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A

HAND BOOK, OR GUIDE,

FOR

STRANGERS VISITING MALTA,

BY

Thomas MacGill.

MALTA.

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LOWELL BEQUEST.

DEDICATED
THROUGH ROYAL CONDESCENSION,
TO
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY
ADELAIDE
QUEEN DOWAGER OF ENGLAND

BY
HER MAJESTY'S
MOST HUMBLE
AND MOST DEVOTED SERVANT
THOMAS MACGILL.

PREFATORY NOTE.

AS up to the present day, in which we write, there is neither Hand-book, Guide or Valet de place, to assist strangers in their rambles through these interesting Islands; and as the frequency of visitors has increased since steam navigation has become the fashion; we have attempted to compose, what we consider may be both useful and entertaining to them. And as the attempt has been made with a good intention, we pray that its imperfections may be visited with indulgence; this being the first work in English, which has been published from the Free Press of Malta.

INTRODUCTORY.



WHETHER the Island of Malta, is mount Atlas looking out of the water, as some antiquarians assert; or whether with Gozo and Comino, she formed one Island, at some very early period, as others are of opinion; we shall leave to those of deeper research to determine; as we find no dates to show, at what time Atlas went a bathing: or when Gozo and Comino parted company.—It certainly does appear however, from the abrupt termination of carriage ruts, in the back settlements of both Islands, that at some no very remote period, they were of greater extent than at the present day; but whether those diminutions, were produced by shakes from Etna, or from the sea having undermined the Cliffs, who can tell? more recently some Avalanch of the kind must have taken place, “near to *Fom-i-reih*,” (or the Mouth of the wind) to the west of Mount *Bengemma*,

The object of this little work is to put into the hands of visitors an account of what these Islands are at the present day, not what their size was in early times; and that too before they get larger or smaller, which may happen, in those days of convulsion and change, (happen when it may, it will most certainly be a radical change.)—We have seen Grahams Island, take a look at us, and sink down again; perhaps to wait the result of the agitations of the present day. And who can tell, whether our own Islands may not take a dip, or whether some fine morning, we may not find that we can take a walk to Sicily dry shod, without the aid of steam; and that the Bullocks from Bengase may not come trotting into our market, without consulting their great importers.

We shall as a kind of exordium proceed to give a brief chronological account of the different masters, who for upwards of 3000 years, ruled the destinies of these Islands; give a topographical statistical sketch, of their surface and rocky basis: their soil natural and artificial; agriculture, products and fruits; without indulging in the romantic idea, that the soil was brought from Sicily, or that the luscious blood-orange, is the result of a matrimonial

connexion, contracted between the orange and pomegranate; of their delightful and salubrious climate; of their fine race of animals, and ingenious mode of feeding black cattle for slaughter; of their healthy industrious and overgrown population; their trades and occupations; an account of the ports, fortifications, palaces, cities, rasals, and villas, which bedizen the land.

Mention the ancient temples said to have existed; the colossal remains of others not described, also the grottos and excavations, natural and artificial, which do exist.

CHAPTER I.

When the history of a country is traced back to obscurity, then tradition steps in and fills the vacant space with giants, ecc.

The Phenicians it appears, found the ports of Malta useful as watering places for their shipping, and a safe retreat during the stormy months; when by their laws they were prohibited from keeping the sea.—That wealthy and enterprizing people, (history informs us) took possession of the Islands of Malta and Gozo, about 1270 years before the birth of Christ; and kept possession for the space of 448 years, when they were displaced by the Greeks after the siege of Troy.—The Phenicians left on the Islands many signs of their greatness, in temples to their Gods, which after a lapse of thousands of years, have again disappeared. They left things more valuable, some of which have been handed down to posterity. The growing

and manufacture of cotton we presume to trace to Tyrian birth; the cloths of Malta are mentioned by Homer, at that period they were considered the most beautiful in the world, as well for their texture as pure whiteness; a character which they retained, until the middle of the last century; when machinery, and a finer quality of cotton were introduced into Europe. They left also the art of dying the Tyrian purple, which is practized in Gozo to the present day. The roses of Malta, so much esteemed by the Romans and others, were a Tyrian gift; and it may be allowed, that they also brought the first hive of bees, which continue to produce such delectable honey, from the highly flavored wild Thyme and flowers, which deck the Islands.

The Greeks, who for a time occupied the Islands with the Phenicians, and afterwards by themselves, left also temples and other works of their times, which have also disappeared.

The Carthagenians, succeeded the Greeks 628 years before Christ; as the Carthagenians sprang from another Phenician colony, established on the coast of Barbary, their residence at Malta may be considered as a renovation of the Phenician rule; with certain intermission and battles, with the Romans, the Carthage-

nians remained master of Malta and Gozo for 365 years; they were however finally expelled by the Roman Consul Titus Sempronius; who created the Islands into a municipality, and gave the people the high title of "Soci del popolo Romano."

During the dominion of the Romans the apostle Paul was shipwrecked here 58 years after the birth of the Saviour; on which occasion many of the inhabitants were converted to the true faith, Publius their governor being the first.

About the year A. D. 500 the Goths and Vandals had possession of the Islands, and after 37 years were expelled by Belisarius.

The Saracens invaded Malta first in 870, and again in 904, when they took possession. They in their turn yielded to Count Roger the Norman in 1090, who united Malta to the government of Sicily, permitting the people to govern by a popular Council, subject to his control.—Until 1120 the subdued Saracens, had leave to remain as tributaries, but were then totally expelled.

In 1265 the French, under Charles of Anjou, became masters; but 19 years after they were expelled by Peter of Aragon then king of Spain and Sicily.

These possessions remained under the sole authority of the Sovereigns of Spain and Sicily until 1530, when Charles the 5th. ceded them as a place of refuge to the Knights Hospitalers of St. John; who some years before had been driven from Rhodes. The Islands flourished under the powerful protection of the knights, and were rendered invincible by proud fortifications; and for fine palaces became the admiration of Europe,—under the influence of the knights, that population which on their arrival did not exceed 12,000 souls, on their departure in 1798, surpassed 100,000. A large portion of the people found occupation under the knights; and through their protection and influence, the cotton yarns and stuffs of the Islands (which could only be exported in a manufactured state) became a mine of wealth to the inhabitants. The knights had now become impotent through their dissolute lives, and loss of revenue from continental revolutions; and in a most dastardly and treacherous manner, without firing a gun yielded up their invulnerable fortifications in 1798, to a republican armament under the command of general Bonaparte; who on his way to Egypt thought it advisable to hold Malta as an intermediate post.

On the evening of his arrival Bonaparte, with one of his generals, walked round the bastions, at one he stopped and exclaimed, "what sublime fortifications!" his companion answered "it was fortunate we had good friends within; or you never would have got possession of them." Leaving a garrison of 5000 men, carrying off an equal number of natives, after three days Bonaparte proceeded to his destination.

The republicans by their acts of spoliation and loose conduct, so irritated the natives, that after an occupation of only two months, the whole country rose against them, and shut them up within Valletta and the surrounding fortifications.—The English came to the assistance of the patriots, and after a siege and blockade of two years, the French were obliged to capitulate.

The patriot chiefs, and national representatives in 1799, proposed that their Islands should become an integral part of the British Empire; which proposal being accepted of, from that period the union Jack became the national flag.



CHAPTER II.

The Island of Malta, (as every one knows, or ought to know,) stands in north latitude 35. 34. and in east longitude 14. 31. The length of the Island is 20 miles, its breadth 12, and its circumference 60 miles. The quidnuncs of ancient days, picked each others eyes out, to determine whether Malta was in Europe or Africa; but John Bull, (before he allowed himself to be dictated to) in his own gruff way, put a stop to all farther dispute on the matter; and by act of Parliament, told the world that Malta is in Europe, and there she must remain.

The land is high towards the north; the highest hill *Bengemma*, is only 590 feet above the level of the sea.—The ports or harbours are all on the north side; the southern and western parts are bounded by inaccessible cliffs, forming a barrier against all debarkation,—The first port or harbour on the east is called *Marsa scirocco*, then comes *Valletta*, *St. Julians*, the *Salines*, *St. Paul*, and lastly *Meleha*.

The ports for commerce are those of *Valletta*, called the great harbour, and *Marsamuscetta* or the quarantine ground; all the others

are considered as ports of refuge, when foul winds prevent ships reaching the two before mentioned; the anchorage in all is good, Valletta port is only subject to a N. E. wind, or *gregale*, which at times does great mischief.

The basis of the Island is lime-stone rock, generally soft, but hard in some parts; quarries of marble are even to be met with; the air of Malta is salubrious, her people of sound constitutions; there is no running water on the Island; but there are many springs which give most exquisite water; and every house in town or country is furnished with cisterns, into which the rains are carefully collected; the soil is part natural and part artificial, rendered fertile by extraordinary industry; the fruits are exquisite.

The products of the land consist in cotton, cummin, and anise, fruit and vegetables, corn for from 3 to 4 months supply of the inhabitants; now potatoes, not only sufficient to supply the population, but also for a large exportation; and on the coast salt is made to considerable extent. The natives are a sober, active, industrious people: they exceed 100,000 souls. The population of Malta is greater than that of any other country in the world, and may now be calculated at 1200 souls to every square mile.

What the aborigines of the Islands were before the descent of the Phenicians we have no data to determine, neither what language they spoke; the language of the people certainly became Phenician or arabic, and continues to be so to the present day, particularly in the interiors or back settlements; in the Cities, there is as great a profusion and confusion of tongues, badly spoken, as was at the building of Babel, in the country, and particularly at Gozo, the people show their arabic origin; they are swarthy with fine black eyes; with one solitary exception, Casal Zurrico, where they are fair with blue eyes.

The coasts of Malta abound with a great variety of fine fish, from the sword fish to the *Macco*; in shell fish from the periwinkle to the lobster. A native writer says "nature in her bounty to her favorite people of Malta, has made even the stone on the sea shore become pregnant, and from their bowels we draw the delicious sea date:"—the *macco* a kind of white bait is about an inch long, it is an embryo of the spawn, which fish from the sea leave in our creeks; in a batter it is made into balls or cakes then fried. Stones which have been in the sea for years, when taken

up and broken are found filled with sea dates.

During the seasons of passage from south to north in the spring, and vice versa in autumn there is a variety of game in Malta, but from the want of cover, and the immense number of sportsmen few birds breed on the Island.

The breed of cattle at Malta is fine; the true beave of Malta is a stately animal and feeds to a great weight; the cows give no milk, they are kept for agricultural purposes, and for breeding from; they often give two calfs, which after suckling for a very few weeks, they become dry:—they are yoked in the plough, generally with an ass or a mule.

The mares of Malta, in times gone by, were much esteemed for their symmetry and swiftness; they were sent by the grand masters as presents to the sovereigns of Europe; the asses are renowned continue to be exported to different parts of Europe and America.

But where is there any thing to match the intelligent looking goat of Malta: the assistant nurse to the ladies of the Island. The Malta goat is taught to suckle children, they soon acquire the art, and appear to like it; it is truly astonishing with what intelligence they do their

work. They leave their pasture when they think the child requires a suck, bleat at the door until admitted, scamper to the nursery where the little urchin is placed on a pillow on the floor, the goat lies down beside it, a tit is placed in its mouth, and then it sucks its fill, or when Nanny is of opinion it has had enough, she rises, goes through her gambols, then bounds off to feed; we have known families where the same goat has suckled five or six children; the children become attached to their quadruped nurse smile at her gambols, and cry when they think she is neglecting them.

The udder of the Malta goat, when full is rather unsightly, it hangs down to nearly the ground, and hinders in some measure the animal from walking; a fine native goat will give two gallons of milk in a day, as there is no pasture land the goats and a few ewes are fed on the waistes and road sides. The milk used by the people is chiefly goat and ewe milk; since the English came milch cows have been brought hither from England and the continent, and what with the original importation and their progeney the number on the Island is now considerable.

The system of agriculture pursued at Malta

is patriarchal, and from the particular nature of the soil cannot conveniently be changed; the soil is turned up with a large hoe, and where it is argillious it is broken with the pick-ax. A primitive looking plough, which a man can carry on his shoulder, is also used, drawn by a cow and an ass, some times a mule or old mare: this plough does not penetrate more than four inches into the ground, we would say that it is more for molifying the soil, which is apt to cake and indurate, than for any other purpose. The harrow used is also simple and original: not seldom have we seen the seed harrowed in, by branches of trees drawn by the yoke mentioned.

Some of the early English brought ploughs from home, but it was soon found they would not answer, as they brought up the small stones, on which the soil reposes, spades were also attempted but with the same effect; nature and practice has pointed out to the natives, that which is best adapted to the nature of the ground they have to work on. It is truly wonderful how they do get on in their own way, and how productive the soil becomes under their management.

