welcomed us warmly; and after we had had the usual snow and wine, and had made ourselves comfortable with some water and half-an-hour's sleep, set us down to an admirable dinner—albeit, their own was long ago finished. Nothing can be kinder nor more well-bred than the hospitable reception given us by this family, who remind me more of the Abruzzesi than any of those Calabrese I have yet seen. After dinner, we went out to the unsafe precipices of the Castle, which frowns magnificently in its decay; but the wind, for which even on clear days Gerace is notorious,



Edward Lear, del. et lith.

GERACE
London, Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, August, 1852.

Printed by Hullmandel & Walton.

was too high to allow of drawing happily, so we passed the evening at home in conversation with these new acquaintances.

August 11.—Early we wandered near the town on the ascent from the sea-side, and drew till eleven, wondering at the infinity of pictures presenting themselves on every side: each rock, shrine, and building at Gerace seems arranged and coloured on purpose for artists, and the union of lines formed by nature and art is perfectly delicious. Of costume there seems little enough, except that all the women dress in black, and wear the skirt of their outer dresses turned over the head, like those of Civita Castellana in the Roman States. At twelve we dined at the Casa Scaglione. This is a very well-bred and agreeable family in essentials, although there are certain Calabrian modes and usages less refined than those of the northern provinces among families of a similar class. Donna Peppina Scaglione, the eldest brother's wife, is very pretty and lady-like in appearance, and with agreeable manners. Then

there are the brothers, Don Nicola and Don Gaetano, the canonico, and Don Abennate, a priest of Stilo, staying in the house as a guest, and little Don Cicile, the heir, of five or six years old, a quaint little Calabrian, full of joy and fun. Their family dinner consisted of soup, fish, boiled and fried meat, and potatoes, all plain and excellent.

After dinner, the last act of which was to imbibe sundry glasses of an old wine, much esteemed by the Calabresi, and called Greco, we adjourned to the great show-room, or salone, of the Palazzo, the view from which eastward is most splendid. Here Don Pasquale showed us a large collection of Locrian, Syracusan, Roman, and other coins found in the neighbourhood, after which our good host victimised us fearfully by reading aloud chapter after chapter of a work which he is writing on Locris—an “opus magnum,” which, however learned, was vastly dull. All hints about repose were vain; so when P—— fell fast asleep, and I was nearly following his example, I was about to beg we might retire, when the author himself

yawned, and paused, and fell into the arms of the drowsy god, whereupon the committee of literature was broken up *nem. con.*

After siesta, drawing again. A beautiful trait of Gerace is its admirable colour; its white or delicate fawn-hued cliffs, and gray or dove-coloured buildings coming beautifully off the purple of mountains. Returning at Ave Maria, and eating ices in a café, we encountered the medico, whom we had seen at S^{ta} Agata di Bianco: the Baroness Franco had died on the morning we left the house; so that we now fully understood the mournful silence of the family, aware of her near dissolution, but anxious that if possible any excuse to relieve them from the exercise of hospitality should be avoided. A most pleasing instance of good feeling, and well worth remembering. Supper with the Scaglione family, who are really very agreeable people: it being Wednesday, scate, prawns, and rice-rissoles are the order of the day.

CHAPTER IX.

We remain at Gerace, and draw constantly.—Evening visit to the Sott' intendente.—Cathedral of Gerace.—Church of S. Francesco.—We leave the Palazzo Scaglione, and descend to the river Novito.—Arrangements to return to Gerace, so as to visit all this province before proceeding to Calabria Ulteriore, II.—Town of Siderno; dress of the women.—General civility of the peasantry and of all orders of people.—Descent to the seashore.—Magnificent appearance of Rocella.—Approach to the town.—Night comes ere we ascend the rock.—Search in the darkness for the Casa Manni.—Hospitable reception by the family of Don Giuseppe Manni.—Ancient palace.—Our fatigue and inaptitude at conversation.—Endless interrogatories.—The Rocellesi are decided in their opinions as to our native productions.—Their rejection of our fruits and vegetables as wholly fabulous.

August 12.—A day passed in drawing either on the platform below the town, or on the open space near the old castle. The powdery state of the architecture of Gerace is not agreeable when under the influence of the winds usually prevailing around the isolated rock. There is a feeling of home about the good family Scaglione and their ways, which is most pleasing. In the evening we all adjourned for

a prima sera visit to the house of the Sott'intendente, Don Antonio Buonafede, and there passed an hour or two, ere the return to supper, in showing drawings to admiring officials and their families.

August 13.—We had arranged to start after dinner for Rocella, the next place in our line to the north-east corner of the province, so we devoted the morning to our hosts, going with them to see the lions of their native town. The cathedral of Gerace must have been most interesting as it formerly existed; but except the great number of columns from ancient Locris, the Norman building has totally disappeared, all the upper part having been destroyed by the great earthquake of 1783,* which left half Gerace in ruins. There is a crypt below the cathedral, which, to architects, would prove extremely interesting, as would the mosaic altars in the upper building, as well as those of San Francesco, another church in the city.

* See Hon. K. Craven on the Cathedral of Gerace. Swinburne.

Having made all ready before dinner, we quitted the amiable family of Scaglione soon afterwards, promising to return to them on our way back from Stilo, for I purpose to go no further northward than that town, the boundary of this province. Thence, in order to see the whole of Calabria Ulteriore I., before advancing into the next division, it appears to me that the best plan is, having gone northward by the sea-shore, to return hither by the hills (Gerace being a central point of the province), and then cross them to the western side of the peninsula.

Descending to the River Novito, whose broad fiumara runs from the mountains north of Gerace to the sea, we ascended the hill of Siderno, and passed through that town, a large, but not picturesque place. The costumes of the peasantry are, however, becoming more marked in character; the women all wear deep-blue dresses, with four-inch broad orange or pink borders, and their heads are covered with black or white panni-cloths, adjusted as in the province of Terra di Lavoro. Throughout this, and all our walks hitherto, the civility and

friendliness of every person we meet is most agreeable. Hence, leaving the Marina di Siderno on the right (it is said to be a thriving place among the little ports of this coast), we descended towards the sea in a northerly direction, and after many a long lane, by olive-grounds and fig-gardens, reached the beach. Rocella, on its rocky cape, always a beautiful object even from Gerace, becomes more and more beautiful as one advances towards it; but the hour grew late, and so low was the sun, that it was only by hard running that I reached a spot, among aloes and olives, by the sea-side, near enough to draw the fine outline before me. When the sun had set, there were yet three miles to the town, over a flat ground, intersected with deceitful ravines, so that delays in approaching it were as unexpected as unavoidable. Troops of peasants passed us, playing on the Zampogne merrily; dark grew the sky, and the stars were bright, as we arrived at the foot of the suburbs of Rocella—once a stronghold of the Caraffa family—now a collection of scattered houses below; and a knot of others on the double

fortress rock. Don Giuseppe Nanni, to whom our letter directed us, we were told lived close to the castle; so up we went to the upper rock, through black arches and passages to a piazza surrounded by houses, all, as we could see, by their ragged walls against the sky, in utter ruin.

Ciccio shouted aloud, but no signs of life were given in the total darkness. We tried this turning—it was blocked up by a dead wall; that way you stumbled among sleeping horses; the next path led you to the precipice. We despaired, and remained calling forth “ai! ai! Don Giuseppe Nanni! Oo! ooo! ai ai!” till we were hoarse, but there was no other way of attracting attention. At last (as if there had been no steps taken at all to arouse the neighbourhood), a man came, as it were casually, forth from the dark ruins, holding a feeble light, and saying mildly, “Cosa cercate?”* “We seek Don Giuseppe Nanni’s house,” said we. “This is it,” said he. So we walked, with

* What do you want?

no small pleasure, into the very place under whose windows we had been screaming for the last hour past. It was a very old palazzo, with tiny rooms, built against a rock, and standing on the extreme edge of the precipice towards the sea. As usual, the family received us cordially — Don Giuseppe, and Don Aristide, the Canonico, and Don Ferdinando; and during the doleful two hours preceding supper, we sat alternately watching the stars, or listening to the owl-answering-owl melody in the rocks above our heads, or fought bravely through the *al solito* questions about the tunnel, and the produce of Inghilterra, though I confess to having been more than once fast asleep, and, waking up abruptly, answered at random, in the vaguest manner, to the applied catechetical torture. I will not say what I did not aver to be the natural growth of England — camels, cochineal, sea-horses, or gold-dust; and as for the *célèbre tunnel*, I fear I invested it drowsily with all kinds of fabulous qualities. Supper was at last announced, and an addition to our party was made in the handsome wife of Don

Ferdinando, and other females of the family, though I do not think they shared greatly in the conversation. Vegetables and fruit alone embellished the table. The world of Rocella particularly piques itself on the production and culture of fruit; and our assertion that we *had* fruit in England, was received with thinly hidden incredulity.

“You confess you have no wine—no oranges—no olives—no figs;—how, then, *can* you have apples, pears, or plums? It is a known fact that *no* fruit does or can grow in England, only potatoes, and nothing else whatever—this is well known. Why, then, do you tell us that which is not true?”

It was plain we were looked upon as vagabond impostors.

“Ma davvero,”* said we, humbly; “davvero

* But indeed we *have* fruit; and, what is more, we have some fruits which you have not got at all.

Oh what fruit can you possibly have that we have not? Oh how you are laughing at us! Name your fruits then—these fabulous fruits!

We have currants, gooseberries, and greengages.

And what are gooseberries and greengages? There are no such things—this is nonsense.

abbiamo de' frutti—e di piu, ne abbiamo certi frutti che loro non hanno affatto." Suppressed laughter and supercilious sneers, when this assertion was uttered, nettled our patriotic feelings.

"O che mai frutti possono avere loro che non abbiamo noi? O quanto ci burlano! Nominateli dunque — questi frutti vostri favolosi!"

"Giacché volete sapere," said we; "abbiamo Currants — abbiamo Gooseberries — abbiamo Greengages."

"E che cosa sono Gooseberries e Gringhegi?" said the whole party, in a rage; "non ci sono queste cose—sono sogni."

So we ate our supper in quiet, convinced almost that we had been telling lies; that gooseberries were unreal and fictitious; green-gages a dream.

CHAPTER X.

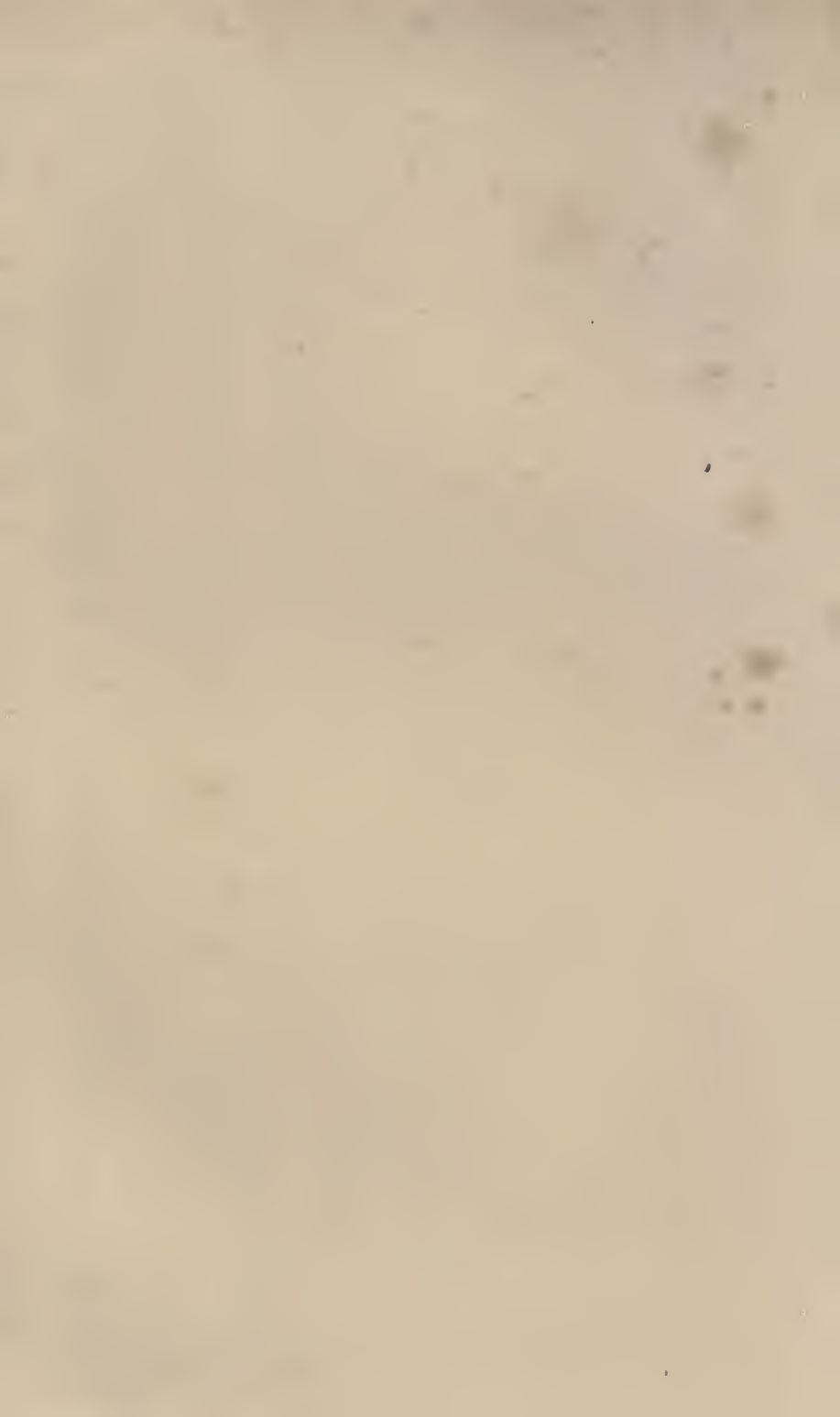
We pass the morning at Rocella.—Its magnificently picturesque character.—We leave Rocella and the sea-side.—Cross the River Alaro.—Rich vegetation.—Ascent to Stignano.—Vast herds of goats.—Two pointed hats from the province of Catanzaro.—The family of Don Cicillo Caristò.—Evening in the balcony.—Little owls.—Hospitality as usual.—Somewhat of dullness.—Prospective costumes in Northern Calabria.—Fête of the Madonna.—Drums and noise.—We grow weary of Stignano.—The dinner.—New idea for a valentine; Cupid among the maccheroni.—We set off to Stilo.—The river Stillaro.—Grand character and architectural beauty of Stilo.—Its magnificent situation.—Its well-kept streets.—House of Don Ettore Marzano.—Agreeable host and thoroughly cordial reception.—Difficulty of selecting views among a multitude of fine points.—A visit to Bazzano.—Courteous manners of peasantry.—Daily thunderstorm.—Agreeable stay at Stilo.—Fly-flappers.—Life at Stilo.—Conversazione.—Plans for continuing the tour.

August 14. — We politely declined Don Aristide as cicerone through the town, as we had but the morning to choose points to sketch from, as well as to work hard, for we had planned to go as far towards Stilo as possible in the afternoon. Full occupation was there in Rocella till noon, for the town and rock is a little world of scenic splendour, and besides its



ROCELLA.

London, Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, August, 1852



various beauties as a whole, its details are exquisite—palm-trees and all sorts of vegetable incidents included. The Nanni family are good hearty people, but less refined than the Scaglioni of Gerace. At dinner they had procured dishes of the largest pears and apples to be found in Rocella, by way of dessert, and they watched our faces for signs of mortification thereat, evidently attributing our non-amazement to our firm resolve not to tell truth, and betray our country's horticultural failings.

At half-past two we left Rocella, certainly one of the very finest coast scenes of Southern Calabria, and turning round the end of the promontory, pursued our way northward along the sea-shore; but so frequently were we tempted to sketch, that there were no hopes of reaching Stilo ere night-fall. After passing the River Alaro, too large a stream to be crossed on foot, we struck inland, through lanes bordered with every possible kind of shrub, and rich with the most luxurious vegetation; and as we commenced the long ascent to the large village of Stignano, the mountain views were more

than ordinarily first-rate. In the wide *fumara* of the Alaro, we observed a flock of five or six hundred goats among the picturesque accidents of the day; and we also met two men with real positive pointed hats—a circumstance of the most exciting nature. Are we then at last leaving the land of Sicilian long blue nightcaps? But, alas, quoth the spokesman of our two peasants, “*Siamo della provincia di Catanzaro —siamo di Squillace.*”^{*} So we must wait patiently yet.

At Stignano we arrived late. It is a wild place on a steep height, and we went with a letter to the house of Don Cicillo Caristò, who received us heartily enough; but, in common with all his family, overwhelmed and grieved us with bitter lamentations that they were obliged to live at Stignano. Once they lived in Napoli, but now they were doomed to lifelong discontent concerning all things in general, and their Stignano existence in particular: like the people in the happy valley of Rasselas, they

^{*} We come from the province of Catanzaro—we come from Squillace.

said, we feel a chain around us, and would sacrifice all to go once more into the gay world! The unexpected decease of an elder member of the family had given the present possessor his little property in this remote village; and very ill did the gift of fortune seem appreciated.

We sate all the evening in a balcony looking towards the mountains; pleasant pastime enough, as the moon shone brightly, and we listened to the "gufi," or little owls, answering each other far and near; yet, for all this, we were half asleep before the supper was announced, and moreover the family of Caristò were not possessed of any conversational talents. Nothing did they care for the Thames Tunnel, and as little for the produce of England. The grandfather, the host, his children of all ages, and some old domestics, composed the party; and what was wanting in refinement was made up in good-will and heartiness to us, though among themselves the circle seemed rather to jar and spar.

The costume of the good-looking girl who waited at table was the prettiest we had seen;

and say the Stignanese, "if costumes please you, you will find better ones at every place you go to henceforward."

August 15.—It is not easy in this wandering life to arrange matters so as to see certain parts of the country with a view to a comfortable division of halting places. In order to have more leisure at Stilo, we agree to pass the morning here, and to go thither after dinner; and though all Stignano, on account of the day being the festival of the Madonna, seems to have formed itself into a committee of drummers, we must bear the noise as best we may.

But it must be confessed that life at Stignano is oppressive. The famiglia Caristò would never leave us alone; when they do not catechise, they stand in a row and stare at us with all their might; and the grandpaternal Caristò is a thoroughly scrutinising and insatiable bore. At dinner, also, there was a most confused assemblage of large dogs under the table who fought for casual crumbs and bones, and when they did not accidentally bite one's

extremities, rushed, wildly barking, all about the little room. But the most remarkable accident during our stay was caused by a small juvenile Caristò, who, during the mid-day meal, climbed abruptly on to the table, and before he could be rescued, performed a series of struggles among the dishes, which ended by the little pickle's losing his balance and collapsing suddenly in a sitting posture into the very middle of the macaroni dish, from which P—— and I rejoiced to think we had been previously helped. One sees in valentines Cupids on beds of roses, or on birds' nests; but a slightly-clothed Calabrese infant sitting in the midst of a hot dish of macaroni appears to me a perfectly novel idea.

At half-past three we commenced our journey northward once more. The route from Stignano to Stilo is a mule-track threading a wild region between mountain ranges, which here shut out all view of the sea; the hills extending far eastward to the coast, so as to leave but little space for cultivation. In less than an hour we arrived at the Stillaro; which the

violent rains, accompanying a thunder-storm at noon, had so swollen, that the crossing it was not to be easily performed on foot: the imperturbable Ciccio, however, carried us over on his back safely enough. Soon the town of Stilo on its height became visible, and though it was dusk before we arrived there, yet there was light enough to perceive that its general aspect was most promisingly picturesque; standing immediately below perpendicular precipices, it is built on a sort of amphitheatrical terrace, the projecting rocks at each extremity crowned with the most picturesque churches and convents. There appeared to be more evidence of care and cleanliness in the streets than in other Calabrian places we had passed through, and there was an air of orderly feeling and decent neatness, which struck us as remarkable in a place more remote from the capital than any we had yet visited. Don Ettore Marzano, to whom our introduction was addressed, seemed a thoroughly hearty, as well as polite, young man, and his large house was well kept and comfortable (speaking of things as they are in

Italy), though without attempt at splendour. With ready alacrity our host put us in possession of two large rooms, and then leaving us, sent a servant to administer to our wants; a tact and attention which reminded me of my old friends of Abruzzo, whom I was continually holding up to my fellow-traveller as the models of Italian provincials. Supper, a simple and good one, was announced when ready, without any preparatory waiting or questions; our host, a bachelor, being the third of the party. The friendly and gentleman-like tone of this all'improvviso reception, in so remote a district, greatly delighted us.

August 16.—When a landscape painter halts for two or three days in one of the large towns of these regions, never perhaps to be revisited by him, the first morning at least is generally consumed in exploring it: four or five hours are very well spent, if they lead to the knowledge of the general forms of the surrounding scenes, and to the securing fixed choice of subject and quiet study to the artist during the

rest of his stay. So many and so exquisite are the beauties of Stilo, that to settle to drawing any of them was difficult, and after having glanced at all the notabilia close to the town, I employed the rest of the morning in walking to Bazzano and Bigonzi, two villages on the farthest outskirts of Calabria Ulteriore I., in face of the mountains among whose depths lie the ruins of the famous Norman convent of Santo Stefano del Bosco. The gorge between Stilo and Bazzano is excessively grand, but the villages were not such as to tempt me to sketch them; the morning's walk, however, was delightful, if only for the opportunity it offered of observing the universally courteous and urbane manners of the peasantry. It is probable that no stranger had ever visited these wild and unfrequented nooks of a province, the great towns of which are themselves out of the route of travellers; but no one met or overtook me on the way to Bigonzi without a word or two of salutation; there were few who did not offer me pears, and parties of women laden with baskets of figs would stop

and select the best for us. Nor did anybody ask a question beyond, "What do you think of our mountains?" or "How do you like our village?" In the town of Stilo we were sometimes followed by not less than fifty or a hundred people, but ever with the utmost good feeling and propriety. The well-bred population of Stilo we shall ever remember with pleasure.