We have observed before that the soil of

Malta is of two kinds, artificial and natural, the base of the whole is rock, generally of a soft calcareous quality. The artificial or made land is on the acclivity of the hills, or rising ground.

The mode of procedure in making of this land, is first to break off the crop rock, which is generally of a limited thickness, the large pieces of the stone are rudly dressed, and with them a wall or barrier is built at the bottom of the slop, behind which the lesser pieces are thrown, and gradually the whole is brought up to a level; the smaller particles are rendered minute and reserved for the last; under the crop rock almost universally is found a bed of greater or lesser thickness of virgin soil; this is carefully set apart when all is ready, this virgin soil is mixed with the minute fractions of the soft rock, and a shirting of from a a foot to a foot and a half in depth is spread over the whole.

The breadth of this parapet or hanging ground is determined by the greater or lesser acclivity of the hill.

The natural land, is that in the vallies or lower lands, and has been formed by the alluvial washing from the higher parts, this is generally deeper and with a clay bottom.

Since the carnivorous English came to the Island the lands of Malta have been put into better till, and the crops, particularly that of corn, rendered more secure ; both from the quantity of cattle fed for slaughter, and from the increased number of animals for the saddle and other purposes.

As the feeding of cattle here, may in some measure be considered as an agricultural production ; and as their mode of feeding is rather ingenuous ; we cannot refrain from mentioning it. The cattle for consumption, for the most part, are imported, and that generally from Barbary.

The Barbary bullock is a small animal, and always arrives in a lean, and exhausted state, from the length of the voyage ; in this state, at an estimation of weight, they are sold or distributed to the country people ; also to men who are regular feeders as a trade, and who are generally in connection with the contractors for the army and navy.

During winter or the wet season, when vegetation is remarkably quick, the farmer soils his cattle with the garbage of his lands ; the regular feeder, with green barley and *silla*. The cattle are all tied up ; the regular mode

of feeding at other seasons, is with bruised pulse, or barley, mixed with cotton seed and bran, the cotton seed predominant, and between meals they get what they can eat of chopped straw and dry *silla*; the cotton seed has a grand fattening effect; it is truly astonishing how quickly the cattle take on, and what excellent beef is produced.

We have neglected to mention the *silla* or clover of Malta, (*Hedy Sarum clyperatum*), one of the most beautiful plants, and richest products of the soil. *Silla* may truly be called an indigenous plant of Malta, for there and there alone it grows to perfection, during the last 38 years, *silla* seed has been sent to the east and west Indies, to different parts of America, to the British Isles, to France, Italy, Sicily and Greece; but in neither of these countries can it be cultivated but as a flower: as such it is known in every garden in England, under the name of the French honey suckle." The *silla* of Malta, is a rich beautiful luxuriant plant; it rises to the height, of from three to five feet: its fine leaf is a deep green, its large flower deep red and purple, its stem strong but esculent (from a half to three quarters of an inch in diameter,) leaf, flower and stalk, are all eat by cattle with avidi-

ty. *Sillais* thrown broad cast in August, on land which has yielded a spring crop, and a light harrow is passed over it, the seed is husky, and the sowing in August, is said to be to let the sun rot the husk. The young plant appears after the first rains, is soon after wed with a hand hoe, which also breaks the earth, caked by the rains, after which it is left to its fate, and the produce is more or less, according to the dryness or wetness of the season; sometimes towards the close of December, but generally in January, it is in a state to be drawn for green forage, in February and March it is cut down for dry fodder, and the land is prepared for a spring crop; the quantity prepared dry for summer is truly astonishing.

Here cotton seed is put into the ground, in the end of April and beginning of May; a person with a hand hoe passes over the field, making slight incisions at about two feet distance, another following drops in three or four seeds, drawing the earth over with the foot, a third gives a watering; if no rain falls in a few days after, a second watering is given, then the seeds are left to their fate.

When the germs rise above the ground, the supernumeraries are removed and the

hoe passed round those left; the plant rises to from one and a half to two feet; in the end of July it flowers, after which the bulbs form and open, flower and bulbs continue in succession; in open seasons until the end of november. Cotton is grown here as an annual; yet in some strong lands it is allowed to remain in the ground for two seasons, it is considered as a stolen crop; it is put into the ground after a spring crop has been removed; from the fineness of its roots, it is not a robber of the soil; and from the umbrosity of its foliage, and its hoeings, it leaves the land, in a fit and open state to receive a winter crop.

There are two kinds of cotton grown here the white and the nankeen:—Cotton continues to be the staple produce of the Island; though from the changes which have taken place, in the cotton trade, and its manufactures, it is no longer so profitable as it was in former times; when as we before said, it was a mine of wealth to the inhabitants.

We have said that the Maltese are an industrious race of people, so are they ingenuous; they know them not, who say they are untalented; but talent is rarely developed here, and ingenuity less encouraged; public spirit is

wanting for the encouragement of enterprise; and patriotism and paternal feeling, appear to have hitherto slept on the Island; with the patricians of the land, there is a visible paucity of means; and political economists, acting on a false principle, not taking locality into consideration, say, the Government of a country ought not to interfere in promoting the ingenuity and enterprise of the people. In England it is the wealthy and landed proprietors who encourage genius, the Government only granting it protection; in Malta the sovereign is also the largest proprietor. We are far from advocating, that the public purse should be opened, to gratify the whims of the subject; yet where national advantage is evident, we do think that the public money ought with all due precaution to be brought forward. The interests of the governing and governed must be considered one: otherwise, there can be neither prosperity nor satisfaction to either party:—nothing can possibly run sooth without it.

We shall mention a few trades, or handicrafts carried on here; in some of which the natives excell; and we make no doubt, would in all, but from a very foolish idea, that binding a youth to an apprenticeship, is making him a

slave; the maltese parents in bringing up their sons to the learned professions, make of them college slaves for years; and when they have attained their ambitious object, is it but in too many instances entailing beggary on their offspring, and misery on themselves; whereas having bestowed as much time, in acquiring some useful trade, they could not only gain a competency for themselves, but be able to assist their parents in case of need,—no trade disgraces the man, if the man does not disgrace his trade.

From early times, the workers in the precious metals at Malta have been famed for their feligree work, in gold and silver; and to this day, they preserve their character:—the work which passes from their hands, is truly elegant, and readily bought up by our continental and transatlantic visitors; in the shop of *Critien* N^o. 68 Strada Forni, the most elegant and fashionable articles may be seen.

The stone of Malta, from its softness, and fine grain, works beautifully under the chisel of the sculptor. The Marchioness of Hastings, took great pains in bringing forward this branch of art; and from her fine taste, and the beautiful designs she furnished the leading

workmen; their vases, figures and other fancy work, have risen to a pitch of elegance, they never before were capable of producing; they are now exported into all parts of Europe and America.—In the work house of *Demech* in front of the Theater, some fine specimens may be seen.

The spinning and weaving of the native cotton, has always been considered the most extensive branch of native industry; though it has ceased to be very profitable, yet many thousands continue to gain a livelihood by it, however miserable. The cotton sail cloth of Malta, is still held in great repute by the levan-tine navigators, and there is rarely a Greek ship which comes to the Island, that does not extract a supply.

The table covers, bed mats and glass doylies made here; (the manufactory of which was introduced some years ago by the present Bishop) are very pretty; cloth made from the nankeen cotton of the Island was much in vogue some years ago, and is still worn; it does not always wash well unless particular attention is paid; (after washing Malta nankeen, it ought to be thrown for a night into a lie of straw water, and hung up to dry in the shade, but must on

no account be wrung out, otherwise the cloth will be cloudy and shaded:—Embroidery on cotton and silk is done to perfection, by the females of the Island, and sent out to adorn those less industrious in the neighbouring states; they make also excellent lace; the lace mitts and gloves wrought by the Malta girls, are bought by all ladies coming to the Island; orders from England are often sent for them, on account of their beauty and cheapness.

The making of common chairs, sofas and other articles, of ordinary furniture, form an extensive branch of trade; it is hardly conceivable, the quantity of these articles which are exported to the Levant and coast of Barbary:—now there are also some expert workmen in mahogany; whose work, would do no disgrace to a first rate drawing room.

The sons of Vulcano are not idle spectators, iron bedsteads, sofas and balconies are become an important branch of exportation.

We ought not to overlook the ship-wrights of the Island; they are by all esteemed excellent workmen, and build good ships of fine model; both for the merchants of the Island, and by commission from other parts. If the Island possessed a dry dock, (too great an un-

dertaking for a private individual), this branch would become one of the most extensive and important on the Island. The dry docks at Toulon are the only ones in this part of the world; did Malta possess a dry dock she would become the resort for all steamers and other vessels wanting repair in the Mediterranean.

The grinding of oil colours, is a matter of no mean importance, the oil paints of Malta are esteemed to keep their colours well, and orders for them are received from all parts of the Levant.

The making of cigars, has become a most important branch of trade here, and gives employment to many thousands of poor families; cigars made here from Havana tobacco, are nearly equal to those imported, and cost less than half the price. From hence cigars are shipped to all parts within the pillars of Hercules, and the home consumption must be immense; they are to be seen in mouths, from the half naked pauper, to the best dressed gentlemen of society; who, to gratify an undiscrivable sensation make themselves disagreeable in delicate female society.

We remember, some years ago, before this odoriferous vice became so very fashionable

amongst English gentlemen; that on one occasion it was sanctioned by one of our dames of the first water, who having given a splendid dejeuner to "a smoke puffing captain of rank, afterwards came into the banqueting hall, with a lighted cigar between her pretty teeth, handed a plateful of them to her honored guest; and holding her sweet mouth near his, thus they puffed at one another, until his cigar got ignited.

If we would know anything of the manners and customs of a people, we must dive into the country and join the peasantry, who are still in a patriarchal state, and uncontaminated by the vices of towns and cities; people who live in towns, particularly sea port towns like those of Malta, and mix with foreigners from all parts, are apt to imbibe their manners, and lose their own nationality; and from something in our natures, we are more prone to imbibe vices than virtues.

We maintain therefore, that those who only see the people of Valletta, know nothing of the natives in their unsophisticated uncontaminated state. Lord Byron called Valletta a military hot bed, and he was right, for it has been so ever since it was built:—First under the

knights of St. John, who were lords of the land for the space of 268 years, next under the French republicans for two years, and finally under the English for the last 40 years. All the world knows, what the character of the knights was, founded from the Cadets, or Scions, of the noble families of Europe, professing celibacy, were prevented beggaring their families, by legitimate progeny. The French republicans were not men likely to improve the morals and virtues of the people, and what can be said of the conduct of some of our own countrymen, in either military or civil situations?—

A regular peasants or country wedding, is a scene of great enjoyment;—how delightful it is to see people happy.

After the preliminaries of the compact have been regularly drawn up and signed, (for all and every one must have their contract, in which amongst other things the *sposo* contracts to carry the *sposa*, to the feast of St. Gregorio at *Zeitun*, to that of St Peter and St Paul at *Medina* and *Boschetto*, and in former times to that of St John in *Valetta*:—) the next step is to bring the contracting parties together be-

fore the altar and priest, in the Parish church, for the passing of the ring, which is the first church ceremony; being before the altar, the priest asks the *sposo* if he is willing to take this woman for his wife, to which he answers in the affirmative; he then puts the question to the female, if she is willing to take this man for her husband, and on her answering yes, her father produces a ring, which handing to the priest, he places it on the third finger of the *sposo's* right hand, and with his benediction declares the parties betrothed; all the party now repair to the house of the brides father, where they are treated with wine, rosoglio, cakes, nuts and almonds: all present receive a portion of the cakes, nuts and almonds, to carry home to their families, other portions are sent to friends not present. Early on the morning of the day destined for the wedding, all the relations and friends of the parties, meet at the house of the bride, and in procession go to church; the bride with her maidens, relations and friends go in the Van, the bridegroom with his party following: two or more little maidens precede carrying baskets of flowers which they strew in the way, singing verses in praise of the bride; and as the procession

passes the houses of friends, they throw flowers from their windows and balconies. Arrived at the gate of the church, the father of the bride leads her to the altar, with her veil thrown back; the father of the bridegroom does the same by him, and places her on his left hand, the rest of the party ranging behind and near those they had accompanied. The priest now performs the ceremony; after which the initiated approach together, receive the sacrament and benediction. The wedded pair now leave the church hand in hand, their relations and friends following promiscuously, not unfrequently preceded by rustic music; passing the houses of their friends they are now greeted with showers of corn, nuts and almonds; and more particularly on entering the house of the bride's father they are pelted with the same materials, as if emptying a cornucopia on their heads, for a blessing. The bride is now placed in a chamber, with an apron or handkerchief spread on on her lap, and all the party pass her in levée order, each paying her compliments, and dropping her a present, according to their ability, as a marriage gift.

The families of the peasantry invited to one

of these weddings bring in their *horgia*, a fowl or capon, prepared for the pot with a distinguishing sign, attached to it; a large loaf; and one or more bottles of wine:—a kettle or boiler is provided, into which the whole of the volatiles are thrown, and at the appropriate time a quantity of paste or vermicelli, (provided by the father of the bridegroom,) with other condements, is put into the pot; which forms an excellent soup or minestra. Now comes a scene of enjoyment hurry scurry and excitement; a friend of the bridegroom presides over the boiling cauldron, dives a large fork into it, and holds up the produce to the excited party; each knowing his distinguishing mark, claims it as his property, and carries it off.

If not seldom happens however that more than one has chosen the same mark, and a good natured row takes place for possession, and frequently fowls with the same signal are of different sizes; which occasions another scramble. The *minestra* is now baled out into *lembie* (large brown dishes,) for the supply of all. The bridegroom and bride preside at a large table prepared for the most exalted of the party, and those specially invited, perhaps the landlords or their sons; or if tenants of

the crown, a sprinkling of clerks or influential men from the land revenue office; and priests, like carrion crows, who are never wanting, where there is good cheer. The wedding dinner is provided, in different parts, by the fathers of the initiates, and generally consists of *riso alla portughese*, *maccaroni al forno*, roast pork, roasted lambs, and sometimes capons; wine fruit and cheese, either home-made or imported from Gozo. This is a sad scene of stuffing for the poor bride, who would give serious offence, if she did not eat a portion of what had been brought to the feast by her country cousins and other guests; she must also take a sip of wine out of the tumbler of each; the bridegroom must do the same, not to give mortal offence. Now all is hilarity and enjoyment, as Bacchus assumes the ascendancy:—Joke and song prolong the delight; music strikes up in the court yard, and the most honored guest leads the blushing bride to exhibit on the light fantastic toe, the dance is continued until the day closes in; *Morpheus* begins to remind the more experienced, that the drama is not closed; the maids wean the fair one from the still lingering festive throng, and prepare her for the nuptial bed;

the watchful mot her on giving the bride her blessing, produces as her last act, that delightful compost of honey, jesamine and anisee, with which she anoints her lips, that her breath may be balmy, and her kisses more ravishing.

Marriages here are not always love matches, more particularly amongst the upper and middle classes, where they are but too often a matter of convenience and contract. We remember an instance of this some years ago when the gay Lothario, (not a native of this island) did not know for which of two sisters he had contracted when carried into the family, until the mediator made a sign which was his lady love:—such matches if not arranged by the parents of the parties, are treated for by some old hag who makes a business and profit by it, or a family priest, who generally knows at what time it is most convenient for young females to change their relative situation. This unnatural practice however, is not so prevalent amongst the peasantry, who have greater opportunity of mixing with those of their own rank and station.

There are or were several charitable funds for portioning young females, and thus enabling them to begin the world.

Every Casal or Village is under the invocation of its particular Saint; on the eve of its feast day, in the principal casals, they have fire-works, which is a scene of enjoyment to all hands, and of great rivalry; in some casals where people in tolerable circumstances reside, and contribute, the display of fire-works is of no mean discription. In some casals they have both horse and ass races:—both species of animals, are rode by boys, without bridle or saddle; it is truly astonishing to see how the little urchins stick on, holding in each hand some whip or goad, to urge on his beast. The premium to the winner, besides a small purse of money, is a slip of velvet or silk stuff; sufficient for a sash; this is extended on a painted pole and carried in triumph through the casals and sometimes the cities, by the victors. On their feast day, young and old attend mass in the morning, and abstain from all field or other work for the entire day; after mass the day is spent in innocent amusement; by the young in conversation, dancing and singing, to the guitar or other instrument; of such amusements all are distractedly fond; the men play at bowls, or walk about the fields, talking of their agricultural prospects; and should the

festival fall out during the passage of birds, many amuse themselves in shooting or netting them. On that day, all are dressed in their best array; and when they can afford it, their mid-day and evenings repast, is a little more abundant and of better quality, than on other days. Happy innocence, when undisturbed by the seductions, embroils, and political intrigues of the cities. The lower classes in the country are uneducated, but, "where ignorance is bliss t'were folly to be wise."

The wants of the peasantry are few and easily supplied. Their clothing is the produce of their own fields, spun, and often wove in their own families; their living is of the most simple kind, bread made at home, forming the predominant part; the other parts may be called a *companatic*, or relish, composed of cheese, olives, onions, garlick, dried fruit, salt-fish, oil, etc: in their season, they eat freely of melons, prickly pears, and vegetables in a crude state; they drink wine in moderation;—their evening's repast, after returning home from the fatigues of the day is generally hot, consisting of a *minestra* or cooked vegetables, strengthened with a little oil or grated cheese:—this may be called low living, by those who are accustomed

to higher fare; but they through life have been used to it, and are contented, robust and healthy.

Through all eastern countries the peasantry live on a similar fare; many worse, but few better than those of this island:—butcher meat they rarely taste, it is considered as holiday food; but when they have their *caulata*, the most dainty palate desires to participate.

The *caulata* of the maltese is an appetite stirring dish, composed of all sorts of vegetables, boiled together with little water, and a piece of pork to give it a relish. Their *raviolo*, is even reckoned a dainty dish by the high fed: it is composed of fresh cheese, *ricotta*, heat eggs and chopped parsely enveloped in a thin paste, first boiled, then stewed in a savory sauce, with the juice of the love apple.

When health gives zest, what are all your *col-au-vents*, or fried frogs when compared with the savory *caulata* and *ravioli* of the maltese, but they must be cooked by a country girl; they would be ruined by the first *maitre de cuisine* of Paris.

The peasantry of the country are a humane charitable race of people; it is quite delightful to see the hard working labourer at his hour

of repast and repose, giving a portion of his meal, not more than sufficient for himself, to unprovided lookers on.

A curious custom exists in the Island of giving puppy broth to people pining away from a fright, and in some cases obstructions in young people; the puppy is thrown alive into boiling water, and boiled down into a strong broth; a basin of this is given to the patient, who is kept in ignorance of what it is made from, until it is eaten, then he is informed, and shewn the remains; the idea is that one disgust cures another; it is said to have often a good effect.

Puppies are used by the females of the Island when afflicted with bad breasts:—the puppy must be young before teeth, it is said to draw better and more naturally than any other method devised by us; we know a renowned English Physician who has used it with excellent effect in his own family, and recommends it to all others.

After an experience of upwards of thirty years, we do not hesitate in saying that the climate of Malta, is one of the most healthy; we may judge in some measure of the climate of

a country by the appearance of its peasantry ; where is there a more robust healthy looking people than the peasantry of Malta, female as well as male ; look at the elastic step with which they march along, whether under the scorching sun of summer, or the reverse in winter ; where is the country in which there are fewer rickety or deformed children than here ; and where do people live to a greater age, eighty or ninety is common at Malta, and there are instances of some who have reached the extraordinary age of one hundred and twenty years ; all to be ascribed to the fine climate, and temperate habits of the people :— we are far from saying that the overgrown population of Malta, arises out of the people not dying ; quite the contrary, the children of Malta are as subject to infantine diseases as those of other countries ; and adults to those causes of mortality, which the species is liable to in other parts. Here are no endemic diseases, those fevers which occur in the country may be traced to a cause, which climate has nothing to do with ; yet even these, are less frequent than they were in former days ; *malaria* fevers were of common occurrence with those who laboured and slept in marshy parts ;

now such marshy parts, are either filled up, or are being removed; but marsh fevers never attack those who are not exposed to marsh influence; nor are they ever dangerous to those who attended the sick. One complaint the natives are liable to, but from which few English suffer, that is the *colpo d'aria* as it is called, or a sudden check of the perspiration; and this carries off many and very suddenly: when the pores of the body are open, whether from exposure to the sun, or through hard labor, and the person exposed to a cold current of air; or when a sudden change takes place in the atmosphere, which is not immediately guarded against, they are almost certain to feel the fatal effects; colds and coughs are common to all, who are careless during the changes of the season, and if not taken in time, are apt to degenerate into fatal disease; but these are things which can be guarded against, and man is not more liable to them at Malta, than he is in other parts.

The prevailing winds at Malta, may be called the north west, and south east: all winds with north in them are bracing, those with south, are less so; but this is more felt by old residents, than by those of fresh arrival:—in

all north winds the sky is clear, except the north east, or *gregale*; which when violent, brings both clouds and rain with it; the natives call the north winds *vento di sopra*, and the south *vento basso*, as they invariably bring clouds with them, which hang for a short time over the Island like a fog; but as there are neither high lands, nor forrests to detain them, they speedily pass away; south winds do not always raise, the thermometer, but a clammy heat is felt on the skin, the thermometer at Malta ranges from 75 to 85 in summer, very seldom 90; in winter it is as rarely below 50.

There is hardly a day in the year in which an invalid cannot take exercise, in what may be called the open air, under due precaution;—besides climate, invalids have many other advantages here; the houses are spacious and airy, and never over heated either by day or night even in summer, under proper attention to ventilation; the markets are well stocked with the best of beef, mutton, poultry and game in the season; also with a great variety of choice fish, delicious fruits abound, and vegetables of almost every description; green pease are in the market from november to april.

Here the invalid, finds Physicians of talent, who in addition to their knowledge of an English constitution, from study and practice know how to temper to it, the climate they practise in. The roads are good and the carriages of the country both safe and commodious.

We are far from asserting, that either the climate of Malta, or her medical men can work miracles; but we do say, that when climate, medical skill, and other local advantages, are taken into account; they will be found more prominently advantageous, than can be met with in any other southern country.

As connected with climate, we take leave to mention, that a venomous reptile is not to be found at either Malta or Gozo; a favor the natives ascribe to their tutelary, Saint Paul; who having shook into the fire the viper which came on his hand, extinguished them for ever on the Island.

CHAPTER III.



After the renowned siege by the Turks in 1565, their defeat and final expulsion by the brave knights, and their followers, it was determined by the grand-master and his council, to found a city; and for that purpose the neck of land which runs between the two great harbors called mount *Xiberass*, was purchased; the first civil and military architects in Europe, were sent for; and under their directions, those proud fortifications and stately palaces, which now adorn the land, rose simultaneously. Each tongue of knights vied with another in rendering their auberges splendid, and each knight, in erecting for his private establishment, a habitation fitting to his rank;—every succeeding grand-master added to the strength of the fortifications, and each succeeding knight to the splendor of the city.

Thus then rose the splendid city of Valletta, which for strength, magnificence and beauty, is hardly to be equalled by any in Europe.

The architects who planned the city, did not neglect the health of the people, who were to be located on the most southern part of Europe; the underground works of Valletta may match, those which meet the eye; the city is intersected at all points by spacious canals and sewers debouching into the sea; by which the air is kept pure, and an unpleasant exhalation is not to be met with, except in rare instances by the culpable neglect of individuals.

When the city of Valletta was founded, it was said that an ancient prophecy was fulfilled, "that every palm of mount *Xiberass*, would be worth a zechin of gold."

The city of Valletta is divided into streets longitudinally and latitudinally, running parallel to each other, the latitudinal crossing at right angles; the principal street or strada Reale, runs from the main gate Porta Reale, on the extreme south, down the hill to castle St Elmo; on the right or towards the east, run strada Mercanti, St. Paolo, St Ursola, and lastly Levante, which joins the line wall; on the left or to the west, run strada Stretta, Forni, Zecca, Ponente, and lastly Marsamuscetta, on the line wall; latitudinally on the extreme south is strada Mezzodì, Britannica,

St Giovanni, Lucia, Teatro, Vescovo, San Cristoforo, San Domenico, San Nicola, and also some short traverse lanes.

No stranger need ever loose himself in Valletta, as all the streets run parallel, and cut each other at right angles: the names of the streets being on the corners, and all the houses regularly numbered.

The city of Valletta is girt round by formidable bastions and line walls,—crowned towards the sea by castle St Elmo; and towards the land by the Cavaliers of St John and St James's.

The frowning castle of S. Elmo was rebuilt by the knights, of native granite, after their former erection had been destroyed by the Turks during the siege; the castle is surmounted by a fine light-house, for the guidance of shipping entering the ports, and is seen at a very great distance; the accommodation within the castle for its garrison is extensive, and in the lower bastions are sunk barracks for 2,000 men;—the remains of general Sir R. Abercrombie (brought from Egypt,) lie in one of the bastions; and in another those of Sir Alexander Ball, the first civil commissioner of the crown; who died here in 1809.