In these high mountains, a mid-day thunder-storm frequently occurs betwixt eleven and noon; and this interruption to the labours of the pencil gave us more opportunity of conversing with our hospitable friends. There is, however, but little to note in the house or household of Don Ettore Marzano, except that all was perfectly orderly and agreeable. The only trait which was so uncommon as to be at all worth recording, was that a domestic stood at meal-time close to the table, and in order to dissipate the flies, which at this season are a legion, flapped a long flapper of feathers, Laputa-wise, close to our faces. No sooner did we begin to speak than whizz—flick—down

came the flapper, so as to render conversation a rather difficult effort.

August 17—Was passed in the usual routine of drawing, and of quiet home-life at the Casa Marzano. Crowds are attracted to see our occupation when we busy ourselves with sketching near the town; but all are merry and orderly. Employment for life might be found in the grand and novel mountain scenery round this magnificent Stilo. A walk to a garden belonging to Don A. Marzano's family amused us in the later afternoon; and in the evening we went to a "soirée," at one of his uncles, Don Antonio Crea. There were good rooms in his palazzo, and round them was hung a large selection of engravings, from Claude and Poussin. Cards were the principal amusement, and ices were handed round at intervals. To-morrow we leave this place; and hope to reach Gioiosa by night, if not compelled by weather or lack of time to halt at Castel Vetere. On the 22nd we hope to be at Gerace once more, Cánalo having been visited in the interval.

CHAPTER XI.

Departure from Stilo.—Early morning.—Town of Motta Placánica.—Its extraordinary appearance.—Cross the river Alaro.—Ascent to Castel Vetere.—Palazzo of Don Ilario Ascitti.—The grandfather of the family; his eloquence.—The dinner.—Discourse on flesh, fowl, and fish.—Our host is angry at our early departure.—We appease him, and depart.—We descend the valley of the river Meano.—Come in sight of Rocella.—Ascend the river Romano, and reach Gioiosa at dusk.—Reception at the house of the Baron Rivettini.—Interview with the Baron.—Card-playing.—Doubts and questions.—The evening meal.—“Why?”—Coming events cast their shadows before.

August 18.—Once more upon the road.—Long before sunrise we had said addio to Don Ettore Marzano, the most pleasing of the younger Calabrese gentry whom we had yet seen; a thoroughly good and hospitable fellow, and well informed on most subjects. Stilo we shall ever recollect as in all respects agreeable.

All nature was deep gray and brown—no rock lit up by the yet hidden sun,—as we descended to the valley of the Stillaro, and retraced our steps as far as Stignano, the home

of the querulous Caristo family, and the scene of the maccaroni-throned infant. Leaving the town on our left, we plunged into a deep vale between olive-clothed slopes, and, climbing up the opposite side, were soon in Motta Placánica, one of the most truly characteristic of Calabrian towns. Like others of these strange settlements, this place has no depth, but is, as it were, surface only, the houses being built one above another, on ledges and in crevices, over the face of a large rock rising into a peak, its highest pinnacle being graced by a modern palazzo. The strange effect which these towns have, even upon those long used to the irregularities of South Italian village architecture, is not to be imagined;—Motta Placánica seems constructed to be a wonder to passers-by. Long we lingered to draw this most singular place; and, leaving it by a steep descent, we came to the valley of the Paganiti, crossing it and winding up the height on its farther side, whence the rock of Motta Placánica appeared like a giant king of nine-pins, as seen edgeways against the sky—no one of its buildings but

the crowning castle being visible. Hence, also, the eye ranged beyond the river Alaro, which we had crossed on our way from Rocella, the high hill and walls of Castel Vetere (representative of the ancient Caulon*), a town built on one of those isolated hills which, to antiquarians, at once proclaim an ancient site. By the aid of the placid Ciccio and his horse, we crossed the swollen river, and, ascending wearily to the town, found it, though mean in appearance from below, full of houses of a large size and indicating wealth and prosperity.

To that of Don Ilario Ascitti we went, narrowly escaping the mid-day autumn thunderstorm, and found a large mansion, with a hall and staircase, ante-room, and drawing-room very surprising as to dimensions and furniture; the walls were papered, and hung with mirrors,

* Caulon, antiquaries agree in placing at or near Castel Vetere. Pacichelli speaks of its splendid and regular fortress, and its palace belonging to the Caraffa family. The Ascitti are named by him as an old family. The modern town stands between the rivers Alaro and Musa, but from earthquakes or other causes, is now in a very ruinous condition, excepting a new quarter of the town which is in process of building.

prints, &c. ; cheffoniers, tables, and a book-case adorned the sides of the rooms, and there were footstools, with other unwonted objects of trans-Calabrian luxury. The famiglia Ascitti were polite and most friendly ; there were two smart sons, just come from college at Naples ; a serene and silent father ; and last, not least, an energetic and astute grandsire, before whose presence all the rest were as nothing. The Nonno* Ascitti was as voluble as Conte Garrolo ; but with more connected ideas and sentences, and with an overpowering voice ; an expression of “ L'état, c'est moi,” in all he said and did. The old gentleman surprised us not a little by his information on the subjects on which (*à propos de bottes*) he held forth—the game laws of England, and Magna Charta, the Reformation, the Revolution of 1688, Ireland, and the Reform Bill. He was becoming diffuse on European politics, having already discussed America and the Canadas, and glanced slightly at slavery, the East and West Indies and the

* Grandfather.

sugar trade, when, to our great satisfaction, all this learning, so wonderful in the heart of Magna-Grecia was put a stop to by the announcement of dinner. The silent son, and the two gay grandsons, listened to their elder relative's discourse, but took no part therein; and we, however superior the matter of the oration might be, greatly longed to exchange the orator for dear, little, fussy Conte Garrolo.

In the large dining-room were assembled many female and juvenile Asciutti, all very ugly;—hitherto we are not struck by Calabrian female beauty in the higher orders, though many of the peasant girls are pretty. The ladies spoke not during dinner, and the whole weight of the oral entertainment fell on the erudite grandfather, who harangued loftily from his place at the end of the table. It was Wednesday, and there was no meat, as is usual on that day in South Italian families. “It would be better,” said the authoritative elder, “if there were no such a thing as meat—nobody ought to eat any meat. The Creator never intended meat, that is the flesh of quadrupeds,

to be eaten. No good Christian ought to eat flesh—and why? The quadruped works for man while alive, and it is a shame to devour him when dead. The sheep gives wool, the ox ploughs, the cow gives milk, the goat cheese.” —“Cosa fanno per noi i lepri?”*—whispered one of the grandsons. “Statevi zitt’!”† shouted the orator. “But fish,” continued he—“what do *they* do for us? Does a mullet plough? Can a prawn give milk? Has a tunny any wool? No. Fish and birds also were therefore created to be eaten.” A wearisome old man was the Ascitti Nonno! but the alarming point of his character was yet to be made known to us. No sooner, dinner being over, did we make known our intention of proceeding to sleep at Gioiosa on account of our limited time, than we repented having visited Castel Vetere at all. “O Cielo! O rabbia! O che mai sento? O chi sono? O chi siete?”‡ screamed the Nonno, in a paroxysm of rage.

* What do the hares do for us? † Hold your tongue!

‡ Oh heavens! Oh rage! Oh what do I hear? Oh who am I? Oh who are you?

“What have I done that you will not stay? How can I bear such an insult! Since Calabria was Calabria, no such affront has ever been offered to a Calabrian! Go—*why* should you go?” In vain we tried to assuage the grand-sire’s fury. We had staid three days in Gerace, three in Reggio, two in Bova and in Stilo, and not one in Castel Vetere! The silent father looked mournful, the grandsons implored; but the wrathful old gentleman, having considerably endangered the furniture by kicks and thumps, finally rushed down stairs in a frenzy, greatly to our discomfiture.

The rest of the family were distressed seriously at this incident, and on my sending a message to beg that he would show us a new palazzo he was constructing (himself the architect), for the increased accommodation of the family Ascitti, he relented so far as to return, and after listening favourably to our encomiastic remarks, bade us a final farewell with a less perturbed countenance and spirit.

There are many fine views of Castel Vetere, which has somewhat in it of the grandiose and

classic, from whatever point regarded, but we left it with less agreeable impressions than those we had carried from most of the larger Calabrian towns, partly from the feeling that we had vexed our host's family, and partly that it was yet so far to go to Gioiosa, that old Ciccio, with more than one admonitory growl, would not allow us to pause to sketch—no, not even for a quarter of an hour. Soon—after passing over high ground, from which the last views of ancient Caulon were very noble—we entered the downward course of the Meano, which, eternally winding over white stones, shut us in between high banks, till we came, at sunset, in sight of Rocella on its double rock; this, together with the river-bed, we bid farewell to by taking a route parallel to the coast, as far as the Fiume Romano, which we ascended for an hour, till we arrived at Gioiosa, apparently a large and well-built town, on the banks of a narrow part of the stream. The house of the Baron Rivettini, to whom we had letters, was large and imposing, but the Baron was not within, and the servants, with none of

that stranger-helping alacrity of hospitality, so remarkable in more northern provinces of the Regno di Napoli, appeared too much amazed at the sudden arrival of "due forestieri,"* to do anything but contemplate us; and, to speak truth, neither our appearance, considering we had toiled through some rain and much dirt all the afternoon, nor our suite, consisting of a man and a horse, were very indicative of being "comme il faut." With difficulty we obtained leave to rest in a sort of ante-office, half stable, half kitchen, while a messenger carried our letter of introduction to the Baron Rivettini. When he returned, quoth he, "The Baron is playing at cards, and cannot be interrupted; but, as there is no locanda in the town, you may sleep where you are." Unwashed, hungry, and tired as we were, and seeing that there was nothing but an old rug by way of furniture in this part of the Baron's premises, we did not feel particularly gratified by this permission, the more that P—— was rather unwell, and

* Two strangers.

I feared he might have an attack of fever; neither did the domestics offer us caffè, or any other mitigation of our wayfaring condition. "Is there no caffè?" "Non c'è."* "No wine?" "Non c'è." "No light?" "Non c'è." It was all "Non c'è." So said I, "Show me the way to the house where the Baron is playing at cards." But the proposal was met with a blank silence, wholly unpropitious to our hopes of a night's lodging; and it was not until after I had repeated my request several times, that a man could be persuaded to accompany me to a large palazzo at no great distance, the well-lighted lower story of which exhibited offices, barrels, sacks, mules, &c., all indicative of the thriving merchant. In a spacious salone on the first floor sate a party playing at cards, and one of them a minute gentleman, with a form more resembling that of a sphere than any person I ever remember to have seen, was pointed out to me as the Baron by the shrinking domestic who had thus far piloted me. But

* There is none.

excepting by a single glance at me, the assembled company did not appear aware of my entrance, nor, when I addressed the Baron by his name, did he break off the thread of his employment, otherwise than by saying, “Uno, due, tre,—signore, si—quattro, cinque,—servo suo,—fanno quindici.”*

“Has your Excellency received an introductory letter from the Cavalier da Nava?” said I.

“Cinque, sei,—si, signore,—fanno undici,” † said the Baron, timidly.

This, thought I, is highly mysterious.

“Can I and my travelling companion lodge in your house, Signor Baron, until to-morrow?”

“Tre e sei fanno none,” ‡ pursued the Baron, with renewed attention to the game. “Ma *perchè*, § signore?”

“*Perchè*, there is no inn in this town; and, *perchè*, I have brought you a letter of introduction,” rejoined I.

* One, two, three,—yes, sir,—four, five,—your servant, sir,—make fifteen.

† Five, six,—yes, sir, make eleven.

‡ Three and six are nine.

§ Why, what for?

“Ah, si si si, signore, pray favour me by remaining at my house.—Two and seven are nine—eight and eleven are nineteen.” And again the party went on with the Giuoco.

There was an anxiety, and an expression of doubt and mystery on the faces of all the party, which, however, did not escape my observation, and I felt sure, as I left the room, that something was wrong; though, like King Coal’s prophet of traditional celebrity, “I knew not what that something could be.”

When I returned to the Palazzo Rivettini, all the scene was changed. Coffee was brought to us, and a large room was assigned for our use, while all the natural impulse of Calabrese hospitality seemed, for a time at least, to overpower the mysterious spell which, from some unknown cause, appeared to oppress those inhabitants of Gioiosa with whom we were brought in contact. But the magic atmosphere of doubt and astonishment returned in full force as other persons of the town came in to the evening conversazione. Few words were said but those of half-suppressed curiosity

as to where we came from; and the globose little Baron himself gradually confined his observations to the single interrogative, "*Perchè?*" which he used in a breathless manner, on the slightest possible provocation. Supper followed, every part of the entertainment arrayed with the greatest attention to plenty and comfort; but the whole circle seemed ill at ease, and regarded our looks and movements with unabated watchfulness, as if we might explode, or escape through the ceiling at any unexpected moment; so that both hosts and guests seemed but too well pleased when we returned to our room, and the incessant "*Perchè? perchè? perchè?*" was, for this evening at least, silenced.

By all this mystery—so very unusual to the straightforward and cordial manners of these mountaineers—there was left on my mind a distinct impression of some supposed or anticipated evil. "Coming events cast their shadows before."

CHAPTER XII.

The anxious Baron.—Passports.—Coffee with sugar.—Drawing the town of Gioiosa.—Its beautiful situation.—“Why?”—Bee-eaters.—Sugar-plums.—We leave the Casa Rivettini and Gioiosa.—Recross the rivers Romano and Novito.—Ascent to Agnano.—Copper mines.—Visit of the King of Naples to them.—The fortunate donkey driver.—View of Cánalo from the ravine of the Novito.—Strange position of the village.—The Passo del Mercante.—Don Giovanni Rosa.—His hospitable welcome.—The careful Ciccio.—Magnificent mountain scenery and environs of Cánalo.—Content and simplicity of old Don Giovanni Rosa.—Paradise and Cánalo.—Roast squirrels and fungi.—Ornithological cookery.—Geographical ornaments of the Palazzo Rosa.—Wondrous and majestic scenes.—We leave Cánalo: recross the Novito, and ascend to Gerace.—Return to the Casa Scaglione.—Preparations for fêtes.—Episcopal injunctions against dancing.—Quiet repose of Gerace.—Arrival of peasantry for the fête.—Procession of the image of a patron saint.—Beautiful scenery on the castle rock.—Moonlight.—The festa.

August 19.—As usual, we rose before sunrise. “O Dio! *perchè?*” said the diminutive Baron Rivettini, who was waiting outside the door, lest perhaps we might have attempted to pass through the keyhole. A suite of large drawing-rooms was thrown open, and thither caffè was brought with the most punctilious ceremony.

My suspicions of last night were confirmed by the great precision with which our passports were examined, and by the minute manner in which every particular relating to our eyes, noses, and chins, was written down ; nor was it until after endless interrogatories and more "*perchè*" than are imaginable, that we were released. But our usual practice of taking a small piece of bread with our coffee renewed the universal surprise and distrust of our hosts.

"Pane !" said the Baron, "*perchè* pane ? O Cielo !"

"I never take sugar," said P——, as some was offered to him.

"Sant' Antonio, non prendete zucchero ? *Perchè* ? O Dio ! *perchè* mai non prendete zucchero ?" *

"We want to make a drawing of your pretty little town," said I ; and, in spite of a perfect hurricane of "*perchè*," out we rushed, followed by the globular Baron, in the most lively state of alarm, down the streets, across the river on

* Do you not take sugar ? &c.

stepping-stones, and up the opposite bank, from the steep cliffs of which, overhung with oak foliage, there is a beautiful view of Gioiosa on its rock.

“O per carità! O Cielo! O San Pietro! cosa mai volete fare?” said the Baron, as I prepared to sit down.

“I am going to draw for half-an-hour,” said I.

“Ma—*perchè?*”

And down I sate, working hard for nearly an hour, during all which time the perplexed Baron walked round and round me, occasionally uttering a melancholy—

“O signore, ma *perchè?*”

“Signore Baron,” said I, when I had done my sketch, “we have no towns in our country so beautifully situated as Gioiosa!”

“Ma *perchè?*” quoth he.

I walked a little way, and paused to observe the bee-eaters,* which were flitting through the air above me, and under the spreading oak branches.

* Merops Apiaster.



“Per l'amor del Cielo, cosa guardate? Cosa mai osservate?”* said the Baron.

“I am looking at those beautiful blue birds.”

“*Perchè? perchè? perchè?*”

“Because they are so very pretty, and because we have none like them in England.”

“*Ma perchè? perchè?*”

It was evident that do or say what I would, some mystery was connected with each action and word; so that, in spite of the whimsical absurdity of these eternal what fors and whys, it was painful to see that, although our good little host strove to give scope to his hospitable nature, our stay caused more anxiety than pleasure. Besides, his whole demeanour so strongly reminded one of Croaker—“Do you foresee anything, child? You look as if you did. I think if anything was to be foreseen, I have as sharp a look out as another,”—that it was no easy task to preserve a proper degree of gravity.

His curiosity, however, was to be tried still

* For the love of Heaven, what are you looking at? What do you perceive?

further; for, having heard that Gioiosa was famous for the manufacture of sugarplums or confetti, we had resolved to take some hence to Gerace, to give to little Cicillo and Maria Scaglione; but when we asked where confetti could be purchased, the poor Baron became half breathless with astonishment and suspense, and could only utter, from time to time, “Non è possibile! Non è possibile! O gran Cielo! Confetti? confetti? *Perchè* confetti? Non è possibile.”* We proved, however, that sugarplums we were determined to have, and forthwith got the direction to a confectioner’s, whither we went and bought an immense quantity, the mystified Baron following us to the shop and back, saying continually “*Perchè, perchè, confetti! O Cielo! perchè?*” We then made all ready to start with the faithful Ciccio, and, not unwillingly, took leave of the Palazzo Rivettini, the anxious Baron thrusting his head from a window, and calling out, “*Ma fermatevi, perchè? Perchè andatevi? Statevi a pranzo,*

* It is not possible! it is not possible! O great Heaven! Sugarplums? *Why* sugarplums, &c.

perchè no? *Perchè* ucelli? *Perchè* disegni? *Perchè* confetti? *Perchè, perchè, perchè, perchè?*"* till the last "*perchè*" was lost in distance as we passed once more round the rock, and crossed the river Romano.

Long did we indulge in merriment at the perturbation our visit had occasioned to our host, whom we shall long remember as "Baron Wherefore." Nevertheless, a certainty impresses me that so much timidity is occasioned by some hidden event or expectation.

Merrily we went through the long garden lanes which stretch away seaward from Gioiosa, over a rich tract of country most luxuriant in vegetables and fruit. Soon we left the coast once more, and winding round the uninteresting olive-clad hill of Siderno, ascended to Agnano, a village on the hill-side above the river Novito, the valley of which stream separates it from the rock of Gerace. From Agnano the eye looks into the very heart of the ravine of the Novito; and high above it on the west

* But stop—*why* do you go? stay to dinner; *why* not? *why* birds? *why* drawings? *why* sugarplums, &c.

below stupendous cliffs, stands Cánalo, a village at the entrance of the Passo del Mercante, a wild route leading across the mountains to the western side of Calabria.

To Cánalo we were bound; it had been described to us by our friends in Gerace as “Un luogo tutto orrido, ed al modo vostro pittoresco;”^{*} and although Grotteria and Mammola were named in the same category, we could not devote time to all three.

We rested an hour at Agnano, with Don Nicòla Speziati, to whom we had a letter; but although there were mines of iron or copper in the neighbourhood which we ought to have gone to see under Don Nicòla’s guidance—he being the agent for the works—yet we neglected to do so, preferring the search after landscapes of Cánalo to exploring scenes of utility made illustrious by the recent visit of King Ferdinand and his Queen. All the Court had arrived in the preceding autumn on the coast in a steamer, and came hither from the Marina of Siderno

* A place altogether horrible; and, after your fashion, picturesque.

on a vast crowd of donkeys, collected by the peasantry for the occasion. "Maestà," said the owner of the ass on which the royal traveller rode, "no one else can ever ride on this donkey: it shall have a bit of ground and a stable to itself for the rest of its honourable life. I wish, nevertheless, Maestà, that I had another; for though the honour is great, yet I have no other mode of getting my livelihood." The King, say the villagers hereabouts, gave the acute countryman all the dollars he had about him, and settled a small pension on him besides for life.

The view of Cánalo from the ravine of the Novito is extremely grand, and increased in majestic wonder as we descended to the stream through fine hanging woods. Having crossed the wide torrent-bed—an impracticable feat in winter—we gradually rose into a world of stern rocks—a wilderness of terror, such as it is not easy to describe or imagine. The village itself is crushed and squeezed into a nest of crags immediately below the vast precipices which close round the Passo del Mercante, and when

on one side you gaze at this barrier of stone, and then, turning round, perceive the distant sea and undulating lines of hill, no contrast can be more striking. At the summit of Cánalo stands a large building, the Palazzo of Don Giovanni Rosa, the chief proprietor of the place, an extremely old man, whose manners were most simple and kind. "My grandchildren," said he, "you are welcome to Cánalo, and all I can do for you will be too little to show you my goodwill;" and herewith he led us to the cleanest of rooms, which were to be ours during our stay, and apologised for any "mancanza"* we might find. "You must excuse bad fare to-day, but I will get you better to-morrow," quoth Don Giovanni Rosa. The remainder of the afternoon we employed in wandering about the town and its most extraordinary environs, where masses of Titan rock threaten to crush the atoms of life that nestle beneath them. I have never seen such wondrous bits of rock scenery. Meanwhile,

* Deficiency.

old careful Ciccio never lost sight of us; he was always silent, contenting himself by following our footsteps as attendant and guard, lest excess of enthusiasm might hurry us over one of the fearful precipices of Cánalo.

August 20.—Every spot around this place possesses the very greatest interest, and is full of the most magnificent foreground studies. All the morning we drew on the hill-sides, between the town and Agnano; and very delightful were those morning hours, passed among the ever-changing incidents of mountain scenery—the goats and cattle among the tall oaks, the blue woody hills beyond. At dinner-time, good old Don Giovanni Rosa amused and delighted us by his lively simplicity and good breeding. He had only once in his long life (he was eighty-two) been as far as Gerace, but never beyond. “Why should I go?” said he; “if, when I die, as I shall ere long, I find Paradise like Cánalo, I shall be well pleased. To me ‘Cánalo mio’ has always seemed like Paradise — sempre mi sembra Paradiso,

niente mi manca.”* Considering that the good old man’s Paradise is cut off by heavy snow four months in the year from any external communication with the country round, and that it is altogether (however attractive to artists) about as little a convenient place as may well be imagined—the contented mind of Don Giovanni was equally novel and estimable. The only member of our host’s family now living is a grandson, who was one of our party, a silent youth, who seemed never to do or say anything at any time. Our meals were remarkable, inasmuch as Paradiso cookery appeared to delight in singular experiments and materials. At one time a dish was exhibited full of roasted squirrels, adorned by funghi of wonderful shapes and colours; at another, there were relays of most surprising birds: among which my former ornithological studies caused me to recognise a few corvine mandibles, whose appearance was not alto-

* My Canalo always seems Paradise to me, I am in want of nothing.

gether in strict accordance with the culinary arrangements of polite society.

Over all the doors which connected the suite of apartments we lived in, were rude paintings of various places, by a native artist, with their names placed below each. There were Naples and Rome, Vesuvius and Etna, London, Paris, Constantinople, and Saint Helena; but as most of these views contained three similar fuzzy trees, a lighthouse, and a sheet of water, or some such equally generic form of landscape, we were constrained to look on names below as more a matter of form than use.

The peasantry of Cánalo were perfectly quiet and well-behaved, and in nowise persecuted us in our drawing excursions. Only a poor harmless idiot followed us wherever we went, sitting below the rock or path we took for our station, and saying, without intermission, "O Inglesini! dateci un granicello — wh——ew!" * the which sentence and whistle accompaniment he repeated all day long. Stern, awful scenes of

* O, little Englishmen, give me a farthing!

Cánalo ! Far, far above, along the pass to the western coast, you could discover diminutive figures threading the winding line among those fearful crags and fragments ! or deep in the ravine, where torrents falling over perpendicular rocks echoed and foamed around, might be perceived parties of the women of Cánalo spreading out linen to dry, themselves like specks on the face of some enormous mass of stone ; or groups of goats, clustered on some bright pinnacle, and sparkling in the yellow sunlight. Cánalo and its rocks are worth a long journey to behold.

August 21.—After dinner at noon, we made our last drawings in this singular place, and bade adieu to the Casa Rosa, with its clean, airy, neat rooms, its painted doors, its gardens, vines, and bee-hives, and its agreeable, kind, and untiringly merry master, old Don Giovanni Rosa. The pleasant and simple hospitality of Cánalo had once more restored us to our former admiration of Calabrian life and its accompaniments, which the little casualties



Edward Lear del. et sculp.

Printed by Hollman & Walter

PASS OF CÁNALO

Edw. Lear del. et sculp. New Burlington Street, London, 1852.

of Gioiosa and Castel Vetere had begun to diminish.

Instead of returning to Agnano, we kept a downward route in the channel of the Novito. Throughout this valley there are interesting scenes of cultivation ; the patch of gran turco or Indian corn, the shelving terraces of olives, and the cottages here and there, covered with luxuriant vine. Once opposite Gerace, we crossed the river, and gradually ascended to the town, which, with its crumbling white rock, is very grand and simple in form from the northward approach.

On arriving at the Palazzo Scaglione all the family were delighted to welcome us back, including little Cicillo and his sister, to whom the sugarplums were a source of high edification ; and it was great sport for us to tell them of all our adventures since we had left them, save that we did not dilate on the facetiæ of the Baron Rivettini. All Gerace was in a fever of preparation for a great Festa, to take place on the following day ; and in the evening P—— and I, with Padre Abbenate and

Don Gaetano Scaglione, inspected the site of the entertainment, which was arranged at the west end of the rock, on the platform by the ruined castle. Here were Zampognari and booths, and dancing and illuminations, all like the days and doings of Tagliacozzo in the fête of 1843,* but on a smaller and more rustic scale. The Sottintendente, Don Antonio Buonafede, was presiding at the preliminary festivities. There was also, as in the Abruzzo, a temporary chapel erected in the open air, highly ornamented, and decked with figures of saints, &c.; but the usual accompaniments of dancing were expected to be rather a failure, as the Bishop of Gerace had published an edict prohibiting the practice of that festive amusement by any of the fairer sex whatever, so that poor Terpsichore was to be represented only by the male gender.

August 22.—We passed all the morning, being left to our own devices by the good

* See "Illustrated Excursion in Italy," Mc Lean.

people of our host's family, in a quiet shade on the great rocks east of Gerace.

Parties from all sides of the country were winding up the sides of the ravine to the festa; but there was little or no costume, the black skirt, worn mantilla-wise after the fashion of the Civita-Castellanese, being the only peculiarity of dress in Gerace.

In the late afternoon we all repaired to the walls of the town to gaze at the procession of the saint's image, followed by the inmates of every one of the monasteries, and by all the ecclesiastics of the place. On the rocky platform, far below Gerace, yet elevated high above the maritime plain, are several convents, and far, far over the terraces of crags, among which they are built, the long line of the procession crept slowly, with attendant bands of music and firing of cannon—a curious scene, and not easy to pourtray. Hence, as evening was closing and the last golden streams of sunset had ceased to gild the merry scene, we came to the castle, where hundreds of peasants were dancing to the music of the Zampognari;

black-hooded women ranged in tiers on the rock-terraces, sate like dark statues against the amber western sky; the gloomy and massive Norman ruins frowned over the misty gulf beneath with gloomier grandeur; the full moon rose high and formed a picturesque contrast with the festa lights, which sparkled on the dark background of the pure heaven; and all combined to create one of those scenes which must ever live in the memory, and can only be formed in imagination, because neither painting nor description can do them justice.

After supper all the Scaglione family wished us a hearty farewell—and may all good betide them! as kind a set of folk as stranger or wayfarer has met anywhere at any time. The days we passed with them will always be recollected with feelings of kindness for their hearty welcome and friendly hospitality. Separated as Gerace is, though the chief town of a district, from the more civilised parts of Italy, its inhabitants marry chiefly among families in the immediate neighbourhood, and very rarely out of the province. Among the richer classes a

few years of youth are passed away at Naples, where the sons attend schools and colleges, and the daughters are educated in nunneries; but after their return to their rocky fortress city, they seldom quit its precincts; and the changes of seasons, as they busy themselves with the agricultural produce of their sea-shore plains, and inland river vales, or the little politics of so narrow a space, alone vary the monotony or calm of Calabrian existence in these days, when mediæval party wars and the romance of brigandage are alike extinct.

CHAPTER XIII.

We leave the Casa Scaglione, and the east side of Calabria Ulteriore Prima.—Ascend the central ridge of mountains.—Come in sight of the Western sea.—Descent to the immense plains of Gioia, Terranova, &c.—Complete change in the character of the scenery.—Dreadful earthquake of 1783.—Descent to Castelnuovo.—Reception of Don Vincenzo Tito.—Character of the environs of Castelnuovo.—Olive-woods.—Plans for to-morrow.—Vast olive-grounds.—Town of San Giorgio.—Costume of its female inhabitants.—Polistena.—Visit to the house of Morani the painter.—Portraits of Sir Walter Scott and of Pio Nono.—Hospitality of Don Vincenzo Tito.—Departure from Castelnuovo.—Road through the olive-woods.—Radicena.—The destroyed town of Terranova.—Immense olive-plains from the mountains to the sea-shore.—We reach Oppido late, and find no friends there.—A disagreeable night's shelter.

August 23.—The domestics, as usual, could not be persuaded to accept anything on our leaving the Casa Scaglione, which we quitted an hour before sunrise. At the early period of our departure, Gerace was as yet undisturbed and still, and our regrets at leaving it were only broken by an unwonted torrent of loquacity on the part of Ciccio, and the burthen of which seemed a song of praise in honour of the

hospitalities and of the festa of the city, and some strong comparisons in disfavour of Gioiosa—Dìghi, dóghi, dà. We were soon ascending the central ridge of the mountains towards the western districts of Southern Calabria. The two coasts are here united by the “Passo del Mercante,” and by the tremendous pass above Cánalo. Addio Gerace! with Rocella and Siderno, Ardore, Bovalino, and all our old friends. The rock and Norman castle were long in sight ere woody hills and chestnut-clothed dells surrounded us on all sides, and shut out the eastern sea.

Our route to the west side of Italy was for a long while by a steep ascent: at its summit there is a broad green plain in the midst of beech-woods,—a calm inner hill-scene, where were cattle and shepherds; as on the higher parts of Monte Gennaro, near Rome, or many an Abruzzo altitude, we had hoped to have reached a spot whence both seas might be visible, but the east side was soon hidden by the highest peaks of Montalto, the loftiest point of the Aspromonte range, below whose

woody crown lay the dark vale of Polsi, and the Hermit home, so cut off from all sympathies with the outer world. At length, the morning breeze and the fresh fern beneath our feet having made our walk truly pleasant, we came in sight of the Gulf of Gioia, and the scene changed to one of beautiful forest-groups of foliage, through which sparkled the soft western sea; descending through which we soon came to the wide tract of cultivated ground stretching from Nicótera to the hill country around Palmi and Bagnara. The heat became oppressive from the sultry scirocco, as we wound downward towards a most extensive and wondrous plain of olive-grounds—a filmy blue foliage occupying the whole wide level. We had come into a new world; no more gray and white rocks, but strange cones and points, and Vesuvian furrows, and volcanic smoothnesses; green tumuli and slopes covered with short brushwood, and everything from hill to sea suggesting something subterranean, not quite as it should be.

The mind instantly reverted to the fatal days

of February, 1783, when one of the most terrible earthquakes on record utterly overwhelmed this beautiful tract of country, and when all this fair western coast of Calabria became one great sepulchre. The following graphic account of that event is extracted from the Hon. Keppel Craven's "Tour through Naples," pp. 274—278 :—

“On the 5th of February, 1783, a day indelibly stamped upon the recollection of every older native of this plain, all the towns and villages situated within its circuit were overthrown by the terrific shock, which extended far into Upper Calabria on one side, and reached to Sicily on the other. * * * * At Castelnuovo every edifice was cast to the earth. * * * * At Terranova one straight street, containing 700 inhabitants, remains in the midst of ruins, which are those of a town of 13,000 souls. * * * * Three particular days, the 5th and 7th of February, and the 28th of March, of the year 1783, are recorded as the periods of the most severe efforts of the convulsion : but six successive weeks from the first

of these dates would perhaps be more correctly assigned to the continued internal fever, marked during that period by not less than a *thousand* distinct shocks: these were neither periodical, nor attended by any particular symptoms in the state of the temperature. The summer of the preceding year had been remarkably hot, and followed by violent and continued rains till the month of January. The winter was rather more severe than usual, as may be inferred by the frost on the night of the 5th and 6th of February. It has been observed, that this month and the following have in these regions been marked by the recurrence of four several earthquakes of more than ordinary violence.

“A thick fog succeeded the spring, and seemed suspended over all Calabria for some months, obscuring its shores from navigators, and only indicating their proximity by its existence, so unusual in these latitudes. It is difficult to imagine a more extraordinary picture than the appearance of this portion of Italy, during the first few months which

followed this awful visitation, by which an extent of territory exceeding 140 miles was more or less laid waste, and which can only be assimilated to the dissolution of the human energies and frame, under the activity of the operation of a violent poison. Here the finest works of nature, and the improvement they had received from the industry of man, were swept away by the same terrible agency which hurled mountains from their bases, and checked rivers in their speed. The convulsion extended from sea to sea, and the wreck throughout was universal. The wretched survivors fled from the few buildings which might have afforded shelter, while they only threatened destruction; and either wandered round the ruins which had overwhelmed the bodies of their friends and relations, or, mutilated and disabled, lay in hopeless apathy among their vineyards and fields, now affording neither fruit nor vegetation. These, as well as the necessaries of life, which the fertility of soil and benignity of climate render so abundant in these provinces, were involved in the general destruction; mills

and magazines were annihilated : the wine and oil which could be saved had suffered such singular and offensive alterations as to render them useless ; and even the water was not drinkable. All domestic animals seemed struck with an instinct of terror, which suspended their faculties ; while even the wilder species were deprived of their native shyness and ferocity. The stillness of the air was remarkable, and contributed to render more appalling the deep-seated thunder which rumbled in the recesses of the earth, and every fresh throe was responded to by the apprehensive lamentations of the human, or the howls and screams of the brute creation.

“An epidemical disorder, produced by the stagnation of the water, the want or bad quality of food, and the exposure to night air, filled the measure of misery up to the very brim, and left the unfortunate victims of such accumulated calamities, no hope but that of a speedy termination of their woes in the apprehended dissolution of the world itself, which they looked upon as awfully impending.”

Far below us was Castelnuovo, one of the towns which have arisen from the scattered remnant of those ruined by that fatal period of devastation and depopulation so well described above, when the whole of the western side of Calabria was so fearfully afflicted. Standing on an elevated site above the plain, this modern and unpicturesque successor to the former city exhibits long streets flanked by low one-storied houses, with bright red-tiled roofs, and in no part of its composition does it offer any loophole for admiration, or capability of artistic picturesqueness. We at length arrived at it after a long descent from the hills, and soon found the house of Don Vincenzo Tito, to whom our letter was addressed. Don Vincenzo, who seemed a wealthy proprietor, with a dwelling full of conveniences, seemed to hesitate as to his reception of us; but after a long scrutiny, and many interrogations, he apparently decided in our favour, and, showing us some good rooms, ordered a dinner for us anew, his own being finished. But the manner of our host was abrupt, restless, and uneasy;

and his frequent questions, as to whether we had heard anything from Reggio, &c. &c., gave me a stronger suspicion than ever that some political movement was about to take place. Although long accustomed to hear that some change of affairs was anticipated in the kingdom of Naples, and equally in the habit of studiously remaining as far as I could in ignorance of all political acts or expressions, I half concluded that now, as often before, the suspicious reserve of Don Vincenzo, and possibly that of Baron Rivettini also, proceeded from some false rumour afloat. Nevertheless, I confess that more than one trifling occurrence in the last two days had increased my feeling that "something is about to happen."

Be this as it might or not, the afternoon passed in wandering around Castelnuovo to obtain some characteristic views of its position, and of the great plain it stands on. This is not easy; studies of tall graceful olives, and Claude-like richness of distance, are innumerable, but the choice among such scenes is difficult. I sate me down by the side of a broad torrent-

bed, and drew one of many landscapes; all perfectly pastoral, calm, and elegant, and essentially different in their outline and expression to the scenes of Eastern Calabria.

Before supper we were penning out our drawings in Don Vincenzo's room, and we seemed to puzzle him much by our professional labours, and obstinate ignorance, real or assumed, of political events. We have adopted this quiet mode of passing the evening hours of late, as a passive refuge from the persecution of continual interrogations; for the interest our sketches awaken in the families where we may chance to be, fully occupies their attention.

We shall devote to-morrow morning to a visit to San Giorgio, which, by a description of its castle, seems worthy of a walk; and we think of making a chance dash at Polistena, one of the numerous villages dotted over the great plain of cultivation, and to me interesting, as being the native place of one of the best Neapolitan painters — Morani — whom, years ago, I had been acquainted with in Rome.

August 24.—By long lanes, through the immensely extensive olive-grounds, and by descents into earthquake-marked ravines, — by crossing torrent-beds, and walking in irrigated gardens, we came in three hours to the foot of the hill of San Giorgio, which is an isolated ridge, running out from the central range of hills, and crowned most magnificently with a town and castle. Among the numerous grand positions of towns in this varied land, San Giorgio may bear an eminent place. Thick foliage clothes the steep sides of its pyramidal hill, and its houses are crowded together on plateaux of rock, or are piled up into spires with a beauty and abundant variety striking even in Calabria. As you rise up to its many entrance-paths, the broad blue plains of Gioia and the glittering sea are peculiarly lovely. The costume of the women is here perhaps the best we have yet seen in Calabria, and the wearers certainly the handsomest; but, excepting the interesting groups of figures, the interior of the town of San Giorgio had but little to repay a visit. We lingered awhile in the Piazza, wandered through



Engraved and Coloured by W. Wall.

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SAN GIORGIO.
London. Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, August 1852

two or three of its streets, and soon decided on bending our steps to an onward route. Descending once more by olive and chestnut shades to the plain, we arrived, by ten, at Polistena, a large town, where riven rocks, a broken bridge, shattered walls, and desolate streets, bore witness to the fatal catastrophe of 1783.*

We easily found the house of Morani's family—"Quel pittore famoso," † as the town's people called him, and entering it, were welcomed by his mother and sisters, who seemed pleased that any stranger should inquire after his dwelling. "These," said two very nice girls, throwing open the door of a small room, "are all the works we possess done by our brother;" little supposing that to an Englishman one of the portraits possessed the highest possible interest. It was a small drawing made from Sir Walter Scott during his visit to Naples; and though neither

* Polistena is represented in Pacichelli's work as a fine city.

† That famous painter.

remarkable for beauty of execution, nor pleasing as a likeness, it was highly interesting as the last record of that great man taken from life. “Si dice questo qui essere uno scrittore famoso,”* said our two hostesses. There, too, was Pio Nono, a sketch just made from nature.

After this visit to Polístena, which a short sojourn at its principal café concluded, we returned to Castelnuovo by half-past twelve, the tall, thin olive-trees casting a grey veil of filmy shade over our path all the way thither: “Tirate, tirate, mangiate sempre,”† said old Don Vincenzo Tito, at our hospitable meal; but on my asking for a letter of introduction to Palmi, he drew back, and abruptly declined, “Là c’è locanda,”‡ said he, which refusal, so different to the way in which the Abruzzesi used to say—“Go to our cousin this, or uncle that, but *not* to a locanda;” or, “Che disgrazia, andare in una locanda! Non ci saranno de’

* They say that this was a famous author.

† Work away—eat always.

‡ There is an inn there.

parenti nostri in quel paese forse ?”* rather revived my suspicions.

At nineteen o'clock we left Castelnuovo, with the intention of sleeping at Oppido, a town also on the plain, and the native place of Donna Rosina Scaglione's family. A delightful road through never-ending olives, with wondrous glimpses of a perfect sea of foliage, down to the Gulf of Gioia, brought us in two hours to Radicéna; everybody we met offering us grapes, peaches, and pears, with the good-natured profusion usual among these people. You see little of the towns in this great plain until you arrive at them: they are composed mostly of low and scattered houses, placed on eminences in the heart of deep ravines or hollows—like San Vittorino, Pratica, Gallicano or Galera, in the Campagna di Roma. Few buildings of more than a single story in height having been raised since 1783—and these are well-nigh hidden by cultivation; but albeit there is little strikingly or individually picturesque

* What! go to an inn? Are there then none of our relations in that town?

to be found, the whole aspect of the country, which slopes gradually to the sea, is one of rich, though monotonous beauty. At twenty-two o'clock, after passing many immense ravines and undulating earthquake-traces, where fern, and all kinds of vegetation grow most luxuriantly, we ascended to Terranova, once the largest town of this district, but utterly destroyed by the fearful event of 1783. The old city is altogether overwhelmed and buried in chasms, and below crags and dells, and its successor is a single straggling street of lowly dwellings of most melancholy appearance. All the surface of the neighbourhood seems changed and destroyed. But there were yet above three hours' walk to Oppido,* so we still went on over that wondrous plain, with peeps of waves of foliage—now like a sea of bronze in the setting sun, which gilded this extraordinary olive-garden. Then rose the full round moon, and all the scene became

* Oppido is represented as a large walled city in Pacichelli's work; and is spoken of as a bishopric, and a large and important place by Marafioti.

The latter author describes Terranova as the greatest and most flourishing city of all that plain.

one of gray filmy light and shade, the long stems of the olive making a net-work of shadow on the deep dusty roads. At Avemaria, we passed another village (Mesigné) and later yet, Trisilico—hamlets faintly seen among the tremulous moonlit olives. We were well tired by the time we reached Oppido, which had the appearance of a large and tolerably well-built town; nor were we sorry to stand at the door of the house where we hoped to be entertained, but alas! Don Pasquale Zerbi, its owner, was away, and all his palazzo shut up for repairs! Our only hope and help, therefore, was in a most wretched locanda—a very horrid den: at its door we sat, and prolonged our supper of eggs till late: but the numbers of formidable vermin were so great and distressing in the sleeping apartments, that we could not contemplate the animated beds without a shudder; whereon we sat up and waited till daybreak, as best we might.

CHAPTER XIV.

Olive woods on the way to Gioia.—Fiumara, or River Marro.—Burning heat.—Rice-grounds.—Melon-gardens and elevated look-out houses.—Malaria.—King-fishers.—Wearisome walk.—Arrival at Gioia.—Its character for very bad air and deadly fevers.—We set off towards Palmi.—High-road travelling in Calabria.—Approach to the city of Palmi.—View of the Lipari Isles.—The angry landlady and the good inn.—Breakfast.—Beautiful situation of Palmi.—We send Ciccio to Bagnara by the road, and go ourselves by sea.—Fine coast scenery.—Beautiful position of Bagnara.—Carriage-road to Scilla.—Its position.—Its rocks and castle.—Opinion of Calabrians of our drawing.—Boat to the rock of Scilla.—Squabble with the innkeeper.—We leave the town: halt at Villa San Giovanni.—Retrospective glance on our thirty days' tour, and plans for the future.—We reach Reggio once more.—Consigliere da Nava.