Following the line wall and entering from the sea the port of Valletta, the first striking object is the grand ward of the Hospital of the knights, it is 600 feet in length; here the knights in person fed their sick off plate; it is asserted that Bonaparte carried off six cart loads of this plate:—farther on, rises that beautiful arcade called the lower *Barracka*, erected on a bastion; in the platform of this bastion is a monument to the memory of sir Alex. Ball, built on the plan of the temple of *Thesis* at Athens:—beyond this and on the summit of mount *Xiberass*, on the extreme eastern part of the fortifications, stands the upper *Barracka*, more lofty and more extensive than the other, forming two sides of an angle, the one looking to the sea, the other to the harbour;—the view from the upper *Barracka* is both extensive and beautiful.

Those beautiful arcades were erected as promenades for the knights, and were formerly roofed, to exclude the scorching rays of the sun; after the insurrection of the Priests in 1775 by order of the grand-master, the roofs were removed, as it was found that there the seditious priests had held their meetings. From a slab in the southern extremity of the upper *Bar-*

racka, it appears to have been built in 1661, by an Italian knight, at his private expense.

A marble bust of the grand-master Gessan, who ruled at the period of this erection, stood in the N. W. end but was removed to the outside by order of Sir Thomas Maitland, to make room for a monument and statue he caused to be erected to the memory of a favorite native Judge, Zammit:—the two fine lions of this monument are after that of Canova; a copy of which, in clay, was brought on purpose from Rome, and now stands in the University. The statue by a native artist, is a good and strong likeness of the Judge.

In a shoulder of an angle is a monument to Admiral Sir Thomas Freemantle who died at Naples, when in command of the mediterranean squadron; and on another shoulder a very elegant bust and monument, erected by the officers of the squadron to the memory of Admiral Sir Henry Hotham, who also died in command of the fleet.

At the southern end of the *Barracka* is a fine columner monument, from the private purse of Sir Thomas Maitland, to the memory of colonel Clement Edwards, formerly private secretary to His Excellency at Ceylon; colonel

Edwards, died here in 1816 : while introducing his new system of colonial accounts.

In a bastion immediately under the *Barracka* is a monument (erected by his widow) to colonel Morshed of the Engineers, who died whilst acting Lieutenant Governor.—In the platform of the *Barracka* bastion now a garden or shrubbery lie deposited the remains of the great Sir Thomas Maitland; and to the shame of his family, (which got a large sum of money by his death,) there is only a stone with his name on it.—Sir Thomas Maitland was the first governor of Malta.

In the bastion under the lofty cavalier of S. John, in a narrow vault, within that little circular railing, lie the mortal remains of a much loftier cavalier, the companion of his sovereign the supporter of kings and princes;—who ruled the destinies of millions, and was buried embalmed in the tears of thousands,—the great, the noble Francis Rawdon Marquis of Hastings.—For six months after the funeral of lord Hastings, his tomb was bestrewed with choice flowers and garlands by unseen hands; a grateful country people, bringing the produce of their farms to market before the dawn of the morning. The governor general of India,

died in command of the little Island of Malta.

Since the English became masters, the proud bastions of Valletta have become sepulchral. In another bastion to the west, is buried Capt. Hon. sir Robert Spencer; and still lower, rises that beautiful traiean column in memory of the late Major General the Hon. sir F. Cavendish Ponsonby Lieut. Governor of Malta, erected by subscription, at the suggestion of the maltese.

The title of the knights of S. John is that of hospitalers, their first care then in the building; of the new city was their hospital, that building is now the military hospital of her majesty; it is a most magnificent and extensive building, inclosing a spacious square in the centre; this square contains fine quarters, in which, in the first instance, were lodged the grand-master and his knights, until his palace, and their auberges were erected. Behind the square and towards the port are spacious and magnificent ward, also store houses and appurtenances to render complete such a princely establishment.

This hospital is near the bottom of strada Mercanti, a little farther on is an extensive female hospital, built and endowed in 1646, by

a charitable lady of Sienna, named Scoppi; and opposite is another hospital for males, in a building formerly the monastery of S. Madalena; both these hospitals are extensive, and conducted on the most approved principles, both for cleanliness and the management of the sick; admission to them is on the most liberal scale.

The palace formerly the residence of the chief of the order of St John, now that of Her Majesty's representative the Governor, is a lofty and magnificent building; filling up a quadrangle formed by four streets, and having within two squares, or courtyards. The building is of one story, in which are all the public and family room, the ground floor is occupied with household offices; in the back part are the stables and coach houses. Its bold front faces the square of St George, where the main guard is stationed; this front has two stately portals, and is pretty regular, but without architectural beauty, and appears to have been added to at different periods.

An arched way runs round the court below, and a spacious corridor the upper floor, rendering free and single, the extensive suit of rooms on it

This corridor is hung with portraits of the grand-masters, and on the frize over them; are sea fights, between the knights and infidels.

Most of the receiving rooms are hung with paintings by good masters, and some good copies; there are however but a few esteemed valuable, one, the saviour embracing the cross, said to be a Guido, a full length figure of Wiguan-court in armour by Caravaggio, Lewis the 16th by David, and a fine portrait of Catherine of Russia, by a Russian artist.—In the large anti-chamber are some pretty paintings, by maltese pensioners, sent to study at Rome; Amongst others, a copy of the portrait of George the Fourth, painted by Sir Thomas Laurence, and presented by His Majesty to the Pope.

The Hall of St Michael and St George, is an elegant and spacious room, recently modernised by the choice taste of Sir George Whitmore; and still more recently, floored, for the convenience of the ladies, by His Excellency the present Governor.

The tapestry room is a most elegant hall, and its decorations representing Indians and strange animals, are in most splendid colours, in the very best style of the gobeling:—the decayed roof of this fine room, was restored

about twelve years ago, and the fine tapestry most tastefully disposed of, under the direction of the Marchioness of Hastings.

The entire back part of the palace is fitted into an armory, round the walls, the mail and arms of the knights are tastefully disposed, this armory contains many curious pieces of ancient armour; the most beautiful piece, is the entire mail of Wignacourt, inlaid with gold; the same he wore when his portrait was done by Caravaggio.

In the armory, are 10,000 muskets, besides a great store of carabines, pistols, pikes, etc., fancifully arranged; all in the finest state of order, and ready to serve the wants of army, and navy, at a moments notice.

In an angle of the court yard of the palace, in a place formerly a cellar and kitchen, is the Protestant Episcopal chapel and vestry; as our saviour was born in a stable, our legislators hitherto, have considered a cellar a fit place for his adoration.

On the north east side of the palace rises a lofty square tower; now a signal station, formerly an observatory:—This observatory, on the most southern part of Europe, was established by the grand-master Rohan; who

besides bringing instruments to the value of *L.* 5000, brought also an astronomer.—On the arrival of the French in 1798, those valuable instruments were secreted in an *entre sol* of the tower; where they were discovered in 1816, by Captain Smyth the surveyor; and where we presume they still are; the hatched roof of the observatory, a round house, from which the astronomer made his observations, and which opened to all points of the heavens, was calked over and tarpawlined by Sir Alexander Ball, and converted into a place for keeping signals.

The stair of the palace, is certainly one of easy ascent, yet it is one of the most awkward; and neither in its entrance or exite, becoming a palace of such magnificence.

The public Library is joined to the palace of the Prince; an arch being thrown over *strada Teatro*; this is certainly the most beautiful architectural edifice on the island; besides a fine range of shops, it was originally intended, that the lower part of this fine building, should contain the mint, and many public offices; whilst the upper part, should in the front be devoted to the Library; and the fine rooms, behind the large hall, to contain the Museum.

This fine edifice had arrived at a finished state before the expulsion of the knights, its internal arrangement for the books and Museum, was left to the English; who, from a store of mahogany found in the premises, completed the undertaking; in 1811 during the administration of General Oakes, it was finished, and the books of the Library and Museum were transported thither; the old Library and Museum, were in a range of rooms, filling the space between the Treasury and strada St Lucia; on this site, has risen a beautiful range of buildings.

The public Library of Malta was founded by a knight named Tancin in the year 1760, who gifted the child of his adoption with 7000 volumes of choice works; some of the Sovereigns of Europe, we believe, made donations; and as by a decree of the grand-master and council, all books found in possession of knights at their death, became the property of the Library; it was concluded at their expulsion, that the Library was possessed of about 70,000 volumes. From the mode in which the books accumulated, it is fair to suppose that the collection is more numerous than select; this extensive Library is very poor in manuscripts.

It is to be regretted that though the Island has been 38 years in possession of the English, that as yet there is not a catalogue of the books in the Library; though we are told that upwards of twenty years have been spent on its compilation.

In the Library are to be seen some ancient vases and marbles, found in Malta and Gozo.

The exterior of the temple of St John, offers no signs of attraction, grandeur or beauty; the grand entrance is flanked by two square towers or belfrys, in one of which is a clock; in the other, several fine bells, some of which, it is said, were brought from Rhodes.

The church of St John is a temple becoming the worship of the true God; when the sound of its fine organ, fills the lofty vaulted roof, the mind of the worshipper cannot fail being exalted above worldly things, to adoration of him who dwells in space infinite.

It is an unique building, from its tessellated and mosaic sepulchral pavement, to its heaven inspiring canopy; from its splendid nave, run off spacious aisles, in which are the altars dedicated to the different tongues, or branches of the order of the knights; at the extremity of the nave stands the grand altar, adorned

with *lapis-ladzule*, behind it, in the choir, rises a colossal group, the baptism of the Saviour by St John, in white marble, from the chisel of the renowned Melchior Gaffa a native sculptor; in front of the altar, to the right is a throne to Her Majesty, and adjoining it, without the rail, a chair and cushion for her representative; on the left, and opposite the throne of Her Majesty, is another for the Prelate of the Diocess, both elegantly decorated with crimson *velvet* and gold fringe.

The tapestry in this temple, is remarkably fine, and of great value; its original cost was 12,000 Venitian zechins; in coming to the Island it was captured by the infidels, and ransomed at its original value.

This tapestry is from Gobeling, the subject is the life of the Saviour, from his nativity to his death and resurrection; it fills up to the groin of the arches, the space between the columns in the different aisles.

There are many good but few valuable paintings in this Church, the decollation of St John, which forms the altar piece in the oratory is good, by Caravaggio, it is much injured by the damp from the wall behind, and appears as if it had suffered from smoke. There are

four valuable paintings in the chapels on the right of the grand altar, Mary at the grave of Lazarus, Gerome and the scull, a youthful St John in the wilderness, and the Holy Family. That stupendous work, the painting on the vault of the nave is the work of Calabrese: the history of St John, painted to correspond with that of the Saviour on the tapestry, which hangs beneath it:—To the extreme left of the grand altar, is a chapel to the Virgin; called the most Holy, as the sacred elements of the Sacrament, and holy oil, are kept there; on the wall of this chapel, within the rail or separation, hangs the keys of the gates of Jerusalem, Acre and Rhodes, brought off by the knights as they were forced in succession to abandon them; the railing in front of this chapel is of silver; and escaped the rapacity of the republicans, having been painted black by a priest.

There are many fine monuments in this church, to different Grand Masters; we shall mention five of the most remarkable:—on entering the temple by the great gate, on the left is a pretty monument to the grand master, Zondadari, it is in bronze and marble; in an aisle to the right going up the nave, is that to Pinto;

his portrait in mosaic is said to be of hard stones, and valuable; it is supported by a cherub, and hanging, as it were over it, a very fine figure of Fame, both of white marble and well executed; in an adjacent chapel is a monument to Perillos, in choice marble, beautifully executed; the figures of Justice and Charity, are of exquisite workmanship. In the same chapel and immediately opposite, is the beautiful monument to N. Cottoner; the work of Melchior Gaffà in his best style, Fame surmounting is exquisite, and the Moor and Turk, in large natural size, supporting the plinth are most remarkably characteristic.— Contiguous to this is that to Vilhena, in bronze and marble; a richly adorned sarcophagus on the plinth, is borne by two lions, the one grasping a turband the other a helmet; and each crushing with the other paw, a quiver of arrows.

Under the choir behind the grand altar, is a crypt in which are deposited the remains of several grand-masters.

The church of St John, or high temple of the order, was built in 1580, it was the treasury of the order, for all its valuable reliques:— before the landing of the republicans St John's

temple was rich in every thing of church grandeur, its stately candelabras and magnificent lamps, were of massive silver, some even of gold; near the grand altar stood the twelve apostles in silver, all fell to the rapacity of Bonaparte and his myrmidons; we shall mention a few of the valuable things which were moved off on this occasion, as well as the valuable church plate.

There was the right hand of St John, which formerly was kept in the church of St Sofia at Constantinople; and taken from thence by the sultan Bajazet, and presented to the grand-master D'Aubesan, whom he was attempting to bribe, to betray his brother Zezime; who had fled, and taken sanctuary with the knights at Rhodes, in the year 1482.