August 25.—Once more on the road—hoping to repose to-night at Palmi! and the infallible Ciccio, never yet put out by changes or chances, advises us to go hence directly to Gioia, on the sea-shore, and from that place to Palmi, by the carriage-road, instead of lengthening the journey by passing through Seminara. So, from Oppido we walked on, always downward toward the sea, and ever through interminable olive-woods—

high, gray, filmy, feathery olives, with twisted mossy trunks. But the pleasant freshness of early morn soon ceased ; and when we left the last flock of goats below the last great oak-tree on the red clay banks of a huge white watercourse, we had no prospect but that of burning heat, ever increasing through the shadeless journey to Gioia. Gioia, forsooth ! Noia it should be called ; for the whole of the lower part of its great plain is celebrated for the most deadly malaria ; so that although the Scala, or port of Gioia, is the centre of business for all the produce—oil and olives—of the whole of this wide and fertile tract, yet, after early May, it is not habitable, and in July or August to sleep there is almost with the certain consequence of fever.

Lower down, towards the gulf, our route in the fiumara of the river Marro became disagreeable to the greatest degree—there were not even oleanders to vary its monotony ; extensive rice-grounds, irrigated and irritating, were stretched on either side, and to these succeeded immense fields of melons, placed among which were many lofty stands here and there, made of

boughs, and roofed with dry foliage, in which aerial boxes dwelled the melon-growers, enjoying a bird's-eye view of their property. This mode of protecting vineyards and other produce is frequent also throughout Sicily, and its details always abound in picturesque characteristics; —the bronzed faces of two or three children projecting from their airy home—the scattered clothes or household utensils below—the clustering goats beneath the shade of the lofty chamber—or a thousand other accidents, all conspire to form pictures. The heat of the day grew most intense, and the passage through stagnant sheets of water or mud, and over dry, burning, white stones, was most weary. Now and then we saw large herds of black swine, of that race whose proportions are so highly esteemed — wallowing in the dull pools of the river, or tended by half-naked children on the borders of the rice-grounds, but unless by these encounters, or by the glittering flight of a bright kingfisher, our walk was unvaried by any incident. We passed and repassed the stream, till we were fairly disgusted; a

thick heavy atmosphere, a sentiment of solid disease and heat, seemed to brood over all things, and we were extremely glad of even the little shade afforded us by the shelter of one of the melon-growers' towers, a two-storied leafy hut, round whose base melons were piled in prodigious quantities. Here we reposed, if that might be called repose which consisted of sitting on a heap of Indian corn leaves, in the very small space to which the sun's rays did not penetrate, and in disputing with hungry pigs the right to lunch on one of their master's melloni d'acqua. At length, on resuming our walk, little undulating heights covered with bosky oak and thick underwood, betokened that we were leaving this unpropitious region, and approaching the vicinity of the high road from Naples to Reggio; and, crossing this, we were soon within the limits of pestiferous Gioia,* a mere village, consisting of some large warehouses, and a huge osteria, which stands close to the sea-shore.

* Gioia is described by Alberti as possessing a plain most abundant and fruitful in character. Site of Metaurus (Paicicelli, Cramer, &c.) The river Metaurus is the modern Marro.

In this public resort, a tenement containing two huge rooms, mostly filled with the oily, but by no means odoriferous, produce of the neighbourhood, we sought food and rest, though our prospect of the latter was small; for the wary Ciccio said, ever and anon, “Se dormite, siete morti, d'ighi dóghi dà!”* and if we ever closed our eyes for a moment, all the people of the osteria shrieked out with one voice, “O santo cielo! svegliate vi! svegliate vi!”† Gioia is, indeed, one of the most mournful of places; for, although the trade carried on from it in oil is very considerable, and numerous workmen are transporting barrels, &c., on every side, these are all people of the adjacent city of Palmi, who come hither at morn and return home at night. There is no drinkable water in the place; and the few poor wretches who are left in charge of the warehouses are melancholy and horrible objects—malaria-fever being written on every line of their face and form. Here were on every side the emaciated

* If you sleep, you are dead men!

† O heavens! wake up!

limbs, the skin contracted closely to the bones of the face, the yellow complexion, the swollen stomach, the harsh and grating voice—all unerring signs of the nature of the air in such localities, and too easily recognised by long sojourners in the marshes or Campagna of the Roman States.

Hot as was the afternoon, we considered that any extremity of discomfort might be a relief to that we were suffering; wherefore, with the fear of fever before our eyes, we preferred to set off as early as we could along the burning high road towards Palmi. How undeniable is the simplicity of those who think they have “done” Calabria, by travelling in a carriage from Naples to Reggio! All the beautiful incidents of pastoral or mountain life, all the romance of a wandering artist’s existence, is carefully banished from your high-road tourist’s journey; and the best he can boast of is an extended view from some elevated point of road. We looked back with fond regret to the mountains of Aspromonte, or to the shady paths in the groves of the upper plain of Gioia, and

voted all highways eminent nuisances and vulgarities.

Leaving a road to Seminara on the right, we toiled up the hill of Palmi, and long before arriving there, the burning sun and white dusty "via carrozzabile" had thoroughly wearied us. Dreary walls by the road-side, enclosing gardens of villa or casino, foretold our near approach to the city; and these, in the absence of shade, were our only consolation, except that in one open warehouse we were treated to a draught of refreshing water. Palmi is one of the three sottintendenze of the province, and is placed on the high cliffs of its western coast, immediately opposite the Lipari Isles, which, in shape somewhat like a row of inverted cups and saucers, here adorn the horizon. Suburban residences surround the city to a considerable extent, but the views from it are rather remarkable for the great distance they embrace, than for possessing any first-class landscape qualities. Eastward, high cliffs overhang the town; northward, the endless plain of Gioia stretches far away; and southward, Scilla and part of

Mongibello occupy the picture, with the blue sea, Stromboli and its satellites, to the west. Palmi bears in its first aspect the character of a neat, clean, and bustling place—indeed, we find we are at once and plainly come to the end of Calabrian romance and interest, and had we not been heartily wearied by our walk we might probably have regretted that we had not chosen the road hither by Seminara, where at least there were woods which in former days were among the most celebrated in the province as the haunt of robbers.

We went to a locanda which had been named to us by some one on the road, but in going thither old Ciccio twice shook his head, and said “Non credo *—dìghi dóghi dà,” wherefrom we did not augur any great success in our search. When we arrived at the bottom of the scala or staircase, all the upper part of it was filled up by the most Brobdignagian of living landladies: moreover, this enormous woman was peculiarly hideous, and clad in the slightest and most extraordinary of simple costumes:

* I doubt.

true, the thermometer was at the highest, and the lady might be suffering from the great heat; but the apparition of her dishabille and globe-like form was so remarkable, that we paused at the threshold of so formidable a hostess—the rather that she had evidently been sacrificing earnestly to Bacchus, and was as unsteady on her feet as clamorous with her tongue. “Let us try some other locanda,” said we to each other, and were turning away, when the monster landlady shouted out—“O, figli miei! venite, venite;”^{*} but seeing that her invitation made no impression—“Andatevi al diavolo nero,”[†] quoth she, accompanying her words with a yell, and an abrupt ejection of a large broom from her right hand down the staircase, so that we fairly fled without further discussion, and followed the silent but grinning Ciccio to another locanda, called “Il Plutino,” and situated in the chief piazza of the town. Here was everything in very tolerable order, and no southern Italian provincial inn can boast of

* O, my sons, come in, come in.

† Go to the black devil.

better accommodations. In the evening we explored the town—a bustling and active scene, and contrasting strongly with many of our late homes. The solid wheeled cars used here to transport goods, and drawn by cattle, struck us as peculiarly picturesque. Of costume in dress there is little enough.

August 26.—After the unheard-of Calabrian luxury of a real breakfast, we drew in the piazza near the sea. At this spot is one of the views on which those few travellers who pass from Reggio to Naples by land are accustomed to bestow enthusiastic praise; nor is it unworthy of its reputation. A flat promenade or platform, half surrounded by seats, and a balustrade, the resort of the evening idlers of Palmi, is terminated at one end by the clustering churches and other buildings of the town; and at the other, sinks down into the blue sea, a perpendicular cactus-clothed precipice. Immediately above the town frowns a bluff point, the sides of which also shelve downward, and are lost in a world of olive and orange groves, a feathery

palm-tree peering here and there over the little houses embosomed in the luxuriant foliage. Beyond is spread a wide expanse of sea, with the single town of Scilla sparkling at the foot of its cliff, while pale Etna, with its snowy point, closes this most beautiful prospect. Many are the pretty bits of landscape around this charming spot—gray rocks and olives or gay gardens, with the town of Bagnara seen afar between the graceful branches of the trees.

At mid-day, the bill of the "Hotel" was by no means so unexceptionable as the dinner and style of the accommodation, and it was not without much dispute and combat that we succeeded in paying one-seventh of the sum asked, but which seventh was more than a sufficient remuneration.

Sending Ciccio with the horse and baggage by the road, we descended to the Scala, and embarked in a boat for Bagnara, which, placed on a peninsular rock, projects grandly into the water beyond the Bay of Palmi. The cliffs are infinitely majestic between the two towns—



Engraved by F. Wallis

P. A. J. M. I.

London: Printed by Foulley, New Broad Street, August 1845.

Engraved by F. Wallis

descending in sheer and perpendicular crags to the sea, and were it not for the absence of buildings, the coast would have often reminded me of that of Amalfi, or of Positano ; as far as the motion of a boat in a very rough swell would allow me to observe them, I enjoyed these scenes extremely, but I was glad to approach the shore once more. On the north side of the rock of Bagnara we landed, glad once again to welcome our old friends the aloes and cactus, which ever love to adorn the rocky coast or beetling crag ; they affect but little the smooth plains of Gioia, the olive-ground and orange-garden, nor does the stately aloe thrive among the colder mountain-heights, though the Indian fig was common, albeit not in its own full luxuriance, even on the crags of Cánalo. Bagnara rises from the water's edge in an amphitheatre of buildings, crowned by a high rock which is joined to the mountain above by a castle and aqueduct,* and is assuredly one of the most imposing and stately towns in

* At Bagnara, Marapóti speaks of having seen considerable remains of ancient baths.

appearance which we have yet seen. The arches of the aqueduct span a chasm in the rock-peninsula on which it stands, and while a castle adorns the seaward portion, the land-cliffs are studded with a glittering row of buildings, many of which nestle down to the very shore below the torn and cracked ravines into which the precipices are shivered. A smooth half-moon of sand extends at the foot of the rocks, and gives a calm and pleasant air to the whole picture.

We wound up the path which leads to the upper town, and passing through the arches of the viaduct (for it serves for a road as well as to transport water) were even more delighted by the sight of the southern side than we had been with the northern. Bagnara from this point of view is wonderfully striking, and few coast scenes of Western Calabria can rival it.

It grew late ere we finished sketching, and a courteous priest directed us to a good inn, where we found Ciccio arrived before us.

August 27.—We had no squabble with the



Printed by Hollishead & Walton.

BAGINARA
Engraved by Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, August, 1852.

Edward Lear, del et lith.

host of our very comfortable and quiet locanda here: few people ever stop at Bagnara, so the world is less acquainted with the modes of high-road depredation. There is a good carriage route all along the coast, which decided us on sending Dìghi-dóghi-dá to Scilla, and we loitered forward, making drawings as we proceeded, until we reached that town about noon, and found (so much for "roughing it" on this side of Calabria) another very clean inn by the sea-side, just beyond a most picturesque rock and castle.

Scilla is one of the most striking bits of coast scenery, its white buildings and massive castled crag standing out in noble relief against the dark blue waves—while the Lipari Isles and Stromboli, with the Faro of Messina, form a beautiful background. But beyond the general appearance of the place, which from all points of view is very imposing, there is but little to note down. No hospitalities, no family incidents, fill up the wandering landscape painter's journal when he leaves the more unfrequented regions of mountain scenery, for

plain and civilised highways ; and although old Alberti says that Scilla "hath a rock shaped like a man, surrounded by caves, emitting howls of wolves and screams of other beasts," we could not perceive even that degree of romance in our researches.* Exploring and drawing Scilla occupied the whole day ; but at the close of it, in spite of the favourable appearance of our locanda, we could get nothing to eat but a very antique fowl, which baffled knives and forks, and we anticipated from such bad fare, and from the landlord's continual compliments, that the charges would be proportionally heavy.

August 28.—A throng of numerous observers crowded round us while drawing the castle

* On the 5th of February, 1783, Scilla, in common with all the other towns on this coast, was nearly wholly overthrown at night. The aged Prince of Scilla, with 4000 of the inhabitants, had remained on the sands of the little bay on the south side of the promontory on which the castle stood, and awaited the return of daylight in terror and suspense. Before midnight, a recurrence of shocks ensued, and vast portions of the mountains above Scilla were thrown into the Straits. One huge wave, resulting from these convulsions, swept over the strand of the bay, and engulfed in one moment the whole 4000 human beings.



Edward Lear, del. et lith

SCYLLA.
London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, August 1852

this morning: "questi," said an old man as we were thus busily employed, "questi sono tutti persone scelte dal governo loro per raccogliere notizie del Regno nostro," *—a conceit universally ridiculed by Englishmen, but not quite so absurd as it may seem, if we reflect that the conquest of many countries by others has been preceded by individual observation and research.

In the course of the morning we took a boat to the rocks of Scilla, and very magnificent did they appear, rising above the boiling current of dark blue foamy water. But it was too rough for so bad a sailor as I am to allow of making any drawings, so we returned to our inn, where, on our departure ere noon, a great conflict was occasioned by the "conto,"—twelve ducats being demanded for what we gradually reduced to two ere we left Scilla, and great was the outcry of feminine shrieks, and masculine maledizioni, which followed us long after we left the place.

* These are all persons chosen by their government to gather notices of our country.

As we neared Villa San Giovanni and were opposite to the well-known coast of the Faro, we seemed, as it were, at home, and talked over our thirty days' tour in Calabria with many pleasant memories, arranging also how we should execute the exploring of the remaining two provinces; one thing was certain — Dìghi-dóghi-dá was such a capital old fellow, he must be our guide to the end of the journey.

As yet we seemed but to have trodden on the threshold of Calabrian fastnesses; the narrow neck of land between two seas of the province of Catanzaro, the dense and fearful forests of the Sila, the pointed hats of Cosenza, and the rich Greek costumes of Calabria Citeriore, were all as yet unseen, and we looked forward to our return to the truly wild and romantic with enthusiasm and impatience.

At Villa San Giovanni, which is the centre of a knot of scattered villages covering that part of the Calabrian coast opposite to the Faro, we found a good locanda, and halted for midday rest, as well as for maccaroni, occhiali,

which are a very good fish, molignani, as good a vegetable, and Lipari wine.

At four we again set out, through long lanes between villas and large silk factories, (the atmosphere reminding us of the silkworm days of Staíti), and a little while after Ave Maria, by a road—now

“Silent in its dusty vines,”

we reached Reggio once more, which, with its lamps here and there, its broad streets, and its numerous inhabitants, seemed to us a sort of Paris in bustle and splendour, after such places as Cánalo and Gerace.

We again settled ourselves in the Locanda Giordano, and closed our day by a call on Consigliere da Nava, to thank him for the letters by which he had so ably and good-naturedly assisted us throughout our journey. Had we not indeed been furnished with these introductions, much of the interest, and nearly all the comfort, of our tour would have been denied us, and the recollections of Southern Calabria would have been far other than those we now enjoyed.

CHAPTER XV.

Arrangements.—Ciccio and his pay.—Plan to see some fine forests near Reggio to-morrow; and to visit Pentadatilo before starting for the other Calabrian provinces.—Morning calls at Reggio.—Set out to Gallicó.—Ciccio's house.—The village of Calanna.—Fine views of the Straits of Messina, and Etna.—We find no fine trees on the hills of Basilicò, and return late to Reggio.—We cross to Messina, and I return to Reggio alone.—I set off by the road to Mélito, and reach that town by Ave-Maria.—Wonderful views of the crags and town of Pentadatilo.—The discomforts of the house of Don P. Tropæa.—Agitation and distress of his family.—The supper.—Revelations of revolution.—Announcement of disturbances.—The supper party breaks up.—The bed-room.—The midnight adventure.—I leave Mélito.—Ciccio's foreboding silence.—The River Alice.—Amazing views of Pentadatilo—its ravine and rocks—its strange form.—I ascend to the town; surprise and alarm of its inhabitants.—Proceed to Montebello.—Indian figs.—The revolution and its shadows.—“The Pentadatilo Tragedy,” a tale of horrors.—Ascent to Motta S. Giovanni—and return to Reggio.—Commencement of the revolutionary movements of 1847-8.—Appearance of Reggio.—Absurd waiter at Giordano's hotel.—Interview with Consigliere da Nava.—Explanation of various doubts and circumstances throughout our tour.—Processions of the insurgents, &c.—An anxious morning.—I escape from Reggio, and reach Messina.—P — and I embark for Naples in a Malta steamer.—Farewell to Calabria Ulteriore Prima!

August 29.—A day of arrangements for past and future. Ciccio received his thirty-one dollars and a half, with four more as Buona-

mano ;* whereon the ancient guide burst into tears, and said he should have thought it quite enough to have worked for such nice people as we two for his stipulated pay only : he moreover declared that we appeared to him in the light of sons and nephews, and that he would live or die for us, as, how, and when we pleased. Dìghi-dóghi-dà was indeed a most meritorious fellow.

To-morrow, having one spare day, we agree to go to Melanicò, where there are said to be fine forests, and after that the programme for the next five days is as follows : we cross to Messina, and while P—— remains there for three days, I intend to return here and go to Capo d'Armi and Penteditilo ; after which I then rejoin my friend at Reggio on the 4th of September so as to start on the 5th for Monteleone, commencing thence our *giro* in Calabria Ulteriore II.

Visits to Reggio acquaintances occupied greater part of this day : in the evening we

* Extra money given in token of satisfactory service.

took part in the usual carriage-drive along the Marina and high street of Reggio—a mode of passing two hours, and of seeing the neighbours or strangers as much in use in the capital of Calabria Ulteriore II., as in the Chiaja of Naples, the Corso of Rome, or Hyde Park.

August 30.—We set out for our day's expedition to the hills of Basilicò at early dawn, and retraced our steps along the high road to Naples, nearly as far as Gallicò, a village which stands at the foot of the mountains, and is exquisitely picturesque, owing to its wide streets being entirely webbed and arched over with a network of pergolate. Here, as it was Ciccio's native village, we paid a visit to his cottage, where his wife and family gave us heaps of fine figs and grapes, and did all they could to welcome us in their way.

Toiling up a *fumara* we ascended hence to Calanna, a castellated village, placed in a grand rocky pass; after making a drawing of which, we continued to ascend the hills—looking back on ever-widening views of the Straits and

Etna, and forwards towards the heights of Basilicò, on the hills of Aspromonte. But the forests which all the world of Reggio talked of were little worth looking at; those who had described them to us had never seen either Polsi, or Pietrapennata; and we were sadly disappointed with the result of our exertions. At length we reached some few men who were at work at the "Sega," or sawpits, placed on the highest part of the mountain; these laughed at our questions about "large oak trees," and grinned incredulously with odd signs which we could not make out. "Oak trees are all bosh," said they, "and you know that as well as we; but as for the men you seek we assure you they are *not* here: but we do not say they are not at Santo Stefano, that village you see below. In vain we said we sought no persons. "You are wise to keep your own counsel," was the reply. So again we saw there was some mystery we could not unravel. Therefore, voting the mountain of Basilicò an imposture, we left it, and came straight down to Reggio. Possibly, after all, we had not gone

high enough up in the hills to discover the gigantic oaks. We returned by a different route, and before we reached Reggio it was dark.

August 31.—We crossed to Messina, paying twelve carlini for a boat, which we took for ourselves. In the fine old cathedral, and in the exquisite views from the higher parts of the city, there is sufficient amusement for travellers, and we, besides, had colours, paper, and wandering-artist conveniences of all kinds to look after.

September 1.—For three carlini I recrossed the Straits in one of the public boats, leaving P—— at Messina to join me at Reggio on the 4th. A fair wind soon placed me on the Calabrian shore, where I found the faithful Ciccio awaiting me with welcome, and a considerable piece of eloquence ending with *Dìghi-dòghi-dà* as usual.

By one o'clock all was in readiness for starting, my passport, as well as a letter from *Consigliere da Nava* to a proprietor in Melito,

where I am to sleep to-night for the purpose of visiting Penteditilo, that strange rock-town which we had seen from Bova, and which at all risks I had resolved to examine. So I set off in a *caratella*, for three ducats, all by the dusty pergola-covered high-road of July 29; the views of Etna increasing in magnificence as I approached Capo dell' Armi, to the extreme point of which a *strada carrozzabile* is carried, and where I found Ciccio and his horse already arrived. Leaving the carriage we then struck inland, as the sun was getting low, by mule-routes crossing the frequent fumaras here joining the sea. On advancing, the views of the wondrous crags of Penteditilo become astonishingly fine and wild, and as the sun set in crimson glory, displayed a truly magnificent and magical scene of romance—the vast mass of pinnacled rock rearing itself alone above its neighbour hills, and forming a landscape which is the beau-ideal of the terrible in Calabrian scenery. On the sea-shore, a few miles below Penteditilo, stands Mélito, a large town, the most southerly in all Italy, and ere we

reached it, we arrived at the house of D. Pietro Tropæa, in the outskirts, whose residence is a kind of ill-kept villa ; for albeit Don Pietro gave me a most friendly welcome, it is not to be disguised that his casino was of the dirtiest ; and when I contemplated the ten dogs and a very unpleasant huge tame sheep, which animated his rooms, I congratulated myself that I was not to abide long with them.

Moreover, it appeared to me that some evil, general or particular, was brooding over the household, which consisted of a wife, haggard and dirty in appearance, and agitated in a very painful degree ; an only son, wild and terrified in every look ; and a brother and nephew from Montebello, strange, gloomy, and mysterious in aspect and manner. The host also apologised for being ill at ease and unwell. The singular uneasiness of the whole party increased presently at the sound of two or three guns being fired, and Donna Lucia Tropæa, bursting into tears, left the room with all the family but Don Pietro, who became more and more incoherent and flurried, im-

parting the most astounding revelations relative to his lady and her situation, which he declared made all his family and himself most afflicted and nervous.

These excuses for so remarkable a derangement as I observed in the manner of all the individuals of the family did not deceive me, and I once more suspected, more strongly than ever, that "something was to be foreseen." This feeling was confirmed at supper-time when the assembled circle seemed to have agreed among themselves that it was impossible to conceal their alarm, and a rapid succession of questions was put to me as to what I knew of political changes about to take place immediately. "Had I heard nothing? Nothing? Not even at Reggio?" "Indeed I had not." "Ma che! it was folly to pretend ignorance; I must be aware that the country was on the very eve of a general revolution!" It was useless to protest, and I perceived that a sullen ill-will was the only feeling prevalent towards me from persons who seemed positive that I would give no information on a subject they

persisted in declaring I fully understood. So I remained silent, when another brother from Montebello was suddenly announced, and after a few whispers a scene of alarm and horror ensued.

“È già principiata la rivoluzione!” * shrieked aloud Don Pietro; sobs and groans and clamour followed, and the moaning hostess, after weeping frantically, fell into a violent fit, and was carried out, the party breaking up in the most admired disorder, after a display, at least so it appeared to me, of feelings in which fear and dismay greatly predominated over hope or boldness.

As for me, revolution or no revolution, here I am in the toe of Italy all alone, and I must find my way out of it as best I may; so, wrapping myself in my plaid, and extinguishing the light, I lay down in the front room on the bed allotted me, whose exterior was not indicative of cleanliness or rest.

Hardly was I forgetting the supper scene in

* The Revolution has already begun.

sleep, when a singular noise awoke me. After all, thought I, I am to encounter some real Calabrian romance, and as I sate up and listened the mysterious noise was again repeated. It proceeded from under my bed, and resembled a hideous gurgling sob four or five times reiterated. Feeling certain that I was not alone, I softly put out my hand for that never-to-be-omitted night companion in travelling—a phosphorus box, when before I could reach it my bed was suddenly lifted up by some incomprehensible agency below, and puffing and sobs, mingled with a tiny tinkling sound, accompanied this Calabrian mystery. There was no time to be lost, and having persevered in obtaining a light in spite of this disagreeable interruption, I jumped off the bed, and with a stick thrust hastily and hardly below the bed, to put the intruder, ghostly or bodily, on to fair fighting ground, — Baa—aa—a!—

Shade of Mrs. Radcliffe ! it was the large dirty tame sheep ! So I forthwith opened a door into the next room, and bolted out the domestic tormentor.

September 2.—None of the Tropæa family were moving when I started at sunrise. A letter to a proprietor of Montebello, where mid-day must be passed, was sent to me, with apologies for the non-appearance of the household. “What is the meaning of this?” said I to Ciccio; but nothing could be extracted from that Phoenix of Muleteers but a clucking sort of glossal ejaculation; nevertheless, he seemed anxious and gloomy.

Off we set; our route followed a tiresome and tortuous road in the bed of the Alice, and then became a rugged path crossing to the Fiume della Monaca ere Pentedatilo was visible; for this strange town is so placed, that although seen from all the country round, you may pass close to it without being aware of its proximity. The ravine in which the river flows is crowded and blocked up with crags to the south of the great rock on which the town is built; so that it is necessary to cross to the western side of the stream, and ascend the heights which enclose it before finally re-crossing it, in order to reach the remarkable



Edward Lear, del et lith.

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PENTEDÁTILO.

London · Richard Bentley New Burlington Street, August 1852.

crag itself. But having gained the high ground opposite, the appearance of Penteditilo is perfectly magical, and repays whatever trouble the effort to reach it may so far have cost. Wild spires of stone shoot up into the air, barren and clearly defined, in the form (as its name implies) of a gigantic hand against the sky, and in the crevices and holes of this fearfully savage pyramid the houses of Penteditilo are wedged, while darkness and terror brood over all the abyss around this, the strangest of human abodes. Again, a descent to the river, and all traces of the place are gone; and it is not till after repassing the stream, and performing a weary climb on the farther side, that the stupendous and amazing precipice is reached; the habitations on its surface now consist of little more than a small village, though the remains of a large castle and extensive ruins of buildings are marks of Penteditilo having once seen better days.

I had left Ciccio and the horse below at the stream, and I regretted having done so, when, as I sat making a drawing of the town, the

whole population bristled on wall and window, and the few women who passed me on their way to the hanging vineyards, which fringe the cliffs low down by the edge of the river, screamed aloud on seeing me, and rushed back to their rocky fastnesses. As it is hardly possible to make these people understand ordinary Italian, a stranger might, if alone, be awkwardly situated in the event of any misunderstanding. Had the Pentedatellini thought fit to roll stones on the intruder, his fate must have been hard; but they seemed filled with fear alone. I left this wonderful place with no little regret, and rejoining Ciccio, soon lost sight of Pentedatilo, pursuing my way up the stream, or bed, of the Monaca, which is here very narrow and winding, and so shut in between high cliffs, that in winter-time the torrent prevents all access from this quarter. Higher up in the ravine stands the village of Montebello; its district is famous in Calabria for the excellence of its cactus, or Indian fig, all the rocks of the neighbourhood being covered with a thick coating of that strange vegetable.

The town is situated high above the river, on a square rock, perpendicular on three sides, amid wide ruins of walls and houses, betokening former times of prosperity. In the centre of this wretched little place is the house of Don Pietro Amazichi, who, though receiving me with every kindness and hospitality, was as much agitated as my acquaintances at Mélito. It seems evident that coming events are casting rapidly deepening shadows, and in vain again do I try to persuade my hosts that I am not in the secret. "It is *impossible*," they said; "you only left Reggio yesterday, it is true; but it is certain that the revolution broke out last night, and everyone has known for days past what would happen." On which there was another scene. The lady of Montebello, less feeble than she of Mélito, gave way to the deepest affliction; her exclamation of "My sons! my two sons! I have parted from them for ever in this world!" I shall not easily forget; and the husband strove to comfort her with such deep feeling, that I became truly grieved for these poor people,

ignorant though I was actually of pending circumstances.

About two, Don Pietro accompanied me to the foot of the rock, and for some distance up the dreary fiumara; meanwhile he illustrated the history of Montebello and Pentedatilo by a tale-tragedy of the early ages of these towns, when their territories were governed respectively, the first by a Baron and the second by a Marquis.

For centuries the families of these two feudal possessors of the towns of Pentedatilo and Montebello had been deadly foes, and they ruled, or fought for, the adjoining country from their strongholds in persevering enmity. The Baron of Montebello, a daring and ferocious youth, was left heir in early life to his ancestral estates and rights, and fell in love with the only daughter of the Marchese Pentedatilo; but, although the young lady had contrived to acquaint her lover that her heart was his, her hand was steadfastly denied him by the Marchese, whom the memory of long injuries and

wars hardened in his refusal. Opposition, however, did but increase the attachment of the young lady, and she at length consented to leave her father's house with her lover; an arrangement being made that on a certain night she should open a door in the otherwise impenetrable rock-fortress of Pentedatilo, and admit young Montebello with a sufficient force of his retainers to ensure the success of her elopement.

The Baron accordingly enters the castle, but finding that equal opportunity is presented him for vengeance on his feudal enemy, and for possessing himself of the object of his attachment, he resolves to make the most of both; he goes first to the chamber of the Marchese of Pentedatilo, and finds him sleeping by the side of the Marchesa, with a dagger at his pillow's head. Him he stabs, yet not so fatally as to prevent his placing his left hand on the wound, and with his right seizing his stiletto, and plunging it into the heart of the innocent Marchesa, suspecting her as the author of his death. The Baron Montebello

repeating his blows, the Marchese falls forward on the wall, and his five blood-stained fingers leave traces, still shown, on part of the ruined hall, — a horrible memorial of the crime, strangely coincident with that of the form and name of the rock.

Immediately on the consummation of this double tragedy, the active young Baron Montebello carried off the young lady, his retainers having put all the family of the Marchese to death, except one infant grandchild, whom a nurse saved by concealing him in a crevice of the rocks ; the castle was then dismantled, and the lady became Baroness of Montebello. But she never spoke more ; the horror of having been indirectly the destruction of her whole race occasioned her to become insane, and she poisoned herself within a month of her departure from her native town.

In process of time, the child saved by the nurse grew up, and was introduced as a page into the Montebello family, the Baron having re-married, and being now the undisputed possessor of both territories as far as the sea ;

but, after many years of life, the wretched man became wild with remorse for his past iniquities, and made over all his possessions to the Church, provided only no living descendant of the Pentedatili could be found, a decent proviso, apparently made without any risk. When lo ! the nurse and a small number of the old Marchese's friends proved, beyond any doubt, that the page was heir to the estates and revenge of his ancestors ! And here you might suppose the story ended. Not at all. The Baron's hatred returned on finding there was really something on which to exercise it, and he ordered the torture and execution of young Pentedatilo forthwith. But now the tables were turned ; the Baron's long reign of wickedness lent weapons to his adversary's cause, and, in his turn, the last scion of the murdered Marchese became a tyrant. Forthwith the whole family of the Baron Montebello were destroyed before their parents' eyes, and he himself then blinded by order of the avenger, and chained for the rest of his days in the very room where he had slain the grandsire

Pentedatilo. Finally, as if it were ordered that the actors in such a wholesale domestic tragedy were unfit to remain on earth, the castle of Pentedatilo fell by the shock of an earthquake, crushing together the Baron and Marchese, with the nurse, and every other agent in this Calabrian horror!

After we had reached Fossati, ever by the tiresome *fiumara*—weary sad haunts are these for man to dwell among!—our route followed the hill we had descended on July 30, and passing to the right of Motta San Giovanni, turned towards the coast below San Nocito, one of the most picturesque of ruined fortresses. Hence the way was long and tedious to Reggio, the more that I was impatient to know what was really occurring, since Ciccio's philosophy was less and less proof to the task of concealing his agitation, which for one so usually tranquil was remarkable.

At the hour of one in the night we reached Reggio, and here the secret divulged itself at once.

How strange was that scene ! All the quiet town was brilliantly lighted up, and every house illuminated ; no women or children were visible, but troops of men, by twenties and thirties, all armed, and preceded by bands of music and banners inscribed, “ Viva Pio IX.,” or “ Viva la Costituzione,” were parading the high street from end to end.

“ Cosa x'è stata,* Ciccio ? ” said I.

“ O non vedete,” said the unhappy muleteer, with a suppressed groan. “ O non vedete ? è una rivoluzione ! Díghi, dóghi, dà ! ”

No one took the least notice of us as we passed along, and we soon arrived at Giordano's Hotel. The doors were barred, nor could I readily gain admittance ; at length the waiter appeared, but he was uproariously drunk.

“ Is Signor P—— arrived by the boat from Messina ? ” said I.

“ O che barca ! O che Messina ! O che bella rivoluzione ! Ai ! ao ! Orra birra burra—ba ! ” was the reply.

* What has happened ?

“Fetch me the keys of my room,” said I ;
 “I want to get at my roba” —

“O che chiavi ! O che camera ! O che roba !
 ai, ai !”

“But where are the keys ?” I repeated.

“Non ci sono più chiavi,” screamed the
 excited cameriere ; “non ci sono più passaporti,
 non ci sono più Ré—più legge—più giudici—
 più niente—non x’è altro che l’amore la libertà
 —l’amicizia, e la costituzione—eccovi le chiavi—
 ai ! o-o-o-o-o-orra birra bà ! !”*

Without disputing the existence of love,
 liberty, friendship, or the constitution, it was
 easy to see that matters were all out of order,
 so, taking Ciccio with me, I went hastily through
 the strangely-altered streets to Cavaliere da
 Nava’s house. From him, whom with his
 family I found in serious distress, I heard that
 a concerted plot had broken out on the pre-
 ceding day ; that all the Government officials
 had been seized, and the Government suspended,

* There are no more keys—there are no more passports, no
 more kings, no more laws, no more judges, no more nothing !
 Nothing but love and liberty, friendship and the constitution !

he (da Nava), the Intendente, and others being all confined to their houses. That the telegraph and the castle still held out, but would be attacked in a day or two; that the insurgents, consisting mostly of young men from the neighbouring towns and villages, had already marched into Reggio, and were hourly increasing in number; that on the opposite shore, Messina was also in full revolt; and that the future arrangements of the Government could only be known after time had been allowed for telegraphic communication between Reggio and Naples. The Government impiegati are all naturally dejected, as nothing of their future fate is known, except so much as may be divined from the fact that no one has hitherto been maltreated. Thus, the agitation of the people at Montebello and Mélito; the suspicions of Don Tito, and of the woodmen at Basilicò, and even those of the fat Baron Rivettini, were all fully explained and justified; for whether those persons were for or against Government, the appearance of strangers on the very eve of a preconcerted revolt was enough to make

them ask questions, and put them all in a fuss.

I returned to the inn. As for what I should do, there seemed no will of my own in the matter; I might be arrested, or executed as either a rebel or a royalist—as things might turn out; so there was nothing for it but to wait patiently.

All that long night the movement increased: large bodies from Santo Stefano, and other places—most of them apparently young mountaineers—thronged into Reggio, and paraded the streets, singing or shouting “Viva Pio Nono,” with banners, guns, swords, and musical instruments.

September 3.—No boat stirs from Messina. I watch on the beach in vain. I sit with Da Nava and his perplexed family. The telegraph works away incessantly; but there is no attempt to stop it, and no attack on the castle. If there is no movement in the northern provinces, troops will certainly march hither, and, in any case, steamers will come, and this wretched town will assuredly be bombarded into anni-

hilation or repentance. On the other hand, Messina will as surely undergo the same fate, and the more probably, inasmuch as it is of more importance. Nevertheless, as P—— is detained there, and I cannot ascertain what extent of fighting therein prevails (owing to no boats having put off from the Messinese shore), it appears to me better to go over to him if possible.

So, by hard work, I persuade some very reluctant boatmen to take me: and I quit the Da Nava family with regret, for a cloud of uncertainty seems to hang over all Southern Italy, and the foreshading gloom of it has earliest reached this remotest place.

After intolerable waiting for five hours with a boat-load of depressed and anxious natives, we were towed by oxen as far as Villa San Giovanni, and thence (the sea was rough and the wind contrary) came over to a point about a mile from Messina, where we landed out of reach of the guns of the fort. Here I was glad at Nobile's Hotel to rejoin P——, whose suspense had been equal to mine. The revolt at

Messina has occasioned the death of fourteen or fifteen men; but the Government has firm hold of the citadel. Distress and anxiety, stagnation and terror, have taken the place of activity, prosperity, security, and peace. A steamer comes from Malta to-morrow, and I resolve to return to Naples thereby; for to resume travelling under the present circumstances of Calabria would be absurd—probably impossible.

September 4. — Two war-steamers are at Reggio, and firing is heard, though the details of action are of course unknown to us. The poor town is undergoing evil I fear, nor will it be wonderful that it does so; for that 400 or 500 men should seize and hope to hold permanently a distant part of a large kingdom, unless assisted by a general rising, appears to be the extreme of folly, and can only, whatever the cause of complaint, meet with ultimate ill-success and probably with severe chastisement.

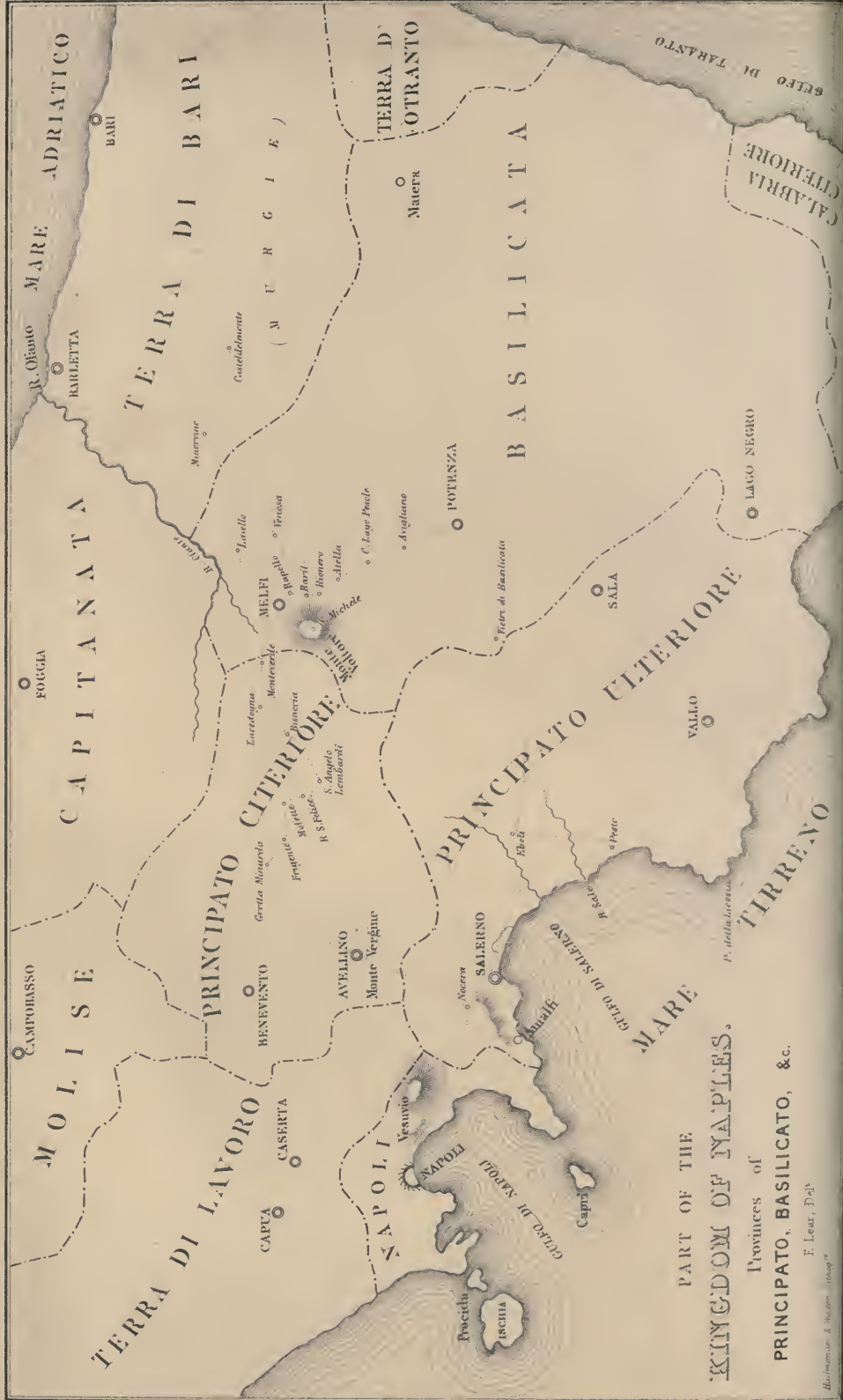
No steamer comes, and we remain at Messina.

September 5. — The steamer arrives from Malta, P—— and I go on board, and at six in the evening we sail. Soon the sparkling line of Reggio ceases to glitter on the purple waters; soon we pass the Faro; and the Rock of Scilla, the headland of Nicótera, and the long point of Palmi recede into faint distance.

I leave the shores of Calabria with a grating feeling I cannot describe. The uncertainty of the fate of many kind and agreeable families—Da Nava, Scaglione, Marzano, &c.—it is not pleasant to reflect on. Gloom, gloom, overshadows the memory of a tour so agreeably begun, and which should have extended yet through two provinces. The bright morning route of the traveller overcast with cloud and storm before mid-day.







PART OF THE
KINGDOM OF NAPLES.
 Provinces of
PRINCIPATO, BASILICATO, &c.

F. Lear, Del.
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A LANDSCAPE PAINTER.

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OF

A LANDSCAPE PAINTER.

KINGDOM OF NAPLES.

PRINCIPATO CITERIORE, BASILICATA, TERRA DI BARI, ETC.
PROVINCES OF AVELLINO, POTENZA, BARI, ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

Return to Calabria not advisable.—A tour to Melfi and part of Apulia resolved on.—We set off to Avellino.—Travelling with the eyes open.—Beautiful character of the country round Avellino.—Convent of Monte Vergine—Vineyards and villas.—Costume and appearance of the women.—Ascent of Monte Vergine.—Historical notices of the convent.—Extensive prospect from the mountain.—Arrangements for visiting Melfi, &c.—We leave Avellino.—Highroads and caratelle.—Uninteresting drive to the valley of the Calore, and Grotta Minarda.—Anticipations of Apulia.—Attempt to reach Frigento.—A guide hired.—We leave Grotta Minarda.—Unpicturesque approach to the hill of Frigento.—The lonely osteria.—Don Gennaro Fiammarossa and his hotel.—We return to the lonely osteria, and make the best of it.—Wheat beds, with onion curtains.—Departure from Frigento.—Barren and dreary scenery.—The Lake of Mofette; its appearance and qualities.—Dead birds.—Rocca San Felice.—Ascent to St. Angelo de' Lombardi.—No carriages nor carriage-roads.—The old man and his ass.—We seize on a roast fowl, and make ourselves as comfortable as circumstances permit.

September 11.—Days have passed; and our decision about not returning to Calabria is fixed.

All that part of Italy is at present in too unsettled a state to admit of prosperous artistic tours. But as P—— has yet nearly a month before he is obliged to turn his steps northward, we resolve to see parts of Basilicata, &c. ; for to various towns in that province I have some good introductory letters from one of its greatest landed proprietors, and there is much interest in that part of the Regno, particularly in the country of Horace, and some of the Norman castles of Apulia. We set off, therefore, by railroad to Nocera, and thence take a caratella (price two ducats) to Avellino, the chief town of Principato Citeriore. The Sanctuary of Monte Vergine, close to the city, is a monastery I have long wished to see.

All the bustle, so characteristic of the environs of Naples, diversifies our route ; but having been up very late on the preceding night, we both of us fall fast asleep before we reach San Severino, and never once wake—so much for “travelling with one’s eyes open”—until we are driving into Avellino.

To how few spots on the map of Italy can

one turn, and yet be disappointed in finding beauty and interest! Totally distinct in character as is this part of the kingdom of Naples from the stern scenery of Calabria, it yet abounds with exquisite landscape: fertile vineyards link tree to tree with rich leafy festoons; the hills clothed with olives, and the higher mountains with chestnut woods; villas and villages dotted in glittering clusters on every slope. Each part of this varied kingdom has its distinct features; and here cheerful industry and abundance light up all around.