This hand at a later period, had been incased in an arm or glove of gold, and was richly set with gems; on the fourth finger was a fine *solitaire* or brilliant; by some curious mechanism the stone turned on a hinge, and the head of St John sprung up in its place. The grand master Hompesch, requested Bonaparte, to give him this relique; Bonaparte unscrewed the gemmed arm, put the fine ring on his own finger, drew forth the precious bones, which

wrapping in a sheet of white paper he sent to the ex-grand-master by an aid-de-camp; Hompesch, on his arrival at Trieste, sent the relique to the Emperor Paul, who built a temple at St. Petersburg to place it in; it is curious to remark that there are five right hands of St John, preserved in different parts; every one of course, believing his own to be the right one. It is more than probable, that extracted from St Sofia is the real one.

In the Treasury of St John were a basin and ewer, which our Henry the VIII. in the name of his Queen, presented to the grand-master Isleadam; when he visited England, in his circuit of the courts of Europe soliciting aid to reconquer Rhodes; Henry, at that time presented him with ordnance to the value *L.* 20,000 sterling:—The last relique we shall mention, is the sword and dagger; this sword and dagger, were a present from the King of Spain to the grand-master La Valletta, in admiration of his conduct at the siege of 1565, the scabbards were of gold, and the hilts studded with precious stones:—These, Bonaparte appropriated to his own use; and before he left Malta had the sword balanced to suit his stature; this sword and dagger were

carried before the grand-master in procession, on the anniversary of the victory.

The cathedral of the diocess being at Medina or Città Vecchia, Bonaparte presented the temple of St John to the Bishop, as a co-Cathedral; which gift however was not formally confirmed by the English before 1814, when at the congress of Vienna these possessions were confirmed to Great Britain; and the following inscription put over the main guard in the square of St George; and the arms of merry England placed over the gates, and other public places.

MAGNÆ ET INVICTÆ BRITANNIÆ

MELITENSIVM AMOR

ET

EUROPÆ VOX

HAS INSULAS CONFIRMAT

A. D. 1814.

It is to be regretted that the Malta Fencibles, were for some years permitted to assemble for mass in this fine temple, and until with their arms, and iron heels, they had punched into irreparable ruin, the beautiful mosaic pavement.

The city of Valletta abounds, to profusion, in churches, chapels, and convents, we shall mention the parish church and convent of St Domenico. This fine building was erected, since the English became masters of the Island; it was in a great measure built by charity, collected daily or weekly, from the inhabitants; and by the working classes, through devotion, working gratis on sundays, and days of holiday; for which they had a dispensation from the Bishop, perhaps from Rome itself.

We take leave to mention, also, the church and convent of Santa Maria de Gesù, or the *minor osservante*, not on account any thing that is to be seen in the church, but from the melancholy accident which occurred there in 1823; this church stands on the steps descending strada San Giovanni to the marina, and part in strada St Ursola. It was a custom of the worthy ecclesiastics of this congregation, on the last days of carnival, to collect all the boys they could find under 15 years of age, to keep them out of mischief; and with them went in procession to Floriana, where they heard prayers; from thence in the evening when they returned to the church, a distribution of bread and fruit took place.

It was understood that a gang of vagabonds had collected, and were in waiting to rob the children of their reward; to defeat this rascally intention the priests had the children passed through the church into a back corridor, which by a deep and wide flight of steps led to an entrance gate in strada St Ursola; the children wandered along this corridor, which unfortunately was dark, until they reached the steps, down which, each as he approached tumbled, and the pressure from behind was so great, that the accident was not discovered, until the whole space was filled to a level with the corridor.

An alarm was given, but horrid to relate, before relief could be afforded, about 150 boys were smothered, and trampled to death; as if to add to the misfortune, the gate in strada St Ursola opened inwardly, and an entrance could only be effected but by demolishing the gate with crowbars and axes. This was a horrible finale to the carnival; instead of merry and uproarious masques, distracted mothers were seen running from all quarters to the scene of woe, in search of their missing children, ignorant of their fate.

Men were seen flying in all directions, with

dead or dying urchins in their arms, to the hospitals, the houses of medical men, the apothecaries shops and houses in the vicinity, in hopes of resuscitation for all were still warm. Few indeed of even these in whom the vital spark was found flittering were restored to their disconsolate parents:—Thus the city which but an hour before, was a scene of giddy joy, was in a moment plunged into one of mourning.

We observed that in the building of the city of Valletta, the different tongues or branches of the order, built for themselves stately auberges; these tongues were eight in number, France, Provence, Auverne, Castile, Aragona, Italy, Germany and Anglo Bavaria.

The auberge of France, in strada Mezzodì, is an extensive building; at present the Commissariat to her Majesty.

The auberge of Castile at the eastern extremity of the same street, is a strikingly fine building; its entrance and staircase are much admired, this fine auberge is at present occupied as officers quarters.

The auberge of Italy, near that of Castile, and in strada Mercanti is a large building, but without architectural beauty, the shield in front

is sculptured on marble, once a column of the temple of Proserpine; which might well have been spared in its original state; in the lower part of this auberge, is the Civil Arsenal of her Majesty; in the upper part, is the Government Printing Office.

The auberge of Provence is in strada Reale, this is a fine building of good architecture, the upper part is devoted to the service of the Union Club, and its extensive and fine hall to a ball room, the lower part is an Auction room.

The auberge d' Auverne, is also in strada Reale, this is a large building but not pretty; here sit her Majesty's courts of law.

In strada Ponente is the German auberge, the residence of his honor the Chief Justice; and near it, is that of Aragona; where the chief Secretary to Government resides.

At the bottom of strada Ponente, and on the line wall, facing the sea, stands that superb building, the anglo Bavarian auberge, isolated from all others, and is occupied as Officers quarters.

In mentioning the public buildings of the Order, in Valletta, we must not overlook its Bakery; this fine establishment stands under

the brow of the hill, in strada Forni; it occupies the quadrangle of four streets;—besides extensive granaries, and stabling for the animals required, here are eighteen mills, which grind daily, forty quarters of wheat when required; and its ovens are capable of baking 70,000 rations of bread:—It is now her Majesty's Bakery where the bread for the Garrison is made.

The institution called *Monte di Pieta'* and *Redenzione*, is one of the old and noble institutions on the island, the funds of this fine and useful establishment were formed by charitable donations; amongst the donors stands conspicuous the name of a charitable lady, called Catarina Vidal: the gains of the institution went to the ransoming of Maltese from slavery. *Monte di Pieta'* was established in 15— for the purpose of lending money on pawns, the interest taken, was, and is, six per cent, the legal interest of the country; the term of loan is for eighteen months, but renewable to three years; unredeemed pledges are sold by public auction, and the balance paid to the holder of the ticket; this institution is in strada Mercanti, since the general redemption of christian slaves by the British in 18—, we are not informed how the gains of this institution have

been applied. That fine building, called the college of the Jesuits, fills the entire quadrangle formed by strada Mercanti, St Paolo, Ves-covo, and San Cristoforo;—After the suppression of the Jesuits in Malta, the grand-master Pinto, took possession of the property they had, and out of it formed the University of Literature; since that period, the administration has been in the hands of the Governors of the Island. In 1809, Sir Alex. Ball granted the court-yards, and a considerable part of the building, to the mercantile body here, to form an exchange; since that period, the merchants have assembled there;—they receive many news paper strom different countries; and are liberal, in admitting to the perusal of them, all strangers, and officers on the Island;—The entrance is from strada San Paolo, and within the premises, is the *Anglo Malta Bank*; immediately opposite, in strada St Paolo, is another Bank, called the *Malta Bank*; those banks, which are of great utility to trade, are simply banks of deposit and discount.

The public market of Valletta, is abundantly supplied with all the necessaries of life, and generally of good quality; such as beef, veal, mutton, and pork; poultry of all descrip-

tions; game in its season, fish, of great variety, fine vegetables, and fruit;—formerly, the public market was finely arranged, and the venders, kept in good order and civil;—since 1816 the market has become filthy, and every thing in disorder; the venders saucy and over-reaching; the bridle which kept the market people in order, was broken and under a false idea of liberty to trade, they were allowed to become forstalers, of the first necessaries of life; to the serious injury of the inhabitants.

Valletta has a pretty little Theatre, capable of containing 800 persons, and at times the operas are executed by good performers;—this theatre was built about 1730, by the grand master Vilhena, and was thoroughly repaired in 1812.

Some 30 years ago, there were neither a decent inn, or lodging house, in the city of Valletta; at that period, strangers arriving on the Island, were forced to depend on the hospitality of the English residents for a dinner; and such was the hospitality of the day, that all were well received, and kindly treated. The palace, now occupied, by the Admiral commanding on the station, was fitted up by Sir Alexander Ball, for the accommodation of strangers

of distinction:—now, we have three good inns, where a prince may be accommodated; and 5 or 6 most excellent lodging houses; the inns are also lodging houses,—we consider the best inn, in the English style, that of Morell, in strada Forni No. 150. The Clarence hotel kept by Madam Goubau No. 249. strada Reale, where every thing is very comfortable; a table, D' hote, as also hot and cold baths, a great luxury, in a warm climate;—the Inn of Micaloff is in strada Stretta No. 53, where baths are also to be found.

The best lodging houses are Dunsford's, in strada Reale No. 254, madam Morelli No. 224 in the same street, Crockford's in strada Zecca No. 124, also Miss Atkinson's No. 38; Vicary's in strada Vescovo No. 111, and madam Calleja, near the entrance to the upper Barracca; there are many others very good, but of less note; the charges, in the inns and lodging houses are moderate.

We cannot take leave of Valletta, without mentioning its interesting marine margin, under the fortifications, on the side of the great harbour:—passing the marina or sea Gate of the City, the first striking object on the right, is that pretty garden in the ditch, with its

romantic house, looking over the harbor; the residence of the superintendent of the quarantine department; and in these days of economy, superintendent also, of the great port of Valletta;—looking to the left, at the extremity of the mole, is the office of the Captain of the port, and marine police; under the lofty bastions, run a fine range of capacious magazines, or store houses, for the reception of merchandise. In front of the magazines is a spacious mole or wharf, where ships charge, and discharge, their cargoes. There are two passages for reaching this part of the marina, the one is a short cut, by steps, emphatically called *Nix mangiare*, from the quantity of beggars which infest it; the other is a broad carriage way, which turns off, going down the hill, at the fish market. At this fish market there is a fine fountain, over which, is an elegant bronze statue of Neptune, of gigantic size; on the plinth, which also is in bronze, are representations of some exploits of the knights, in *basso rilievo*; erected by Wignacourt, when he brought the water into the city;—that broad way, which branches off, at the fountain, continues to descend until it reaches a mine, excavated by the grand master

Lascaris;—passing the mine, the custom-house is the first building on the left; it was built of granite by the grand-master Pinto;—here opens a busy scene; the wharf, covered with activity runs to a much greater length, than the other, and like it on the back ground is lined with fine store houses; those beyond the Calcara Gate, were erected by Pinto; and tradition says, he intended to endow the college of literature with them; at present they are occupied by Her Majesty's Commissariat.

Having introduced the grand-master Lascaris, we shall mention an anecdote of him; this grand-master, having fallen short of funds for some work he had undertaken, applied to the Pope, for permission to coin tokens, or false money; pledging himself, to withdraw them from circulation within a given time:—His Holiness granted the request, but the grand-master neglected the pledge. The Pope vexed at this, sent a peremptory order for its fulfilment; ordering the false coin to be withdrawn, cut in pieces, and thrown into the sea;—Lascaris obeyed, the coin was called in, clipped half through, put into bags, and thrown into the sea; the morning after however, the bags were fished up, and the money thrown again

into circulation:—this base coin, continued in circulation until 1827, when, by an order from England, (with similar other trash of Rohan and others,) it was called in, melted, and replaced by a pretty coinage of copper sent out.

CHAPTER IV.



The fortification of the city of Valletta being completed, it was found expedient, to extend the lines farther into the country; and form a city of refuge, for the people of the interior, with their stock, in the event of invasion, by the enemies of the christian faith;—this line of fortifications was begun by the grand-master de Paola, about 1630; and as they were planned by a person named Florian, he gave to them, the name of the architect; they extend across the entire neck of land, from the great harbor, to that of Marsamuscetta.