Avellino,* standing on the river Sabato, itself forms part of several very noble views, and, in all of them, the most remarkable feature is the high mountain, Monte Vergine, which, thickly wooded to its summit, rears its lofty form to the west of the city. High among the clouds you may see a white spot nearly at its highest peak: that is the monastery of Monte Vergine.

* Avellino, the Abellinum of the Romans, is the chief town of the province of Principato Citeriore, and is one of the districts into which it is divided, the other two being Ariano, and Sant' Angelo de' Lombardi. The town contains about 5000 inhabitants, and is 28 miles from Naples.

Avellino possesses a tolerable inn. Here be high-roads and rattling carriages, shouting drivers, and crowded markets, and a dining-room with a smart waiter. We are in Principato Citeriore, and only a few miles from Parthenope.

September 12.—A cloudy day; and as the ascent of the mountain is not a trifling matter, we postpone it till to-morrow, when the weather may permit a more distant view from the summit. From hour to hour we wander in the shady lanes, or among vineyards. They are all open, and one is never weary of looking at the beautiful outline of Avellino and Monte Vergine through the framework of hanging vines. All this part of the country has a lively appearance from the costume of the peasantry, whose dresses are mostly red, and peculiar in form. The women arrange their hair beautifully, and are almost universally good-looking, and the very picture of health and neatness.

September 13.—September is but an uncertain month for these high mountain excursions;

yet, though the upper part of Monte Vergine is covered with a dark curtain of cloud, we dare the ascent. There is a carriage-road from the city to the village of Spedaletto, situated at a considerable height on the mountain, and beyond this, the path to the monastery is for more than three miles a very steep zig-zag, in overcoming which you are indulged with a fine view of Vesuvius rising from its velvet plain. Noble groups of chestnut-trees clothe the lower part of the mountain, and above their leafy heads is the craggy summit of the hill with the picturesque convent, which combine to make many a beautiful picture.

This celebrated sanctuary, built on the site of a temple of Cybele, as several inscriptions and remains attest, was founded about 1100, A.D., and on account of its possessing a particularly miraculous image of the Virgin Mary (not to speak of the bones of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego !) its sanctity is great. Great numbers of pilgrims* come hither from the surrounding parts of the country ; and on

* It is said that four hundred pilgrims died here in 1611—

the high festa days of the image there is no doubt a goodly show of costume. But, independent of the attractions held out by the relics, &c., the Monastery of Monte Vergine has little in itself which can be called interesting: the great view it enjoys from its isolated and elevated position constitutes (at least to a landscape-painter), its chief charm. Moreover, the cold was too severe at the summit of this high mountain to tempt a lengthened stay; so we descended to Mercugliano, a large village at the lower part of the hill, where stands a great monastic establishment, connected with the sanctuary, and which is the residence of its abbot. The remainder of this day, and all the following,

September 14. — Was passed in sketching among the environs of Avellino, a place of quiet walks and shady groves. How deep and dark green were the tufts of chestnuts against

some one of them having profanely brought up some meat for luncheon. The peasants say that eating meat near the sanctuary will bring on a thunderstorm and hurricane at any time.



Edward Lear, del. et lith.

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STA MARIA DI MONTEVERGINE.
London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, August 1852.

the lilac hills afar off! The evening went in disputing with vetturini, and arranging to be taken, as near as possible, to Melfi in Basilicata, which is the main object of our journey, though we wish to see the Mofette, or Sulphureous Lake, if it can be easily reached. At length we agree; for two dollars we are to be taken as far as Grotta Minarda, and thence pursue our route as best we may.

September 15.—After numberless irritations from the lies and subterfuges of drivers—for the race of vetturini around Naples are odious to deal with—we finally set off at 10 A.M.

The road lies through cheerful places: gardens, cottages, and numerous villages and towns are always in sight; but after leaving Prata and Pratola on the left, and Montefusco on a high hill beyond, the country grew more and more uninteresting as we approached the mid vertebral line of Italian mountains, here more broken and less striking in appearance than in any other part of the Regno. A tedious descent to the valley of the River Calore, with

some monotonous undulations followed, till we reached Grotta Minarda, during our journey to which the outline of the town of Ariano on the east, and on the west that of Monte Vergine, formed the principal, or rather the only, features of a wide expanse of country. Picturesquely speaking we were by no means pleased with this part of his Neapolitan Majesty's dominions; but we trusted to find compensation for such barrenness of interest, in Apulian plains, Norman castles, and Horatian localities, by and by to be visited. At a tavern below Grotta Minarda we dismissed our vetturino, and dined on the universal and useful Italian omelette and macaroni.

But now came the difficulty. Where should we go next? and how should we get there? Melfi might be reached in two whole days; but as we wished to devote an hour or so to the "Mofette,"* if we could find it, Frigento appeared to us as the most fitting place to sleep at; for although it did not seem clearly under-

* "Le Mofette" is the name by which the lake or pool of

stood whether the infernal basin was nearest to Frigento or to Sant' Angelo de' Lombardi, yet the latter place was too far off to be reached before night. Had we been at Gioiosa in Calabria, the Baron Rivettini might well have said, "*Perchè!* do you go to such a disagreeable place as the Mofette?—*Perchè!*"

Much search and earnest persuasion produced a half-witted old man with a donkey which might carry our small quantity of luggage, and after long hesitation he agreed to go with us to the Mofette, the way to which he knew, though, he said, he should not tempt Providence by going very near the spot. He also held out indistinct views of accompanying us all the way to Melfi if he were well paid. The more enlightened inhabitants of Grotta Minarda also said that we should have no difficulty in finding a delightful home at Frigento in the house of Don Gennaro Fiammarossa, who they declared was the wealthiest and most

Amsanctus is known; identified by Antiquarians (see Craven, Swinburne, &c.) with the description in Virgil, "Est locus, Italiae medio, sub montibus altis," &c.—*Cramer*.

hospitable of living men—"È tutto denaro, è tutto cuore: possiede Frigento, possiede tutto."* So we set off, resolving to confide our destinies to the care of Don January Redflame, who is all money and all heart, possessing Frigento in particular, and everything else in general.

Frigento was immediately before our eyes, standing on a very ugly clay hill, and although the grandeur of shifting clouds, storm, and a rainbow did their best to illumine and set off the aspect of the land, yet we were obliged to confess that our journey lay over a most wearily monotonous country. Nor, on arriving at the foot of the bare hill of Frigento, had we any wish to make acquaintance with Don January Redflame for the sake of his native place; and it was not until we had peeped into a very unsatisfactory osteria at the high road-side, that we reluctantly resolved to ascend the dismal and ugly cone before us. At the miserable little town of Frigento itself we made one more trial, but the only taverna was so palpably disgusting,

* He is all money and all heart: he possesses Frigento—he possesses all things."

that it was not to be thought of as a place of sojourn, even by us, tried Calabrian travellers ; and thus we were at length driven to appeal to the hospitality of the benevolent Don Gennaro, whose house is the only large one in the town. Everything in his mansion betokened wealth, and we contemplated with pleasure the comfortable hall with crockery and barrels, and all kinds of neatness and luxury ; and until Don Gennaro came, we were pressed to take a glass of wine by the steward and his very nice-looking wife.

But lo ! the great January arrived, and all our hopes were turned to chill despair ! “ *How* grieved he was not to be able to have the pleasure of receiving us, none but he could tell ; ”—this he said with smiles and compliments, yet so it was. He was expecting an aunt, four cousins (*anzi, cinque**), three old friends, and four priests, who were to pass through Frigento on their way to a neighbouring town ; they might come and they might not, but he dared not fill his house.

* *Nay*, five.

But what of that? There was a capital inn at Frigento, one of the very best in Italy; he would take us there himself; it was time we should be sheltered for the night. And forthwith he led the way out into the street, overwhelming us with profuse expressions of compliment—"Signori miei gentilissimi e carissimi, illustrissimi padroni garbati e cortesi,—amici affezionatissimi," &c., till, to our dismay and surprise, he stopped at the door of the very filthy osteria which we had ten minutes ago rejected with abhorrence as impracticable and disgusting.

"Viaggiatori culti, eccellentissimi Giovani, ecco qui l'albergo; qui troverete tutto, tutto, tutto, tutto, tutto, tutto,"* said our friend; and, bowing and smiling to the very last, he retreated hastily towards his own house, leaving us very distinctly "sold," and not a little enraged at Don January Redflame's proficiency in the art of humbug, though we excused him for not desiring to house unknown wanderers in these days of unsettled events.

* Polished travellers—excellent young men, here is the inn; here you will find everything—everything.

We turned away from the man "all money and all heart," and came indignantly down the hill wishing ourselves in Calabria, and composing our minds to the necessity of passing the night at the one-roomed osteria at the hill-foot. Here, at least, we found civility, though there was little but the bare walls of the taverna to study: a stove filled up one side of a little chamber, half of which was used as a stable; yet when our new muleteer had cooked us some poached eggs, we made ourselves tolerably comfortable by the fireside, and finally slept well in a granary on large heaps of grain, which had the advantage of cleanliness as well as novelty when considered as beds. The furniture of our dormitory was simple to the last degree: the before-named wheat-heaps, long strings of onions depending from above, and numerous round boxes of eggs below.

September 16.—Leaving our wheaten couch ere sunrise, we prepared to start afresh. Our accommodation cost us in all two carlini each; but coffee, alas! there was none. With Antonio

the foolish (who talked to himself without ceasing), we followed a route leading over most forlorn and bare hills, Frigento overlooking all from its ugly pinnacle, and in the far distance loom the forms of mountains, which appear fine in outline, but a scirocco haze makes them all indistinct as to detail and colour. After walking a mile or two we left the high road, and for another mile and a half descended by paths through a wild country, ever becoming drearier and less prepossessing, till as we neared a deep little valley, strong sulphureous odours warned us of our approach to the Mofette.

The hollow basin in which lies this strange and ugly vapour bath is fringed on one side by a wood of oaks, behind which the mountain of Chiusano forms a fine background: but on the northern approach, or that from Frigento, the sloping hill is bare, and terminates in a wide crust of sulphureous mud, cracked, dry, and hollow at some little distance from the pool, but soft, and undulating like yeast at the brink of the little lake itself. The water, if water it be, is as black as ink, and in appear-

ance thick, bubbling and boiling up from a hundred springs which wrinkle its disastrous looking surface: but when the liquid is taken out into any vessel, it is said—for we did not make the experiment—to be perfectly clear and cold. Whether or not birds can fly across or over the enchanted pool, I cannot tell, but as we found many stiff and dead on its brink—namely, two crows, four larks, three sparrows, and eight yellowhammers—it is but fair to conclude that the noxious vapours had something to do with stocking this well-filled ornithological necropolis; and as to ourselves, we found that to inhale the air within two or three feet of the water was a very unpleasing experiment, resulting in a catching or stupefying sensation, which in my own case did not entirely pass away for two or three days.

Possibly the strength and properties of this curious volcanic lake may differ at various seasons or states of the atmosphere;* as for

* Swinburne says—"The Mofette several times spouted as high as our heads; a large body of vapour was continually thrown out

our guide he implored us not to go near, and would not by any means be persuaded to go within a hundred yards of the “accursed eccentricity.”*

After having made a drawing of the celebrated Mofette we called a council as to what decision we should come to concerning our future route. The town of Bisaccia was fifteen miles distant—hardly to be reached with ease ere evening. That of St. Angelo de’ Lombardi was but six miles from us at present, and we settled to go thither, hoping to find some conveyance thence to Melfi. We journeyed on over a bare and hilly country by uninteresting paths along undulating clay slopes or cultivated

with a rumbling noise, accompanied by a nauseous smell and danger of suffocation.” Craven supposes that changes take place in the action of the lake, as he found no smell, and heard no noise, and saw nothing. In the pool of Amsanctus he finds no impediment to respiration; black clay is deposited, leaving the waters clear and tasteless, and icy cold. Raven and wood-pigeon flew over it—worn-out fable—whole ground strewn with dead butterflies—stopped his watch—and discoloured all metal, &c. Mazzella, however, speaks of “all birds dying who fly over the pool.”

* “Cosa curiosa maledetta,” as he called it.

valleys, till we came to a conclusion that the province of Principato Citra is one of the dullest of the kingdom of Naples. In an hour or two we reached Rocca San Felice, and passed through it. Around this little town, in itself picturesque, there seems to lie the only pretty scenery we had observed since we left Avellino ; but a coming storm prevented our lingering to sketch even this single bit of character ; so, after a long descent and ascent, we attained to the town of St. Angelo de' Lombardi just as rain began to fall heavily. Our fate, so far as reaching Melfi, was soon known ; there is no *strada carrozzabile*, and no carriages in or from St. Angelo de' Lombardi ; so, resolving to go on to-morrow towards the Norman city with the old man and his ass, we discovered a tolerable locanda, and adapted ourselves to pass the rest of the day there. The hostess declared she had no food of any sort in the house ; but the distinct odour of a roast fowl caused us to pay but little attention to her assertions : with the energy of hungry men we forced our way into the kitchen, and laid violent hands on the

detected viands, together with some eggs and *alici*—all intended for somebody else. After dinner and siesta, and when the rain had ceased, we wandered forth in quest of food for our pencils, but found little. St. Angelo de' Lombardi is one of those places (and in Italy there are but few such) having no goodly aspect or form in themselves, and placed so as to command a wide panorama below, but with no foreground, tree, or rock to set off against its abundant extent. And, unluckily, where there was really an appearance of fine mountain lines, mist and cloud prevented it from being seen distinctly. St. Angelo de' Lombardi is but a dismal place; the people of the inn, however, were obliging, though the "accommodations" of the dormitories compelled each of us to sleep in his cloak.

CHAPTER XVII.

Departure from St. Angelo de' Lombardi.—Country expands into wide grassy downs.—Distant view of Monte Voltore.—Undulating plains.—Arrival at Bisaccia.—Inhospitable place.—Difficulty of procuring food.—Guide refuses to proceed, and is bribed by a dish of fish.—We leave Bisaccia.—Arrive in sight of the great Plains of Apulia.—Costume.—Nearer view of Monte Voltore.—Reach Lacedogna.—Vain endeavour to hire a horse.—We find a chance vetturino.—Monteverde.—Fine views of Monte Voltore.—Towns on the mountain: its character, lake, &c.—Cross the river Ofanto.—Enter Basilicata.—Approach to Melfi.—Its castle, draw-bridge, &c. &c.—Signor Vittorio Manassei.—Pleasant reception.—Magnificent accommodations.—Comforts of Melfi.—Historical notices of the city, &c.—View from the modern part of the castle.—Picturesqueness of Melfi and its environs: agreeable hours indoors.—Doria Gallery.—Family dinner.—The vineyard and the pergola.—The old hall.—Buttered toast and other Melfi luxuries.—We continue to stay at the castle.—Arrangements for visiting Minervino, Venosa, Monte Voltore, and Castel del Lago Pesole.—Don Sebastiano il Fattore.

September 17. — Glad we were, on rising before day, to find the morning beautifully clear, and the foolish old man, our guide, waiting with his ass below. There were finer mountain views, too, now that the clouds had passed away, than we had given St. Angelo de' Lombardi credit for possessing.

For two hours our advance was very agreeable; we turned from the hill on which stands our last night's home, and passing Guardia Lombardi, another town, high on a hill of its own (and whose unpicturesque appearance, we agreed with old Pacichelli, might fully merit his condemnation, "it contains no object worthy of any praise whatever"), we began to cross monotonous grassy downs, from each undulation of which, when we looked back, the hill of Monte Vergine was still ever in sight.

The mountains on this part of the eastern side of Italy decrease by very slow gradations to the flat country near the shore; and we next traversed wide and long meadow plains, enlivened by large droves of horses, and much like parts of the Campagna around Rome; but there was great want of good form and outline, and my expectations of the Great Pianura of Apulia began to sink apace. And in spite of the appearance of Monte Voltore, which now began to adorn the horizon, and at whose base we ought to sleep to-night in the city of Melfi, these undulating downs, or plains, grew sadly

wearisome, and we were glad to spy the far-off top of a tower, which the foolish old man declared was the church of Bisaccia. It was long, though, ere we arrived there, and when we did, in how odious a place did we find ourselves! So unwilling were the inhabitants to commit themselves by any attention to strangers, that, for all the civility we met with, we might have had the plague. Most of the people loitering about, to whom we spoke, shrugged their shoulders, and passed on; while a few indicated a very filthy osteria as the only place of accommodation in this uncouth wilderness. And when within the walls of the unclean locanda, no one had any edibles for sale; and all the inmates, after staring at us for awhile, went on with their occupations with the most profound indifference to us and our wants. Three exotic-looking men, with long uncombed hair and moustache, and velvet cloaks, looking much like comedians, come and observe us; they say they are Bolognese—we thing them refugees. Four priests gaze at us, with the shrug ignorant, as we again ask for

food. A fifth says, "È indecente! due forestieri garbati, e non sanno che fare, ne come mangiar, ne alloggiar;"* but his faint zeal is rebuked and extinguished by the others. After a long hour of persuasion and quest, we are taken to another osteria, rather less filthy than No. 1, and here we unload our ass. But lo! to our additional dismay, the foolish old guide of Grotta Minarda suddenly vows he will go no further with us. "E come posso? con' sto ciucciarello?"† No animals or guide are to be procured here, and Melfi is still eighteen miles off, and there is the River Ofanto to be crossed in the way thither!

All sorts of evils seemed at once in array against us, so we took time to decide on future plans, and, sending out for eggs and wine, we made a luncheon, to the best of our ability, among the half-naked children, dogs, and dirt. All our endeavours of persuasion were now directed to induce the silly old man to go with

* It is really a shame. Two well-conditioned strangers, and they don't know what to do—what to eat, or how to lodge!

† How can I, with this little ass?

us as far as the next town, Lacedogna, which being a possession of Prince Doria (who had given me letters to his castle at Melfi), I thought promised some better chance of assistance on the journey than the forlorn place we were now halting in ; and at length, by dint of bribes and appeals to his feelings, the old man relented, the last weight in the scale of our favour being a gift of three spigole, which had been brought to us for sale, and which we had innocently purchased, the same, on being boiled, proving highly odoriferous. "Buono per noi, non per voi,"* said the old gentleman, on graciously accepting the present, and tying up two of the fish in his pocket-handkerchief for "to-morrow," by way of waiting for the more perfect development of their flavour.

After this we set off from Bisaccia, a place, according to old Pacichelli, "of which little can be said." There are many very pretty bits of architecture in it, however ; and the view of the distant plains is noble from the outskirts of the

* Good for us, though not for you.

town. None of your half-and-half undulations, but real flat Apulian plains—pale and pink, and level as a calm lake, and stretching away, as it were, into the very clouds. The costume here, too, is pretty: the dresses of the women are all red, the skirt plaited and adjusted differently to the general mode. But for drawing there was no time, neither was there any one view of surpassing or characteristic interest; so we hurried down a steep descent, crossed a valley, and once more ascended elevated spurs of hill, whence Monte Voltore, on our right hand, grew more large and distinct; and Lacedogna, a large but unpicturesque town, lay full before us.*

There we arrived about 2 or 3 P.M., and made instant inquiries for a horse. One, they said, was to be hired, so we engaged it hastily, for there was no time to be lost—Melfi is still twelve miles off. We sate in a wine-shop, unloaded the ass, and paid the foolish man. “Is the horse coming?” said we to the sur-

* Lacedogna, of which the concise Pacichelli remarks, “It is of narrow extent, and contains nothing either curious or beautiful fit for observation,” belongs to the Doria family.

rounding idlers. "Yes, it is on the way: it will be here in half a minute." A quarter of an hour passes—half an hour—three quarters, and still no horse. "Where *is* the horse?"—"Ah, signori, they are saddling it." It would soon be too late to start for Melfi, so we rushed to the stable indicated as containing the fabulous quadruped, and lo! there it was calmly lying down, and evidently wholly guiltless of any attempt, passive or active, towards leaving Lacedogna. Moreover, a dark and surly woman said, "It never was to be hired—it never was intended to go to Melfi—and it never shall." So, all our hopes vanishing, we were in a complete fix.

In great trouble, we stood resolving what to do. A man with two mules passed. Nothing is lost by asking.

"Will you go to Melfi?" said we.

"No," was the answer, "unless for two ducats."

"They are yours," we replied; and seizing on the lucky moment, and the bridles, we lost no time in transferring our little luggage to

the opportune *vettura*,* and were really, after all difficulties, once more on the way to Melfi, leaving Lacedogna, like other places in Principato Citra, with very little regret. Our route led at first by the side of a winding stream, and then by a great ascent to Monteverde, the last town in the province. Here we arrived just before sunset, and, from its elevated site, the views of Monte Voltore, with the territory called Monticchio, adjoining the isolated volcanic woody height, are most gorgeous. The sudden contrast between the uninteresting country over which we had been for three days journeying, and this novel and beautiful scenery, was delightfully animating, notwithstanding our resting-place was still far off. Monte Voltore is the Soracte of this part of the Regno di Napoli; standing alone, and graceful in form (much resembling Vesuvius), it is, though inconsiderable in height, conspicuous among the tame undulations on all sides, and its colouring is always exquisite. On its eastern

* Any mode of conveyance.

and southern slopes lie the towns of Melfi, Rapollo, Barile, Rionero, and Atella; on the north it is covered with dense forests—a royal demesne, little visited by strangers; and the hollow centre of this singular hill, once its crater, contains the secluded lake and convent of San Michele, which, ere we leave Basilicata,* we trust to see. At sunset we crossed the Ofanto, a broad, but shallow river at this season, and the line of division between Principato Citeriore and Basilicata. Henceforward, after a short ascent, we went on apace for two long hours, which sufficed to bring us, sleepy and weary, to Melfi, a city which has given us so much trouble to reach it, that we are anxious lest our labour should not be well repaid. But on our entering the town, it is too dark to discern any of its beauties or failings. Yet the castle of Melfi,

* The province of Basilicata (part of ancient Lucania) contains 431,789 inhabitants (Del Re, 1828), and was called by its present name in the time of Frederick II. It is divided into four districts—Potenza (now the chief town), Matera, Melfi, and Lago Negro.