In the extreme eastern angle of these fortifications, in a fine lofty situation, stands the capuchin convent; in a crypt under the convent, are to be seen, the deceased monks, standing in niches round the sides; after death the body is placed in a kind of sand bath, until it is perfectly dried, then dressed in the habit of the order, and placed in its nich:—In a bastion towards the centre, stands a pretty little-palace called Argotti, with its romantic looking

gardens and pleasure grounds; on the extreme west, looking into the quarantine harbour, are the house and gardens called Sa Maison; these, were places of recreation, for the grand-masters; who, by their rules, could not sleep, beyond the fortifications;—near Sa Maison, is that beautiful and much admired arch, by which two bastions are joined in one. The barracks of Floriana, are capable of containing 1000 men; the officers, who until lately, were dispersed over the town, are now concentrated in a fine building originally intended for a market place, by Sir Alexander Ball.

The Floriana contains many things worthy of notice, the extensive esplanade was divided by Sir Alexander Ball; and the centre made into a Botanic garden, it is now an elegant promenade for the inhabitants, open until sunset; the fine walks in this place, in the midst of flowers and shrubs, were formerly arched over, and covered with vines, forming at all hours of the day, a fine shady retreat, from the heat and dust, of the city; fountains playing to keep the air fresh; the trellis work falling into decay, was taken down, and the pillars remained, covered with flowering shrubs.

It was soon found, that a public promenade was not a fit conservatory for rare plants, so, a garden, in the vicinity was taken for them,—near this public promenade are places of devotion, called St. Calcedonio, and Madonna Manrese; into these establishments, people retire from the world, to prepare themselves, by prayer, for receiving the sacrament;—opposite to this is the house of industry, planned by the humane Marchioness of Hastings;—the original plan of her ladyship, was, that this house should be an asylum for poor children, where they could get a little education, and be brought up to useful domestic arts, fitting them to gain their living as servants, or, in the humble walks of life.—At Floriana is another charitable institution, called *Ospizio*, into which are received old people, and invalids, of both sexes, it was here that the cholera broke out in 1837; at that time the inmates amounted to nearly 900.—At Floriana there is also a lunatic asylum.

Sir Alexander Ball who was a great admirer of the ancient corn institution of the maltese; and who was always anxious, that a sufficient stock of wheat should be on the Island; as well for the supply of the inhabitants, as for our

army and fleet, in the Mediterranean; considering also the war we were engaged in, and the enemy we had to deal with, caused to be excavated, and erected at Floriana, fossi and magazines, equal to contain 34,000, quarters of wheat. (those in the city near St. Elmo contain 45,000, and these near the upper Barracca 9000:.)—The air of Malta is so impregnated with saline particles, that corn cannot be kept for any length of time above ground, so the fossi or corn stores are all excavations; when carefully filled, and hermitically sealed, corn of a *sound quality*, will keep in them for years, without great deterioration. The ancient corn institution of Malta, which had stood the test of many centuries, was a family compact, of the inhabitants; with which the knights, who found it in existence, had no right to interfere, yet they did so, and sometimes made use of its funds, which belonged to the people, and at no period to the government; the management of the institution was under the surveillance of the Jurati, or municipal magistrates, the representatives of the popular council; the object of the institution, was to lay in, at proper seasons, a supply of corn, equal to the wants of the people, and this they issued,

for consumption, at a fixed price; the gains in one year making up the losses of another;—this was the “saving bank” of the nation, and the people had neither to fear, either dearth or scarcity; The French found 40,000 quarters of fine wheat in the fossi; and knowing that it belonged to the people, *and not to the knights*, were prepared at the capitulation, to leave hostages for the payment of it: but, General Pigot was in such a hurry to get possession, that this important point was never mooted; and the native chiefs, being excluded from every part of the arrangement, it became lost to the people. Sir Thomas Maitland “*squashed*” this noble institution, and in its stead created a government monopoly, injurious to both the people and the government; now again suppressed, by recommendation of the late commissioners; and the trade in corn made free.

Under the inner line wall of Floriana, looking into the Quarantine Harbour, is the Protestant burying ground, in the platforms of the outer bastions; and as fast as one bastion fills up, another is appropriated;—and it is truly astonishing how fast they do fill up:—there, many an illustrious, and lamented character, moulders into dust; in one of these, was buried the elegant

Poet of Jonia, the Prince of Masons, and best of men, Waller Rodwell Wright, late President of Her Majesty's Courts on the Island; the grave of Mr. Wright may be discovered (as left by the sexton) near to that costly monument erected to the memory of Mr. James Be'l, a merchant, whose death was occasioned by a fall from his horse, in 1823.—In the new burying ground lie the remains of the late Countess Dowager of Errol, Lady of His Excellency the Right Honorable John H. Frere; a beautiful mausoleum is put over her Ladyship's grave, of Carara marble;—here also lie the remains of Vice Admiral Sir Henry Hotham, Commander in Chief of our Mediterranean Fleet,—and of a beautiful snow drop, cut off as it opened, who can never be thought of, but with a tear, and a sigh; all these grounds are covered with handsome monuments, and pretty epitaphs.

We ought not leave Valletta, and Floriana, without noticing that they are both well supplied with water, brought by an aqueduct of nine miles, from the back part of the Island. This highly useful undertaking, was executed during the Grand Mastership of Adolphe de Wignacourt, at the beginning of the 17th cen-

ture; the expense was borne by the corn institution;—the aqueduct is on the old principle of stone channels and arches carrying the water on an inclined plane; every house, has a connexion with the fountain, from which they are supplied, when the winter rains havenot sufficiently filled their cisterns; immense tanks have been made in various parts, in Valletta and Floriana, to assist in seasons of drought, and for the supply of the shipping in both harbours; there are several little fountains which play, in both the City and Floriana, with basins for the use of cattle, and other purposes.

The great, or Valletta harbor may be called a port of five indentations, or coves; each affording good anchorage. On the first promontory, or point of land, opposite St. Elmo, is the fort called Ricasoli, erected during the Rule of Nicola Cottonera; a knight named Ricasoli, (from whom the fort took its name,) bearing a large portion of the expense. This formidable fort, guards the eastern side of the entrance;—the first indentation is called *Bighy Bay* or *Rinella*:—on the jut beyond this, stood a stately palace, with fine gardens built by a knight named *Bighy*. On this site, reserving the palace for the centre piece in front, has been

erected that superb, elegant, and extensive naval hospital, which is an adornment to the Island, and an immortal honor to its founder;—*Bighy* hospital was erected, by order of His Majesty William the Fourth; and built under the superintendance of Her Majesty's, active and gallant Admiral, Sir Pulteney Malcolm:—where is the Jolly 'Tar, whose heart does not warm, to the memory of his brother sailor, who in his care for his brave fellows, at such a distance from home, erected this elegant mansion for their habitation in hours of sickness! ! !

The centre part of the front was the old palace, re-edified, to suit the plan of the modern building:—in this part, is the chapel, and quarters for some of the medical officers; in the spacious wings, are sick quarters for officers; behind, on each side, run a double row of wards, with a fine airy passage between, and a collonade on each side, where patients may take refreshing air; in the lower part of the building, are the kitchens, and store houses, for the requisites of such an extensive establishment.

The wards at present are capable of receiving about 300 patients, and as a large extent of ground behind, belongs to the esta-

blishment, they may be at any time extended; all round the hospital is laid out in shrubberies, and flower gardens;—the square in the centre, is prettily divided into parterres of ever greens;—so, the sick, it may be said, are living in a garden. In digging the foundation of this hospital, some stones were found bearing Phœnician inscriptions;—they are now in the British Museum;—though every possible care has been taken for their preservation, the action of the air is such, that they are all exfoliating.

The administration of the whole is confided to that able naval Physician and Surgeon Dr. Liddell, whose residence, is at *Rinella* house, within the precincts of the hospital;—Sir George Whitmore, then in command of the engineer department, had the honor of forming the simple and beautiful plan.

The second indentation is between *Bighy* and the promontory, on which stands the formidable castle of St Angelo:—this cove is called *la-Calcara*; on its northern side, is a fine palace, with pretty gardens, the country residence of his honor Augustino Portelli, a member of her Majesty's Council of Government; on the high ground, beyond the bottom of the

cove stands, conspicuous, a convent of **Theresian Friars**.

The castle of **St. Angelo** at the period, (1530) at which the order took possession, must have been of considerable extent, as the grand-master, and all his knights, were accommodated within it; whilst their Greek guard, 4000 strong, were placed on the suburb or *Burgo*, now called *Cit' à Vittoriosa*,—what the actual strength of **St Angelo** was at that period, we know not; it is now a cerberus of nearly eighty large mouths, which would render precarious the existence of ship or squadron, attempting to force an entrance;—such had been the neglect of the debauched *celibates*, that when the French took possession of castle **St Angelo**, there was hardly a gun, that was not embeded to the axle, in the rubbish which had exfoliated from the rock behind; or one, whose carriage, axle and trucks, were not perfectly rotten, and could not have stood three discharges.

As may be supposed **St Angelo** under the English, is in a high state of order, and worthy of admiration.

The fine cove beyond **St Angelo**, is formed by the point on which stands **Scenglea**; in this

cove, is the Arsenal and Dock yard of Her Majesty, under the charge, at present, of a Rear Admiral;—On the north side, are the Victualling, and other stores: also habitations for the Admiral and his officers;—on the south side, from the sheers inwards, is the Dock yard; every thing in this beautiful establishment, is in the highest state of order;—here the wants from a Pinnacle to a first rate, are made up at a moments notice,—a dry dock, so much wanted, was begun here; but after great expense had been incurred, it was again abandoned;—it has since become more necessary, on account of Her Majesty's steamers, and others, which cannot be hove down. On that part of the Victualling Yard, next St Angelo, stood the temple of Juno; not a vestige of which remains;—next the sheers, is that large building occupied by the military: which was the Inquisition, some signs of which remains, in rings, and hooks, in the walls. The whole of this beautiful cove, is covered like an amphitheatre, with fine houses, from the three cities which surround it; The city of *Senglea* on the south, *Vittoriosa* on the north, and *Burmola* in the centre; each possessing magnificent churches;—there is one thing to be seen in *Vittoriosa*, curious

from historical recollections;—*the hat and sword of La Valletta*: which he left in the church of his Greek followers; when he came to thank them, for their brave conduct, in defeating and routing the Turks, at Burgo, in the renowned seige in 1565;—from which the city acquired the title of *Vittoriosa*; also some curious pieces of plate, belonging to the Greek church; preserved in the treasury of the church of St Lorenzo.

Nicolo Cottoner built extensive bastions, and line walls, round a large portion of the country behind this cove: which begin at St Angelo, and end at *Senglea*: this formed a safe retreat, for the people of the country and their cattle, in case of invasion; the extent of the whole circuit is several miles.

The fourth indentation or creek is formed by *Senglea*, and the promontory called *Corradino*; in this fine creek lie merchant ships, and such as are under repair;—here are also the yards of several private ship builders; and many a fine vessel they have put through their hands; ships built in Malta are not only well put together, from the best materials, but are of fine symmetry.

In these private yards the Russian squadron,

after the battle of Navarino in 1827, was thoroughly repaired.

On the heights of *Corradino*, the grand-masters had extensive mews where they kept horses, and brood mares, also a *menagerie* of wild animals;—hardly a vestige now remains; there stands the fine obelisk of granite, erected by the officers and crew, of Her Majesty's Frigate *Madagascar*, to the memory of their late commander, the Hon. Sir Robert Cavendish Spencer.

On the beach below, is a small branch of the Quarantine establishment, for heavy ships of war, not permitted to enter the quarantine harbour; and for merchant vessels which by stress of weather, are forced to enter, the great harbour:—farther on, is an extensive powder magazine, where ships of war, deposit their ammunition whilst in port; as also private ships, and merchants, the powder they have on sale.

Here, begins that fine undertaking which immortalizes the talented Capt. Hunn, of Her Majesty's Navy, late Superintendent of Marine Police, and Captain of the great harbour:—This is a formidable dyke or wharf, which has gained from the sea, and rendered fertile, many

acres of land;—in this work, Captain Hunn made large tanks, to contain many thousand tons of water, for the use of his brother tars; and a fine fish preserve, to supply the market in stormy weather. The plan of Capt. Hunn was to carry a mole, from the health Office to the head of the cove opposite *Senglea*; forming fine rope walks;—and at the extreme end, in a place he considered well adapted, to form a dry dock; which would not only be useful to Her Majesty's Navy, but render Malta a *rendezvous* for ships of all flags in the Mediterranean, which require docking.—Beyond the works of Capt. Hunn, and rounding the head of this bay or harbour, is a still more extensive undertaking, of the same kind, by a private individual, named Francesco Zammit; the two together, will effectually drain a large space of marsh, which rendered that part, and Casal Paula, unhealthy;—Zammit's undertaking is on his own account: and in return for his outlay, Government has ceded to him the land he acquires thereby;—this we call the fifth indentation, perhaps improperly, as it is only a prolongation of the harbour.—The malaria arising from this marsh, was even felt at Floriana.

The history of this Zammit, is an extraordi-

nary instance, of how industry, and talent, will get a man on in the world, without education, capital, or high birth: when the English came here, Zammit was employed by the Commissariat, as a common master mason; where he soon became a favorite, from his steady good conduct; step by step he advanced:—he had the true philosophers stone, industry, economy, and intelligence:—every thing under his hand became gold, and he is now, the most opulent man on the Island.

Marsamuscetta, the small port or Quarantine harbour, may be called a port of four indentations: the entrance of this harbour, to the west of St Elmo, is guarded by a fine round fort, with out-works, called *Tigne*; built by a knight of that name, in the last days of the grand master Rohan: and stands on an elevated promontory, called *Dragut*, after the renowned leader of the Turks at the siege of 1565;—beyond this is the fortification called Fort Manoel, built on a small island, or peninsula, by the grand master Antonio Manoel Vilhena about 1726. On the esplanade of the fort, is a good bronze statue of its founder.

—This fine fort, is at present employed as a Lazzaretto for passengers: the influx becoming so great, since the establishment of steam communication, that the regular Lazzaretto, was unequal to their depuration. The fine bay of *Sliema*, is formed by *Tigne* and *Manoel*;—the second cove is formed by *Manoel* and the rocky promontory of *Tashbiesh*: on the north side of this creek, under fort *Manoel*, is the Lazzaretto, and on the opposite shore of *Tashbiesh*, are moored, ships, which have foul hulls, or long quarantine to perform; whilst those of shorter duration, lie under the protestant burying ground;—the barren point of *Tashbiesh*, juts out, into the middle of the port; the third indentation, a small one, is formed by the angle of the fortification, on which stands *Sa Mcison*, formerly described, and the place called *Pietà*:—at the head of this is a chapel called *Santo Rocco*.

From the public baths, at the end of *Pietà*, the fine line of wharf, up to the head of the creek, is called *Limsida*, from a brackish spring at the top, where inhabitants of the city, and country near, deturge their heavy household linen etc.;—this, then forms the fourth indentation or creek.

The entire port of Marsamuschetto, is under the surveillance, of the sanitary or quarantine police; quarantine is one of those necessary evils, which cannot be avoided, when the health of a nation is at stake; and on that of Malta, (it may be said) in a great measure, depends the health of Europe; here the segregation is rendered as pleasant as possible; by good accomodation, an excellent supply, of all the necessaries of life,—and the politeness of Her Majesty's Officers:—we assert, and that from long experience, that in no part of Europe, are the sanitary laws, more impartially administered, than they are at Malta;—and more, that in no part of Europe, are sanitary laws, and regulations, better understood, better defined, and executed, than they are here:—the quarantine police of Malta, consist of a Superintendent a Captain of the port, another of the Lazzaretto, with all the requisite under officers, and guardians;—and over all, is a board of health, at which the Governor himself sits as president.

CHAPTER V.

Though there is neither wood, nor water, except the sea, to diversify the scene, or relieve the eye; yet there are many, not unpleasant, rides into the country, and on the coast of Malta (*fior del mondo*);—the roads in general are good, and the carriages, cattle, and drivers of the country, are very safe;—the English caresses are certainly handsomer, than those built in the Island, but they are less commodious, and more apt to get out of order; for a days excursion into the country, we have always preferred the roomy; commodious, though clumsy, carriages of the country;—if any thing should chance to go wrong, every one knows, how to put it to rights.

As there are no inns in the country, at which, even a humble dinner, can be procured, those who go out for a day's trip, must carry their prog in the carriage with them; many are the pleasant pic-nics we have formed, when going to explore, or see the well known sights which different parts afford;—

those delightful, little, social parties, are generally made, after the sun has lost his scorching influence,—in autumn when grapes are in perfection;—in winter the season of oranges; or in spring, when strawberries abound;—in summer, no inhabitant will barter, what coolness can be found at home, for the risk of a sun stroke, or of being choked with dust;—but strangers, visiting the island for a limited time, must appropriate it to the best advantage; starting very early, remaining in some shady place during the great heat, and returning late in the evening.

The outer gate of the Floriana lines, is called Port Bomb;—this beautiful gate leads into the country; leaving Port Bomb, a fine road branches off to the right, into the country by *Pietà* and *Misida*;—the road shooting straight from the gate, conducts to the old city *Città Vecchia*, or *Medina*;—a third road branches off to the left; and passing the head of the harbour of Valletta, leads to the casals, or villages on the eastern parts of the island: on the margin of the high, or centre road, which, by a gentle ascent, leads to *Medina*, run the picturesque arches of the aqueduct for several miles.—The first fine house, with its exten-

sive gardens, on this road, is the palace of *Placass*, built by a knight of that name; farther on, at a short distance from the road, to the right, is the extensive establishment of Giuseppe Moscat, or *Giardina*, (as he is commonly called,) where thousands of bullocks are fed for the supply of Her Majesty's navy and army, near this is the country residence of a person named *Schembri*, better known by the nick name of *Conte Gallina*, (almost all the natives have nick names) who rose to be very rich, before he died, (*since the English came to the island*); The house called the Lions, with its fine gardens is a little farther on the road,—and a little way beyond it, the house and gardens of St Giuseppe, the country residence of Hector Greig Esq. the present Chief Secretary to Government:—in front of St Giuseppe, is a fountain from the aqueduct, with a trough for passengers and their animals to drink, and refresh themselves at,—a great treat on this very dusty road: the soft stone, of which the roads are made, soon pulverizes. Not a quarter of a mile further on, the queduct crosses the road; it was near this; the morning after the insurrection in 1798, that 500 French troops, sent from Val-

letta, to relieve the Garrison of *Medina*, were met by some half armed peasants, under command of *Vincenzo Borg*, who afterwards so much distinguished himself;—fearing they had fallen into an ambuscade, and not being able to count numbers, or force behind the walls; they first fell into confusion, then took to their heels, and were chased into the gate of Port Bomb:—The road now leads to *casal Attard*;—there is a splendid view, from this road of the palace and gardens of *St. Antonio*, formerly the principal country residence of the grand masters, now, of the Governor;—a road branches off to *St Antonio*, which for some distance as an approach, was planted with mulberry trees by Governor Ball. *Villa Bologna*, a fine palace, now of the *Xiberass* family, is also seen from this high road;—*Casal Attard* is a populous village; but like many of the others, contains nothing worthy of remark, except its fine church; the way to *Medina*, runs through the middle of it; the road from *attard* to *Medina*, looks bleak for want of buildings,—trees, there are none, but the fields, on both sides, are in a high state of cultivation:—we have observed, that the road from *Valetta* to the old city, lies on a gradual ascent, we are

now at the bottom of the promontory, or pinnacle, on which the old city stands,—the road is now steep, until it reaches the top; near the top of this last ascent, burst out a copious fountain, where cattle water, and the people of the city, and suburbs, wash their linen etc; we have often thought it remarkable, to see such strong springs so near the summit of a mountain; but so it is, and the water gushes out with great impetuosity.

The mountain, on which *Medina* stands, is within a very few feet in height, of those of *Bengemma*, the highest on the Island; the top may be called table land, and for more than half the circle appears parapeted towards the east, north, and partly west;—situated as *Medina* is, on the jutting promontory of an eminence, it has a formidable appearance in approaching it.

The birds eye view from it, is beautiful and extensive; taking in, three quarters of the whole islands, studded over, at all points with palaces, villages; in front the cities and the sea, and in the extreme west, the lofty and fertile island of *Gozo*:—On this commanding site, in ages long gone by; stood the temple of *Apollo*, not a vestige of which is now visible.—The city,

which stands on a limited space, was regularly fortified, with its ditches, and drawbridges,—which, being no longer considered of importance, are falling into decay.

— Tradition says, the city of *Medina*, was originally founded 1404 years before the birth of Christ; and that it was at one period of much greater extent, than it is at the present day.

Within the walls of *Medina*, are several fine buildings, private as well as public; about the beginning of the last century by a decree of Vilhena, *Medina* was made a place of refuge, and safety, into which debtors could take asylum from their creditors;—the Cathedral of the island stands in a fine situation within the city; it was erected on the spot, on which stood the house of Publius, at the landing of St Paul;—Publius was of course the first Bishop of the island; we find the cathedral existed (in 1090) when Count Roger landed on the island, and that he gave in its support, the tribute exacted from the Saracens: whom he had conquered with the assistance of the natives. In the year 1693 the cathedral was destroyed by an earthquake, after which it was determined by the Bishop and his chapter to

re-build it, on a more magnificent plan, and a design for that purpose was procured, (from the renowned Nicolas Gaffa—a native architect); the cathedral is dedicated to St Paul the patron Saint of the Island; in carrying this magnificent plan into execution, funds fell short; when most miraculously, a youth employed in digging out the foundation, struck his pick-axe on a large copper jar; and calling out “a miracle of St Paul, to finish his temple,” collected the Canons and by standers round him; an ample and weighty copper jar was disinterred, and removed into the vestry, as a place of security: the Bishop, who was in Valletta, was forthwith informed of the discovery, and the morning after, came to the spot, where, in his presence, and that of his canons, and some monks, from a neighbouring convent, the jar was opened, and found to contain gold coins, of great intrinsic value, the coin had on one side in arabic characters the creed of the mussulman, “there is no God, but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet,” and on the reverse, three pears;—now by a remarkable coincidence, the ruling grand-master Perillos, had three pears for his arms; Perillos claimed the money as his, and was so obstinate that the matter was re-

ferred to the Pope, who decided against him. His Holiness however only decreed the moiety of the treasure to the cathedral ; giving the other half to the Inquisitor,—who had the generosity to add it to the funds of the *Monte di Pietà*.—The streets of *Medina* are narrow, and the cathedral, is closed in with buildings but the view from the balcony of the Hall of convocation, which looks towards Valletta, is truly beautiful; the Palace of the Bishop, is contiguous to the Cathedral, and near it is the college or seminary, established by Bishop Bussan in 1755; this seminary, certainly stands on the site of the temple of Apollo; in digging the foundation, for a building, adjoining several columns and marbles of the temple, were found at the beginning of the last century; those gems of antiquity, were sawn up by the Vandals of the day, and applied to the decoration of their houses and churches; the grand-master had a Palace, within the walls; the hall of the *Jurate* or municipal magistrates is also there; the Carmelite monks have a church and convent in the city. In 1798 the French began robbing the Carmelite church of its damask, which so exasperated the people, that an insurrection began; a youth kicked away the foot of a ladder, on

which a soldier stood, detaching the silks; who was killed on the spot; a row commenced, others got into the befray, and tolled lustily the great bell, which called together the already exasperated people; from the most remote parts of the Island;—the infuriated populace, let loose their worst passions, and committed acts of horror on the garrison, worthy of cannibals;—within the walls of *Medina*, is also a convent of Nuns.

The suburbs of *Medina*, or *Rabbato* as they are called, are more extensive than the city itself; here, several of the nobility, and gentry, of the Island have habitations; at *Rabbato*, there are several ecclesiastical establishments, there are two things there worthy of notice, the grotto of St Paul, and the Catacombs; the grotto is a cave under ground, apparently cut out of the soft or calcarious rock, of no great dimensions;—here it is said, the apostle daily retired for devotion, during the three months he remained the guest of Publius;—from this circumstance the cave became a place of very great renown. It is fair to presume that this grotto, in the early ages, was in a very rude state; at the beginning of the 17th century, a Spanish nobleman of Cordova, who had become a monk of St Paul, became hermit, and

took up his abode in this cave: through the extreme devotion of Fra. Giovanni, the sanctity of the place increased, and through his extraordinary exertions, and influence with the sovereign Pontif of the day, Paul the fifth, and the Duke of Mantua, he not only procured privileges and immunities for the place of his adoption, but relics of great esteemed value; and through the charities of the devout, considerable funds, by which, he was enabled to build and endow a church, which he erected over his favorite grotto, dedicated to Publius; which church, a few years after, was considerably enlarged and embellished, through the devotion of the grand inaster Lascaris:—from the interior of the church, the grotto is descended into, by a flight of good steps; and through an iron gate on the right, is the entrance to the holy cave: the grotto is circular, and of no very great diameter; in the centre stands a statue, in marble, of the saint. The rock, of which the grotto is formed, is of a soft, white, calcareous substance: and, what is considered miraculous, though for ages, it has been visited by thousands,—and almost every one carrying off a portion, either through devotion, curiosity, or from a belief that it cures several diseases,—

yet the dimensions of the cave have not increased: another flight of steps conduct into a subterraneous chapel, cut out of the same rock; in this, there is a remarkably fine statue of St Paul, in white marble, the work of the renowned native sculptor, Melchior Gaffa, who lived in the 17 century; this piece is certainly of most exquisitely finished workmanship, and is much admired: adjacent is a statue of the Saviour, in wood, said to be the work of St. Luke; and near it, the model of a statue, of St Luke, by Gaffa, which he intended to have executed in marble, in the same style as that of St Paul; it is argued by those who are sceptical in miracles, that the stone of which St Paul's grotto consists, is a growing rock, and so replaces what is carried away; yet it is an odd circumstance, that, though the adjacent chapel is cut in the same rock, and never mutilated by visitors, it has not increased, through ages, in its dimensions.