The old authors speak of manna being commonly found in many parts of it.

which we reach by a short ascent from the streets, is sufficiently imposing at this silent hour of night. There is a drawbridge, and sullen gates, and dismal court-yards, and massive towers, and seneschals with keys and fierce dogs,—all the requisites of the feudal fortress of romance.

Signor Vittorio Manassei, the steward and agent of Prince Doria, received us most amiably, and ushered us into magnificent halls, forming a strange contrast to our late sojourning places. Around were mirrors and gilded furniture in all the full splendour of Italian baronial style, and the perfect order and cleanliness of the establishment did high credit to the Roman agent's skill and taste.

September 18.—A delightful place of sojourn is Melfi,* the first stronghold of Normans in

* Melfi is one of the four *capi-distretti* of the province of Basilicata. According to PaicHELLI and others, it was originally Melphis, a Greek city. He speaks of Popes Nicolo II. and Urban II. holding councils there in 1069 and 1098. K. Craven gives the dates 1089 and 1100. The castle and town were built by the sons of Tancred de Hauteville. After the

Apulia. One of the towers of Roger de Hauteville still exists, but the great hall, where Normans and Popes held councils in bygone days, is now a theatre.

The present building dates from the sixteenth century, and the offices and other additions still later. The castle overlooks the whole town of Melfi, but no great extent of distant country, for one side of the horizon is wholly filled up by the near Monte Voltore, and the remainder by a range of low hills, so that the site of the town seems to have been selected as much for concealment as strength.

A morning's ramble made me acquainted with all the characteristic beauties of the place, which is a perfect tame oasis among much uninteresting scenery. The picturesque buildings of the city (which seems to occupy the site of some ancient place); the valley below it, with its clear stream and great walnut-trees; the

defection of the Caraccioli, to whom the castle had been given by Giovanna II., the emperor Charles V. bestowed it on Andrea Doria, and the dukedom of Melfi has ever since remained in his family.

numerous fountains ; the innumerable caves in the rocks around, now used as stabling for goats, which cluster in swarthy multitudes on tiers of crags ; the convents and shrines scattered here and there in the suburbs ; the crowded houses and the lofty spires of the interior ; and the perfectly Poussinesque castle, with its fine corner tower commanding the whole scene : * so many fine features in a circumscribed space it is not common to see, even in Italy. If one must find a fault, it is that Melfi cannot boast of a beautiful bit of remote landscape to fill up the list of its excellent qualities.

In the middle of the day we returned to the castle, and were treated most hospitably by the polite Signor Manassei and his family, consisting of his wife and two daughters ; and, after we had passed the afternoon in drawing, a sort of réunion of Melfitan neighbours, guitars, singing, and cards till supper-time, closed a very agreeable day.

* All this, alas ! has passed away. See note, page 277.



September 19.—There is a formidable long gallery adjoining our room, full of old oak chests, and older armour ; and its windows are seized every now and then with terrible fits of rattling, so that one is apt to think old Andrea Doria's ghost may be walking about, if not that of some old Norman. We dined with the whole family to-day, and found them very agreeable, particularly one of the daughters. Signora Manassei has, in speaking of the world of Melfi, that mixture of kindness and pity which characterises the true Roman manner. Then we loitered on vine terraces and under pergolate, and ate grapes in the large vineyards behind the castle ; and, along with Signor Vittorio and his two merry daughters, examined all the older part of the building, the prisons, and the old hall, used as a theatre in the last century.

September 20.—Another merry day—drawing out of doors—laughter within. What a home one might make of the Castle of Melfi, with its city below and its territory around—the beau

ideal of old feudal possession and magnificence.

September 21.—But what shall we do when we go out once more into the wide world and its dirty osterias?—after these princely subtleties of luxury, this buttered toast and caffè for breakfast, these comfortable rooms and merry society? The ease and grandeur of the Palazzo Doria in Melfi will have spoiled us, methinks, for rough travelling.

This day, like its fellows, went by, and left no shadow on memory's path; but we had now made as many drawings as we had a right to require, and we had had four days of unvariedly pleasing reception, so we prepare to depart on the morrow for Minervino and Castel del Monte; these, with visits to Venosa, San Michele, and Castel Lago Pesole, will fill up the remainder of our time for wandering.

Before the evening réunion, a foreman or Campagna steward of the Doria family was called in by Signor Manassei. Don Sebastiano, "il Fattore," is a large and important person,

who, knowing all roads far and near, is strictly enjoined to take charge of us as far as Rio Nero, and to see that we want for nothing in going or returning.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Leave Melfi.—Regrets for old Dìghi, Dóghi, Dà.—The magnificent Don Sebastiano.—Lavello.—We prefer walking to riding.—Mid-day halt.—View of Monte Voltore.—Apulian plains—their great flatness and paleness.—Approach to Minervino.—Its appearance—streets, animation, &c.—Plain of Cannæ.—Monte Gargano, &c.—Don Vincenzino Todesche: his warm and friendly reception.—The family supper.—Don Vincenzino's hospitable opinions.—Weary ride from Minervino by the stony Murgie.—Immense extent of Apulian pianura.—Remarkable beauty of Castel del Monte.—Its architectural interest.—Return to Minervino.—Tradition concerning the architect of Castel del Monte.—We leave Minervino.—Reputation for cordiality enjoyed by the south-eastern provinces of the Regno.—Halt at Monte Milone.—Oak woods.—Views of Venosa and Monte Voltore.—Picturesqueness of Venosa: its streets, &c.—Palazzo of Don Nicóla Rapolla, and agreeable reception there.—His family.—Luxuries and refinements.—The castle of Venosa: its modernised interior, prisons, stables, &c.—Agreeable stay at the Casa Rapolla.—Venosa Cathedral.—Church of La Trinità.—Ruined Church and Monastery of the Benedictines.—Amphitheatre.—Another day at the Casa Rapolla.—We leave Venosa.—High roads, commerce, and civilization.—Skirts of Monte Voltore.—Towns of Rapolla and Barile.—Large town of Rio Nero.—Indications of its wealth and activity.—House of Don P. Catena: its comfort and good arrangements.—Our hospitable welcome.—Signor Manassei again.—Evening musical party at Rio Nero.

September 22.—We did not start very early from the lordly gates of Melfi Castle. No

luggage mule was to be found, but our little *roba** was dispersed upon three horses, one of which was ridden by the corpulent Fattore. We took leave of the cheerful Manassei family, with feelings something more akin to those with which we used to part from Calabrian entertainers than we had experienced since we had entered these midland provinces. But ah! in these days of Basilicata and Principato how often did we wish for good old Díghi, Dóghi, Dà! Not but that our large guardian, Don Sebastiano, was very obliging (he was extremely like Dr. Samuel Johnson seen through a magnifying glass, and dressed in a tight blue jacket and trowsers), but from having been Guardiano in the service of the King, when he was staying at the Palazzo Doria, and having then accompanied him in various hunting expeditions, the worthy man was so pompous, and so full of long stories of royal doings, that his manner rather oppressed us, the more that being

* "Roba" is a word of wide signification in Italian; in the present case it means "baggage," but it may be generally well rendered by the English "things."

seventy-three years old, he seemed too venerable to be ordered hither and thither.

About eight miles from Melfi we passed close to Lavello, rather a pretty town. Farther on we encountered a tiresome elevated plain, and the uninteresting valley of the river Bonovento, where, giving our horses to a man who accompanied us on foot, we proceeded to walk: but at this proceeding Don Sebastiano was horrified. The horses, he said, were not good, and he would return instantly to Melfi for others. In vain we assured him that Englishmen did occasionally walk as a matter of choice: this assertion he treated as wholly poetical; and he never during the journey ceased to regret his choice of steeds. After a gradual ascent from the low grounds of the Bonovento, where were abundance of buffali, and great flights of a bird which the Fattore called "calendroni," we arrived at the summit of the last ridge of hill on the eastern side of Italy, where, in a sort of ruined guardhouse, we halted to lunch and rest at half-past twelve. From this spot there is a fine view of Monte Voltore, which stands alone

on the western horizon; but the prospect to the south and east is one of the most surprisingly striking character, and totally unlike anything presented by other parts of Italy—portions of the Campagna of Rome near the sea perhaps excepted. Yet even those scenes fail to recall the exceeding paleness, and pinkness, and flatness of the great outstretched sheet of pianura, which spreads away from the foot of the Apennines to the sea—those wide plains of Apulia, so full of interest to the historian, and doubtless not less so to the painter.

To the south, on a spur of the hills overlooking the maritime part of the province of Basilicata and Capitanata, stands Minervino, and thither we directed our course, over undulating green meadows which descend to the plain, and we arrived about an hour before sunset at the foot of the height on which the town is situated. Minervino enjoys a noble prospect northward, over the level of Cannæ to the bay and mountain of Gargano, at which distance the outspread breadth of plain is

so beautifully delicate in its infinity of clear lines, as to resemble sea more than earth. The town is a large, clean, and thriving place, with several streets flanked by loggie, and altogether different in its appearance and in its population from Abruzzese or Calabrese towns. The repose, or to speak more plainly, the stagnation of the latter, contrasts very decidedly with these communities of Apulia,—all bustle and animation—where well-paved streets, good houses, and strings of laden mules, proclaim an advance in commercial civilisation.

We encountered in the street Don Vincenzino Todeschi, who on reading a letter of introduction, given to us for him by Signor Manassei, seemed to consider our dwelling with him as a matter of course, and shaking hands with us heartily, begged us to go to his house and use it as our own; he was busy then, but would join us at supper.

In the evening there was a family gathering at that meal; there was Don Vincenzino, the host, who conversed on statistics, commercial pursuits, railroads, and increasing facilities of

communication, and other practical matters. "Send any of your friends who come this way to me," said he: "*stendere relazioni*, to increase a connection all over the world should be the object of a liberal-minded man; knowledge and prosperity come by variety of acquaintance," &c. &c. There were three sons also with their tutor, a gentlemanlike and well-informed abbate; and a very nice little girl, Teresa, who, her mother being dead, was evidently the family pet. The Fattore Don Sebastiano sat in silence, though before supper he had been rather loquacious concerning the family Todeschi, whom he looks down upon as "novi ricchi," spite of the show drawing-room, chimney mirrors, carpets, and tables full of nicknacks.

P—— and I are not a little perplexed as to what we shall do to-morrow, for, owing to time running short, we have but one day left ere we turn towards Naples. Canosa (ancient Cannæ) and Castel del Monte, are the two points, either of which we could be content to reach; but as each demands a hard day's

work, we finally resolve to divide them, P—— choosing Canosa, and I the old castle of Frederick Barbarossa, of which I had heard so much as one of the wonders of Apulia.

September 23.—Before daylight each of us set off on his separate journey on horseback,—P—— with the bulky Don Sebastiano to Canosa, I to Castel del Monte, with a guardiano of Don Vincenzino Todeschi's family. Oh me! what a day of fatigue and tiresome labour! Almost immediately on leaving Minervino we came to the dullest possible country,—elevated stony plains—weariest of barren undulations stretching in unbroken ugliness towards Altamura and Gravina. Much of this hideous tract is ploughed earth, and here and there we encountered a farm house with its fountain: no distant prospect ever relieves these dismal, shrubless, Murgie (for so is this part of the province of Bari called), and flights of “calendroni,” with a few skylarks above, and scattered crocuses below, alone vary the sameness of the journey. At length, after nearly five hours of

slow riding, we came in sight of the castle, which was the object of my journey; it is built at the edge of these plains on one of the highest, but gradually rising eminences, and looks over a prospect perfectly amazing as to its immense extent and singular character. One vast pale pink map, stretching to Monte Gargano, and the plains of Foggia, northward, is at your feet; southward, Terra di Bari, and Terra di Otranto, fade into the horizon; and eastward, the boundary of this extensive level is always the blue Adriatic, along which, or near its shore, you see, as in a chart, all the maritime towns of Puglia in succession, from Barletta southward towards Brindisi.

The barren stony hill from which you behold all this extraordinary outspread of plain, has upon it one solitary and remarkable building, the great hunting palace,* called Castel del Monte, erected in the twelfth century by the Emperor Barbarossa, or Frederick II. Its attractions at

* Excellent descriptions of this most beautiful castle are to be found in Mr. Swinburne's and the Hon. Keppel Craven's works.

first sight are those of position and singularity of form, which is that of an octagon, with a tower on each of the eight corners. But to an architect, the beautiful masonry and exquisite detail of the edifice (although it was never completed, and has been robbed of its fine carved-work for the purpose of ornamenting churches on the plain), render it an object of the highest curiosity and interest.

The interior of this ancient building is also extremely striking; the inner court-yard and great Gothic Hall, invested with the sombre mystery of partial decay, the eight rooms above, the numerous windows, all would repay a long visit from any one to whom the details of such architecture are desiderata.

Confining myself to making drawings of the general appearance of this celebrated castle, I had hardly time to complete two careful sketches of it, when the day was so far advanced that my guardiano recommended a speedy return, and by the time I had overcome the five hours of stony "murgie" I confess to having thought that any thing less interesting than Castel del



Richard Bentley del. & sculp.

CASTELDELMONTE
London, Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, August, 1852.

Printed by Hoffmann & Walshe

Monte would hardly have compensated for the day's labour. I reached Minervino at one hour of the night, and found P—— just arrived from his giro to Canosa.

While riding over the Murgie, slowly pacing over those stony hills, my guide indulged me with a legend of the old castle, which is worth recording, be it authentic or imaginary. The Emperor Frederick II. having resolved to build the magnificent residence on the site it now occupies, employed one of the first architects of the day to erect it; and during its progress dispatched one of his courtiers to inspect the work, and to bring him a report of its character and appearance. The courtier set out; but on passing through Melfi, halted to rest at the house of a friend, where he became enamoured of a beautiful damsel, whose eyes caused him to forget Castel del Monte and his sovereign, and induced him to linger in the Norman city until a messenger arrived there charged by the emperor to bring him immediately to the Court, then at Naples. At that period it was by no means probable

that Barbarossa, engaged in different warlike schemes, would ever have leisure to visit his new castle, and the courtier, fearful of delay, resolved to hurry into the presence and risk a description of the building which he had not seen, rather than confess his neglect of duty. Accordingly he denounced the commencement of Castel del Monte as a total failure both as to beauty and utility, and the architect as an impostor ; on hearing which the emperor sent immediately to the unfortunate builder, the messenger carrying an order for his disgrace, and a requisition for his instant appearance in the capital. "Suffer me to take leave of my wife and children," said the despairing architect, and shutting himself in one of the upper rooms, he forthwith destroyed his whole family and himself, rather than fall into the hands of a monarch notorious for his severity.

The tidings of this event was, however, brought to the emperor's ears, and with characteristic impetuosity he set off for Apulia directly, taking with him the first courtier-messenger, doubtless sufficiently ill at ease

from anticipations of the results about to follow his duplicity. What was Barbarossa's indignation at beholding one of the most beautiful buildings doomed, through the falsehood of his messenger, to remain incomplete, and polluted by the blood of his most skilful subject, and that of his innocent family !

Foaming with rage, he dragged the offender by the hair of his head to the top of the highest tower, and with his own hands threw him down as a sacrifice to the memory of the architect and his family, so cruelly and wantonly destroyed.

September 24.—Having risen before sunrise, the energetic and practical Don Vincenzino gave us coffee by the aid of a spirit lamp, and we passed some hours in drawing the town of Minervino, the sparkling lights and delicate gray tints of whose buildings blended charmingly with the vast pale rosy plains of Apulia in the far distance. At nine we returned to a substantial *déjeuner*, and at half-past ten took leave of our thoroughly hospitable and good-natured host.

Basilicata, Bari, and the southern or Apulian province of Otranto, hold as high a place in the Regno di Napoli for their "civilizzazione e cordialità," as do the Abruzzesi and Calabresi: the central provinces, either from vicinity to the capital or other causes, are less amiably depicted, and assuredly our experience of Principato Citra had borne out the truth of the legend.

Turning our faces westward, we resumed our route, which at first was not of the most agreeable kind, carrying us ever at the bottom of a narrow valley bounded by low acclivities, until, ascending the hills which skirt the Apulian plains, we came in sight of Monte Milone, and the beautiful form of Monte Voltore beyond. At Monte Milone we halted, as well to draw as for refreshment, which, in the shape of bread and grapes, and good wine, we found in the village osteria, in whose dark chamber, one sick unclothed child on a bed, and five others in similar undress perversely crawling about the floor like so many brown spiders, were the only remarkable objects. After leaving the village we entered on a track leading over a

pleasant plain, through a beautiful scattered wood of young oaks, between which were noble views towards the left of Acerenza, and before us of Venosa; "Mons Vultur" ever closing the horizon of the onward landscape. Nothing could be more agreeable than this latter part of the day's ride, barring that the horse-flies were so numerous that we were fain to shelter ourselves and steeds with gathered oak boughs. At twenty-three o'clock we arrived at the ancient town of Venosa, which, both externally and internally a most picturesque place, stands on the brink of a wide and deep ravine, its cathedral and castle overlooking the whole area of habitations. Extremely clean streets, paved from side to side with broad flags of stone, like those in Naples; numerous bits of columns or capitals, mediæval stone lions, and the machicolated and turreted towers of the old castle, gave great hopes of great employ for the pencil.

We easily found the house of Don Nicóla Rapolla, to whom Signor Manassei had addressed us, the principal proprietor of the place;

it was an extremely large rambling mansion in a great court-yard, where granaries, stables, and a profusion of pigeons, and other domestic creatures, indicated the wealthy man. Two ladies of considerable beauty, and graceful exterior and manners, informed us that Don Nicóla was from home, but his brothers, DD. Peppino and Domenico, husbands of the two ladies, soon joined and heartily welcomed us. Don Peppino, dressed in the extreme of Neapolitan fashion, and Donna Maria in a riding habit and hat, appeared to our amazed senses as truly wonderful and unexpected objects in this the land of Horace. Presently, Don Nicóla, a sacerdote, but head and eldest of the house, and lord and master of all Venosa, came home, and renewed welcome followed; we were shown into very good rooms, containing four-post bedsteads, pier-glasses, wardrobes, and other luxuries which Horatian ages knew not; and after a while we prepared ourselves in "our best clothes" for supper; for our hosts are Neapolitan grandees of the first caste, and all their household arrangements exhibit good

taste and order. As for the two ladies, they talk French as well as Italian, and are infinitely agreeable and intelligent. To-morrow we are to be lionised over Venosa.

September 25.—The castle of Venosa* is a fine old building of the fifteenth century; it is inhabited at present by Don Peppino Rapolla and his lady. Hither, attended by Don Nicola, whom I in vain endeavoured to detach from us, we repaired at early morn, and sate down before it to draw, our polite host lingering by our sides, until, on my telling him that we might be fixed for two or three hours, he at length withdrew. Afterwards we crossed the ravine, and drew the town of Venosa, with its old churches and picturesque houses, and the purple Monte Voltore behind,—one of the most pleasing landscapes I had seen in this part of the Regno.

At noon we paid a visit to the castle and its inmates. Don Peppino has modernised one of

* Erected in the fifteenth century by Perro di Balzo, Prince of Altamura and Venosa.—(Craven.)

the great halls into a very delightful drawing-room, where a grand piano and sofas harmonise well with old carved chairs and ornamented ceilings; its pretty and ladylike mistress being the chief charm of the *salon*.

We explored the whole of this old feudal fortress: a long winding stair leads to fearsome dungeons, their sad and gloomy walls covered with inscriptions, written by the hands of despairing captives. Most of these mournful records are dated in the early years of the 16th century, and a volume of ugly romances might be gathered from the melancholy list. Then there were four stables to see, each made to hold fifty horses; and a deep moat round the whole castle, with other et-cetera —“*quæ nunc describere,*” &c.

Returning at noon to the Casa Rapolla, we found the dinner-hour fixed at three—woe to us for the fashionable hours of our hospitable hosts!—through which arrangement we fear our afternoon sketching must be relinquished. Don Peppino and his wife were of the party, and the entertainment was excellent in all respects.

The conversation is often on English literature—Shakspeare, Milton, &c., on whom there are various opinions; but all agree about “quel Autore adorabile, Valter Scott!” The Canonico reads one of the romanzi once a month, and the whole family delight in them; and are also equally conversant with other known English writers. The cuisine is of a much more recherché kind than is usually met with in the provinces, and we are particularly directed to taste this dish of seppia or cuttlefish, or to do justice to those mushrooms. The wines, moreover, are superexcellent, and the little black olives the best possible; and all things are well served and in good taste.

After dinner we move into the library—a large room well stored with books; here we have caffè and a visit from the Giudice and other Venusiani, after which we go out in a carriage to see the lions of the town. And first the ancient cathedral, spoiled by modern “improvements,” whitewashed and bedaubed, one good arch only remaining intact; many fragments, apparently of Roman workmanship,

are built up into the walls. Next, the church of La Trinità, an extremely ancient low building with pointed arches; two large stone lions guard the door, and near it is a vestibule containing a single column, around which, according to the local popular superstition, if you go hand in hand with any person, the two circumambulants are certain to remain friends for life. The interior of this most interesting church is miserably spoiled by neglect and additions: on the walls are yet visible many half-effaced frescoes of early date,—one of Pope Niccolo has suffered but little from time. There are the tombs also of Robert Guiscard, and Ademberta his wife, but so shamefully out of repairs, that the Trinità church is a disgrace to Venosa. Hence we went to a church commenced on a great scale by the Benedictines, but the progress or completion of the building was interrupted by an earthquake or want of funds; there is a fine perspective of ancient columns and capitals, but the whole edifice is now overgrown with vegetation, and part of it turned into a vineyard, the vines forming a pergolata walk where

the middle aisle should be : nothing of its kind can be more picturesque than this verdant ruin.*

Later we went to the remains of the amphitheatre, a ruin only partly excavated ; and from thence we adjourned to the castle, where was a "soirée" and some good singing, till four hours of the night, when we returned to the Casa Rapolla to supper. Such is the fashion of Venosa !

September 26.—Luxuries again ! Coffee and hot buttered toast are served at sunrise, the latter food being firmly believed by Neapolitans to be as much a part of English breakfast as roast beef is of dinner. The morning, fresh and delightful, we passed quietly on the banks of the ravine, or in the church of the Benedictines ; the wild air of by-gone times

* The church and monastery of della Trinita was erected about 942, on the site of a temple of Hymen, by Gisulphus, Prince of Salerno ; repaired one hundred years afterwards by Robert Guiscard. In the thirteenth century the Benedictines used up the great Roman amphitheatre to mend it, but it was never completed. (Craven.)

characteristic of Venosa is mournfully charming. Our mid-day and early afternoon was passed at the Casa Rapolla, always pleasantly; the intelligence and affable cordiality of our host is very agreeable. Towards evening we walk out. The grandeur of these great men of Venosa is observable at every moment, in the obsequious demeanour of all the people we meet: as for the peasantry, they doff their hats a long way off, and crossing over to the opposite side of the street stand like statues as we pass.

After seeing the golden sun sink down behind Monte Voltore, we passed two or three hours in music, chess, and drawing, at Don Peppino's, returning to the evening meal at our host's. We set off to-morrow for Barile, Rio Nero, and S. Michele.

September 27.—With great regret I left Venosa, and the pleasant family we had staid with—the only people one has greatly cared for in all this tour. Our route led us over an uninterrupted series of undulations to the foot

of Monte Voltore, and but that the early morning was very lovely, we should have voted the walk tiresome. The bulky Don Sebastiano had left us, and a guide with a donkey was our escort. An oak-fringed slope and lanes between vineyards brought us to Rapollo, a town which stands on the base of the mountain close to Melfi, and henceforward we are once more (save for the digression we shall make to the Convent of San Michele) in the high carrozzabile road of civilisation, and commerce. Rapollo is a picturesque place, but we sketched it hastily, and left it at noon, expecting better things at Barile and Rio Nero. In this hope we were disappointed. A broad high way gradually ascends and skirts the base of Monte Voltore, but although at every turn a greater extent of Apulian plain is unfolded, yet the lines of foreground and middle distance are awkward and bad. Barile (four miles from Rapollo) possesses no beauty worth a moment's delay, although it is one of the Greek or Albanian settlements of the Regno, and I had expected to see somewhat of costume. A vain hope! The

inhabitants still speak their own language, but they have entirely dropped all distinction of dress.

Another mile brought us to the large and populous town of Rio Nero, standing at a considerable elevation on the base of Monte Voltore, which rises above it not unlike Vesuvius above Pompeii, and overlooking the plain southward towards Atella and Lago Pésóle. If the provincial splendours of the Casa Rapolla had surprised us, what were they in comparison to the rich mansion of Don Pasqualuccio Catena, whither we had been directed by Signor Manassei, whom we found awaiting us with his son Pirrho. Here were halls and anterooms, and a whole suite of apartments for ourselves fitted up as well as those of any of the first palazzi of the capital. When dinner was over (the least pleasing accompaniment of which was the presence of a great Barbary ape, who made convulsive flings and bounces to his chain's length, and shrieked amain), P—— and I took an hour's walk about the environs of this increasing and prospering

place; but vainly did we search for any view to draw. Rio Nero is not beautiful to the eye; so we adjourned, with the family of Don Pasqualuccio, to the house of his brother Don Tommas 'Antonio—a palazzo still finer than his own. Here were long galleries and large rooms, empty of all but a circle of sofas, and glittering in all the novelty and magnificence of blue and gold papers, pedestals and busts, cornices and mirrors; and at the end of these apartments was one of still larger dimensions and supereminent splendour, where a grand pianoforte stood the centre of the scene. The lady of the house sang and played fifteen songs with terrible energy, and the master played four solos on the flute; after which they performed three extensive duets, till the night wore, and it was time to depart; but as it began to rain a little, these extremely obliging people ordered out their carriage and horses, and we were driven back to our host's two streets off. Such are the quasi-metropolitan "finezze" of Rio Nero,* a place full of thriving

* See note, p. 280.

merchants and possidenti, and rapidly rising as a commercial community by the production and manufacture of silk, and other articles of luxury.

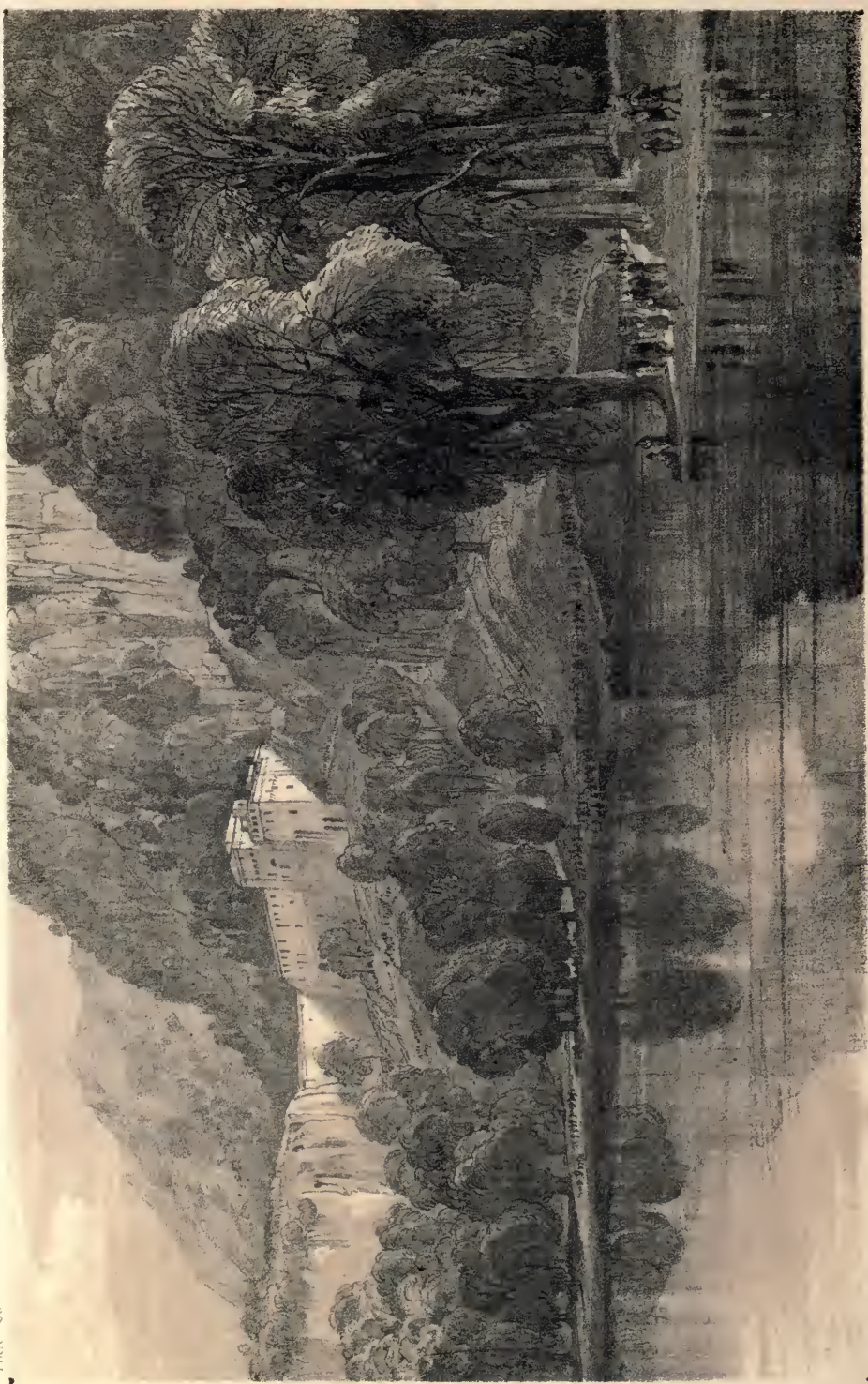
CHAPTER XIX.

Visit to the Monastery of San Michele del Voltore.—Beautiful woods.—Exquisite scenery, and position of the Convent.—The Lake.—The Fêta —The Pilgrims.—Thoughtful attentions of Don Pasqualuccio Catena.—Rain.—Noisy night neighbours.—Another morning at the Lake and Convent.—We leave San Michele.—Extreme loveliness of the scene.—Return to Rio Nero.—Road to Atella.—Arrive at Castel del Lago Pèsole.—Its situation and slender claims to the picturesque.—Italian evening.—Filippopoli.—Departure from Castel del Lago Pèsole.—Avigliano.—Potenza.—Vietri di Basilicata.—Beautiful scenery.—Eboli.—Pesto.—Return to Naples.—Accounts of the late earthquakes at Melfi, &c. &c.

September 28.—To-morrow being the great Fêta of San Michele, all the population of the surrounding country usually flock to the monastery, and if we should be fortunate enough to have fine weather, all the world says it is one of the prettiest sights in southern Italy.

We set off early, with a guardiano and a man on foot, and at first the road, winding round the volcanic mountain, was not interesting:

but when we had reached the western side of the hill, we entered most beautiful beech-woods, which continued increasing in thickness and size as we advanced. The path through these shady forests turns inward to a deep dell or hollow, formerly the principal crater of the volcano; and soon through the branches of the tall trees we saw the sparkling Lake of Monticchio, and the Monastery of San Michele reflected in its waters. A more exquisite specimen of monastic solitude cannot be imagined. Built against great masses of rock which project over and seem to threaten the edifice; the convent (itself a picture) stands immediately above a steep slope of turf, which, descending to the lake, is adorned by groups of immense walnut-trees. High over the rocks above the convent the highest peak of Monte Voltore rises into air, clad entirely with thick wood: dense wood also clothes the slopes of the hill, which spread as it were into wings on each side of the lakes. The larger sheet of water is not very unlike Nemi, on a small scale—only that the absence of any but the one solitary building,



Edward Lear. del et lith

SAN MICHELE DI MONTE VOLTORE.
London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, August 1852.

Printed by Hulme and Walton.

and the entire shutting out of all distance, makes the quiet romance of S. Michele and its lake complete. Great numbers of peasants were arriving and encamping below the tall walnut-trees, forming a Fair, after the usual mode of Italians at their Fête; the costumes individually were not very striking, but the general effect of the scene, every part of it being clearly reflected in the water, was as perfectly beautiful as any I ever saw. We visited the chapel and the dark grotto of the patron saint (but the crowd of pilgrims in these cases makes this no pleasing part of Fête duty), and at noon, after drawing until rain began to fall, we came in to our two cells, which were already well cleaned out by the care of Don Pasquaccio Catena, and arranged for our comfort with the addition of a large dinner sent ready cooked from Rio Nero.

Alas! there was heavy rain all the afternoon, quite deranging the peasant-encampment and Fair: all those, and they were many, who could not be accommodated within the walls of the monastery, returned ere the daylight faded away

to their respective homes, and no others supplied their places, so that the numerous body of pilgrims who should have been the chief charm of the scene was wanting. Neither could we do more than sketch hastily between the showers: but we wandered about the neighbourhood of this most beautiful of places, enjoying its variety of aspects with infinite pleasure.

The long passage or gallery adjoining our rooms was full of peasants, sheltered from the weather by the monks of the convent, and during half the night, their jovial festivities were very noisy, not to speak of the proximity to our chamber door of asses and mules, which frequently brayed and outnoised the clamour of an improvisatore, and four or five zampognari in full practice, as well as some large choral parties employed in singing, in a very terrestrial manner, spiritual songs concerning the miracles of S. Michele.

September 29. — It rained all night, and chillingly damp were the woods of Monte

Voltore at sunrise—yet as the day wore on, the sun brightened everything, and numbers of peasants arrived ere midday was passed.

In the afternoon we left San Michele. As we returned by the beech-woods of the great dell, nothing could be prettier than the view of the convent through the foliage, the blue smoke from the peasant-fires on the green glades rising filmily among the high woody hills,—the hundreds of people in many-coloured dresses on the green sward beneath, and the numerously windowed monastery beneath the great rocks—all clearly reflected in the watery mirror below.

We reached Rio Nero by sunset, where our good hosts were as usual hospitable and attentive, and appeared greatly charmed by our expressions of pleasure at the result of our visit to the convent—the great lion of the northern part of Basilicata.

September 30.—At sunrise we were ready to start in our entertainer's own carriage, accompanied by the good-natured Don Pasqualuccio

on our way as far as Atella (two or three miles distant from Rio Nero), a picturesque but melancholy town, lying lowest of all those placed on the slope of Monte Voltore, and indeed almost on the plain. Here we found a *guardiano* with horses waiting to take us on to Castel del Lago Pèsole,* the last of Prince Doria Pamfili's possessions in this part of Italy which we had arranged to visit.

The castle on its elevated hill was soon in sight, and perhaps from a considerable distance it is better worth the trouble of drawing than on a nearer approach. It was a favourite resort of the Emperor Frederick II. as a hunting-seat (its surrounding territory is still famous for game), and in later days inhabited by Queen Joan; but this ancient place has no pretensions to beauty, nor, excepting from the south whence it combines as part of the landscape with the plain and Monte Voltore beyond, is it in any

* Castel del Lago Pèsole is reputed to have been built by the Emperor Frederick II.; but according to Antonini it is of much older date. Frederick probably rebuilt or enlarged it.

way picturesque: the lines around are desolate and bare of interest, and the lake (or rather marsh) from which it derives its name, lies altogether hidden in the wooden tract below the castle hill.

We found our Melfi friend, Signor Manassei, and his son, staying at the castle, which in its interior is modernised and comfortable, but so little is there of interest either outside or in, that for once we could not find wherewithal to employ our pencils during the afternoon. Below the castle is a small village of cottages, increasing under the care of the active and social Signor Vittorio Manassei, who has named it Filipopoli, in honour of the present possessor of the estate. As the sun set we sate upon the treeless slope opposite the unpicturesque castle, which, indeed, has greatly disappointed us; yet, at this hour, there was the inevitable charm which eventide in Italy brings even to the least promising scenery; the deep purple Monte Voltore, its long lines blending with the plain, across which the last crimson lights were flickering; the dark copse-

wood around; the smoke rising from the hamlet of Filipopoli; the goats and flocks wandering in the valley-common below,—these, joined to somewhat of a wild-world solitude in the scene, threw a sentiment of beauty even over Castel del Lago Pèsole.

October 1.—We set out on our return to Naples. Signor Manassei and his son accompanied us in a carriage; and first we wound up by a good road to the top of the hill called Della Madonna del Carmine, whence we took leave of Monte Voltore, and the seaward plain of Basilicata. Beyond this, the mountains of Principato Ultra were very interesting; glimpses of blue worlds of light and shade, enchanting vales and hollows, which we longed to penetrate.

At Avigliano we left Signor Manassei, and drove on to Potenza, the present capital of the province, and as ugly a town for form, detail, and situation, as one might wish to avoid. Here we hired a caratella to take us to Eboli (for seven ducats), and merely resting to dine, drove on towards Vietri di Basilicata,

where we arrived late and halted for the night.

October 2.—Vietri di Basilicata appears full of really fine scenery and material for good landscape, and left a strong impression of beauty on our minds, though every succeeding hour brought fresh charms to view. It is hardly possible to find a more beautiful day's drive in any part of the Regno di Napoli than this, the road passing through a constant succession of lovely scenes till it reaches Eboli. At sunset the blue gulf of Salerno was visible, and we soon reached the convent-inn of Eboli; which ten years ago I can recollect thinking a horrible place, though it seems to me now rather a comfortable inn.

October 4.—Yesterday we passed at Pæstum:—the morning drive by the beautiful Persano and its plain; the hours of lingering among the bright solitudes of ancient Posidonium; the return at evening when the western sun was golden, and the mountains fading red; the bustling and noisy Salerno by night.

To-day—by beautiful La Cava, and crowded Nocera, and “railroad” from Pompeii to Parthenope.

Our tour is done : it has wanted the romance of Calabria, and something has it been too hurried :—yet it has had its pleasures, and has added many agreeable memories to an already large store.

NOTE.

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FOUR years after the above journals were written, namely, on the 14th August, 1851, a frightful earthquake visited the provinces of the Regno di Napoli, which are partly described in them, and the centre of this alarming convulsion appears to have been the unfortunate city of Melfi. I subjoin the following extract (No. 1), out of many which have appeared in the public papers, which will give some idea of the sad change which has passed over places so full of prosperity and enjoyment at the time of our visit in 1847. I am inclined to think that the account quoted below (No. 1) is in some respects exaggerated, but at all events the calamity has been most fearful. On reading this and other notices of the event in October last, I wrote to Signor Vittorio

Manassei, who most obligingly forwarded me a letter from which I have extracted all which bears on the subject (No. 2). His occupation as agent for the estates of Prince Doria occasioning him to reside generally on the spot, his relation of the casualties may be fully depended on, both as to the number of lives lost at Melfi, and with regard to Barile, which I cannot help thinking he would have mentioned had it met with the fate stated in the notice extracted from the "Athenæum Journal."

No. 1.

From the Athenæum Journal, September 13, 1851.

NAPLES, August 27, 1851.

The details of the terrible earthquake which took place at Melfi on the fourteenth of this month reach Naples but slowly. Each post brings notice of an accumulated amount of suffering, an augmented list of deaths, and particulars of a devastation far surpassing anything that has occurred in the Italian peninsula for many years. I have seen several persons from Melfi, and from their narratives will endeavour to give you some idea of this awful visitation.

The morning of the 14th of August was very sultry, and a leaden atmosphere prevailed. It was remarked that an unusual silence appeared to extend over the animal world. The hum

of insects ceased, the feathered tribes were mute, not a breath of wind moved the arid vegetation. About half-past two o'clock the town of Melfi rocked for about six seconds, and nearly every building fell in. The number of edifices actually levelled with the earth is 163, of those partially destroyed 98, and slightly damaged 180. Five monastic establishments were destroyed, and seven churches, including the cathedral. The awful event occurred at a time when most of the inhabitants of a better condition were at dinner; and the result is, that out of the whole population only a few peasants labouring in the fields escaped. More than 700 dead bodies have already been dug out of the ruins, and it is supposed that not less than 800 are yet entombed. A college accommodating 65 boys and their teachers is no longer traceable. But the melancholy event does not end here. The adjoining village of Ascoli has also suffered, 32 houses having fallen in, and the church being levelled with the ground. More than 200 persons perished there. Another small town, Barile, has actually disappeared; and a lake has arisen from the bowels of the earth, the waters being warm and brackish.

I proceed to give a few anecdotes as narrated by persons who have arrived in Naples from the scene of horror.—“I was travelling,” says one, “within a mile of Melfi, when I observed three cars drawn by oxen. In a moment the two most distant fell into the earth: from the third I observed a man and a boy descend and run into a vineyard which skirted the road. Shortly after, I think about three seconds, the third car was swallowed up. We stopped our carriage, and proceeded to the spot where the man and boy stood. The former I found stupified—he was both deaf and dumb; the boy appeared to be out of his mind, and spoke wildly, but eventually recovered. The poor man still remains speechless.” Another informant says:—“Melfi, and all around, present a singular and melancholy appearance; houses levelled or partially fallen in, here and there the ground broken up, large gaps displaying volcanic action, people wandering about stupified, men searching in the ruins, women weeping, children

here and there crying for their parents, and some wretched examples of humanity carrying off articles of furniture. The authorities are nowhere to be found." A third person states,—"I am from Melfi, and was near a monastery when the earthquake occurred. A peasant told me that the water in a neighbouring well was quite hot; a few moments after I saw the monastery fall. I fell on the ground and saw nothing more. I thought I had had a fit."

No. 2.

From a letter written by Signor Vittorio Manassei, March 27, 1852.

"That although the Castle of Melfi has been ruined by the earthquake of August the 14th, 1851, at least one-fifth part of it having been thrown down, namely, the towers of the outer side, with much of the modern palace, the great gallery, the rooms occupied by Il Signor Lear, the other gallery, and all that side of the building occupied by the family: yet, notwithstanding, no person who was in the castle at the time of the earthquake perished, every individual having been enabled to escape into the vine-garden after the first shock, and before the second commenced, by which all the walls already shaken by the first undulating movement were at once overthrown.

"That the campanile of the cathedral fell down to one-third of its height: that the octagonal church, and the great Casa Manna, (both of which are particularly marked in one of the views taken by Signor Lear on the spot) exist no longer. Such is the case also with the Town Hall, (Palazzo Pubblico) the Palazzi Aquilecchia-Araneia, Severini, and many others. Thus it is too, almost without exception, with all the smaller houses of Melfi, which are all of them destroyed; and when Signor L. was at Melfi, they were building (he may perhaps recollect) a great Taverna; this, but lately completed, was greatly frequented by passengers—and at the first shock of the earthquake there perished in it 62 individuals, and 25 horses; this building is now literally

a shapeless heap of stones. Not more than 840 persons were killed in Melfi.

“At Venosa, though the earthquake was very sensibly felt, no loss of life occurred, and the family of Signor Rapolla were not sufferers in any way.

“At Rio Nero, the palazzo of the Signor Catena (where Signor Lear was staying) fell down, except the lower floor, but no one of that family was killed. In the town, between 90 and 100 lost their lives.

“In Atella, comparatively little damage was done. San Michele, that is the church, of Monte Voltore fell down, but the monastery itself was hardly injured.

“At the Castle of Lago Pèsole, (where Signor Vittorio Manassei happened to be at the time of the earthquake) the shocks were much felt; but though the older part of the building was greatly shaken, the inhabited side was hardly affected.

“At Monteverde, and at Lacedogna, but little injury resulted from the shocks; and although all the towns from Atella in a line to the Adriatic were more or less visited, yet but few were damaged beyond Melfi. Minervino, and all the surrounding places known to Signor L., escaped injury.

“NAPLES, *March 27, 1852.*”

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