The precious relics, suffering from damp, underground, were removed into a place, appropriated for them, in the church, where they are shown, at the present day;—We shall mention a few of the most remarkable of these relics;—there is a cross of ebony, richly adorn-

ed with silver, a present from Pope Paul the Fifth; this cross is said to contain many inestimable relics: amongst others, a piece of the cross of our Saviour,—also some milk of the Virgin Mary; another smaller cross, of gold, set with gems, and containing some relics, (which for some time hung round the neck of Pope Paul the Fifth, by a cord of gold and green silk) was, as it hung at his neck, presented to the hermit of the grotto.

The third we shall mention, is an arm of gold, set with gems, on a pedestal of rock-crystal, containing a piece of bone, taken from the arm of St Paul, which was preserved in the cathedral of Milan, and presented to the grotto, by the Duke of Mantua in 1620. We presume to consider, that, had Citizen Bonaparte been informed of this arm, he would have made it keep company with that of St John.

The Catacombs at Rabbato, are at a short distance from the grotto of St Paul; passing from a lane, into a piece of ground, and descending a flight of rude steps, you find the present entrance to these renowned Catacombs;—at this point, a clerical guide strikes a light, and furnishes each visitor with a taper, that he may see, and not lose his way; he then con-

ducts, through various intricate passages, until he reaches a circular room or vault,—what this apartment was originally intended for, is not well known, perhaps a place for some preparation of the dead, before being put into their silent chambers, or places of deposit; at some period, this has been a chapel, at another, a mill for grinding corn or olives. Passages lead off from this in various directions, and at distances intersect each other, on the sides of these are excavations, into which the dead were laid; in many of them, places for the head, are cut in the stone; in some parts they appear to have held more than one, and in others, there are two tiers;—more than one circular apartment is shown. Tradition says that many persons lost their way, and their lives, in the mazes of the Catacombs, and were never more heard of; and on that account, the passages were shut up to a limited distance; one fable goes to say, that a dog, shut in, after some days, made his appearance at a hole at Burmola;—we are inclined to believe, that such fabulous stories were got up, to make visitors have greater veneration for the place. At some later period, the catacombs appear to have been habitations for poor people, and perhaps; at times

of invasion, they formed an asylum for the inhabitants in their vicinity:—crosses, cut in various places, would lead to a belief, that the catacombs are of christian origin: but those may be the handy work of a later period.

These Catacombs are not lofty, like some in other countries, nor could they well be, as they are only about fifteen feet below the surface;—no Catacombs of equal extent, have as yet been discovered on the island; but, as smaller excavations of the kind are found, it is not improbable, that excavators may discover something more extensive;—we shall mention other excavations, in the course of our description.

At Rabbato, there is a noble charitable establishment in the hands of the Bishop,—we allude to the hospital of N. Saura, in which many aged people are supported, with paternal care.—In the ground floor of this noble building, is another establishment, by a true patriot,—the present Bishop of the Diocess,—who, with equal talent, wielded, as occasion required, the sword, the shuttle, and the crozier: This is a manufactory, of many curious sorts, of cotton stuffs, unknown to his fellow citizens: which he, through industry, ingenuity, and per-

severence, has been able to bring forward, (at his own expense), to promote the industry of the country. Were it not, that we invite every stranger, who comes to our island, to visit this highly patriotic undertaking, we would enumerate a few of the clever things that are manufactured here.

Some antiquarians are of opinion, that the site, on which *Medina* stands, is the top of the famous mount Atlas.

In the year 1826, Mr George Grognet, a talented, and distinguished, Maltese engineer, had the good fortune, to become possessor of a curious stone, disinterred in excavating a court yard at *Medina*;—It was fortunate that this stone fell into the hands of one, so deeply read in the works of ancient philosophers, and so fully imbued with the idea, that his native land was, what had been, before the flood mount Atlas.—Three sides of the stone, (which is four English feet square), are covered with Phœnician, or antediluvian characters, which no one has yet been found to elucidate satisfactorily,—on the fourth side, is an inscription in latin, by T. Sempronius, a Roman, who once ruled on the island, saying, he had seen the stone, which is a relic of the ancient Atlantida, de-

scribed by Plato,—when this stone was disinterred in 1826, so perfectly had the atmospheric air been excluded, that the letters were as fresh in their angles, as if they had but recently come, from the graver; as were those, discovered, in digging the foundation of the hospital, at Bighy.

Mr Grognet, knowing from antiquarian study, the effect, of the action of atmospheric air, on disinterred stones of a soft nature, wisely covered the whole with hot oil; which led malicious interlopers to insinuate, that the stone was not antique, but of his own fabrication.

Considerable sums were offered Mr Grognet, both by English and French antiquarians, for his acquisition; but he determined to send it to Paris, to the Asiatic academy, under the care of his friend the Marquis D. Fortiè d'Urban, where it is at present.

A distinguished English antiquarian who was recently at Malta, saw the *Pietra Atlantida* at Paris, believes in its authenticity, and approved of Mr Grognet's having oiled the stone; which notwithstanding, is exfoliating, and has already thrown off its coat of oil.

This truly eccentric genius has set all the

savans of Europe by the ears, with this stone, and volumns have been written on the subject.—One, of two things must be true,—the stone is either real, or false; if it be a true piece of antiquity, he is a very fortunate man; if it be false, he is a remarkably clever fellow, to have made such an imitation, as to have created so much controversy.

The feast of St Peter and St Paul, on the 29th June, is held at *Medina*, when the ancient city becomes a scene of the highest excitement;—people in crowds, flock from all quarters;—On that day, Valletta appears to have changed character, with its progenitor; the streets are deserted, and not a calesse, or even an humble donkey, can be procured, for love or money.

The Governor, and his family, generally attend to an invitation, from the bishop, or some high dignitary, of the church: and the portals, of the nobles and gentry, have an annual opening, for the reception of their friends;—In the evening, there are horse races,—next day, *Medina* sinks into her dignified solitude.

At a short distance, to the west, on a mount, called *Mitarfa*, stood the temple of Proserpine, not a vestige of which remains above

ground;—a piece of a colossal column of white marble, belonging to this temple, was carried off, by the Italian knights, sawn up, and sculptured into that fine escutcheon, which is over the entrance of their auberge. A few curious remains of the temple, are preserved in the public Library of Valletta.



About a mile of good road, from *Medina*, conducts to the stately palace of Verdala, looking down on the gardens of *Boschetto*, in the valley below; this princely castle is of two stories, the ground floor, being in the fine dry moat, which surrounds it; the castle is entered from behind, by a drawbridge, and the court is surrounded, by outhouses, and stabling, for an establishment on a most magnificent scale; the Verdala palace is castellated, with turrets at the angles, and from the roof, is a fine view of the whole Island, with the surrounding sea, also, of the Islands of Gozo, and Comino.—Verdala palace was built by a grand-master of that name, in the 16th century, and such is the fine quality of native stone used, that at the present day, it looks, and is, as fresh as a modern building.

During a part of the last war, this beautiful palace, was converted into a Gaol, for French prisoners,—when the general peace took place, there was hardly a door or window left unruined, on the premises;—the fine out houses shared the same fate.

The grounds, called *Boschetto*, on both sides of the valley, to a considerable extent, were kept as a preserve for game; and here, at the shooting season, (or times of the passage of birds,) the Grand-master and knights came out for their amusement. There are stations for taking turtle doves, also for *beccafichi*; and the gardens are renowned for wood-cock shooting; on the high ground, on the opposite side of the valley to the palace, was a deer park; the high walls of which, are still standing in some places;—during the heavy rains of winter, a torrent of water, from the lands, and rocks, at the head of the valley, runs through this ravine, which is well banked in, to prevent injury to the gardens, and cultivated lands on the lateral parts; here are extensive gardens, and petty forests of orange, and other fruit trees; lofty oaks, and other forest trees, are dispersed on some of the higher grounds; and at the lower extremity of the valley, on the side opposite the

palace, is a lofty bluff mount, here may be said to be, the gorge, from which the valley delates into the country below.—The *Boschetto* abounds in fine springs of the purest water, and an immense expense has been gone into, in running mines, at various parts, into the bowels of the mountains, to collect the springs, and make the water flow more copiously;—this abundance of fine water, renders the grounds all around, fertile and green, even in the hottest season.—What with fine trees, shady groves, purling rills, and the perfume of flowers, and strawberries in their season, *Boschetto* is rendered a delightful place to pass a day at, and is the only truly rural spot on the Island; there is a charming grotto, (with a basin of icy cold water, and pretty jets,) in which we have seen 20 dine;—here the sun only enters in the evening, when his fiery influence is tempered,—bands of music always follow a party passing by *Medina*, and the happy visitors often finish the day on the light fantastic toe, on the fine plat in front of the grotto;—We have said, that the feast of St Peter and St Paul, is held at *Medina*; so it is at *Boschetto*;—the gaieties of *Medina*, begin in the evening,—those at *Boschetto* begin with the sun in the morning, and continue

until the lengthening shadows proclaim, that it is time to join the crowd in the city.

The girls of Maħa, in making their marriage contract, (for all, high and low, must have the notary, and their conjugal contract,) have it stipulated, that their husbands, shall carry them to the feast, of St Peter and St Paul at *Medina*, and to that of St Gregorio at *Zeitun*.—Whether from the great and general paucity of means, or from the people becoming more enlightened, (most likely the former;—for all are fond of a day's fun and relaxation), those festas now, are neither so numerous, nor so gaudily attended;—we shall tell what the feast at *Boschetto* was, in former times and even, within our own remembrance.

During the cool of the night of the 28th, on the roads leading to this centre of delight, were to be seen, groups hurrying from all points, some on foot, others on donkeys, well dressed, and well provided, for a day's enjoyment.—Flying cook shops, and itinerant venders of coffee, comfits, sweet cakes, rosolio, wine etc., planted their stands in the lanes, and passages to the plantations, and when possible, near some gurgling and refreshing fountain.

We must not omit to mention, that elegant

and exquisite national confiture *Cobaita*, which most husbands, by contract, present a slice of, to their wives, at the stipulated festivals. This nice stuff, (which we have seen in the desert at the first tables on the island,) is composed of almonds and pistachios, well blanched, boiled in honey previously reduced to a caramel. When the honey is, by boiling, reduced to this state, the almonds and pistachios are thrown in, sometimes with a little sesame and anise seed; after being brought to a proper state, the contents of the boiler are turned into a frame, or mould, after which, the fruit is pressed down by a roller, to give it greater consistency, and before cold, (for it becomes very hard,) it is divided into wedges, of a foot or more in length, and about 4 inches square, then enveloped in wafer paste, to prevent the action of the air on the honey. Every stall, at the festa, is furnished with its *Cobaita*, and the husband presents his spouse with a piece of it, from an ounce to a rotolo, according to his ability. Both native and foreigner delight in this choice confiture.

The groups bent on enjoyment were the most grotesque; the ladies were dressed in the finery of their ancestors, rich in all the co-

lors of the rain-bow, and in the cuts of centuries long gone by, which, had been carefully preserved, and handed down from mother to daughter, to be displayed on this occasion.

The parties having selected their station for the day, under the shady branches of some fine tree, the garden soon became filled with a summer carnival;—all determined to be happy and contented,—care seemed banished for the day:—The well filled *Horgeo*, (a double sack, which opens in the middle) now displays its contents, feasting begins, and soon after, the company assembled become uproarious, dancing, singing, and every sort of campestrian amusement fills up the scene, until the approach of evening.

The singing of the maltese country people may truly be called “ *Filarmonica Assinaio* ” they bawl at the top of the voice, holding a thumb behind the ear, and the hand stretched out, that the voice may be carried to a greater distance;—they like it, and why should they not enjoy it,—we have often chimed in, at the top of our voice, when we met them, and they appeared pleased with the compliment. The general national air, is pretty, when well sung, and some of the sentiments in their song,

merit being recorded : we shall indulge in only one: "Do not disturb the pool which relieved you, you may require its assistance again and not find it."

Some men of letters, deep read in ancient lore, are of opinion that *Boschetto*, is a place where Pagan orgies, were held, and that the feast of St Peter and St Paul, is only a continuation of a feast held by the heathens on that day of the year,

As regards the feast day, we confess our ignorance, but to the other opinion we are prepared to subscribe, from what we ourselves have, both seen and discovered, during a residence on the spot of eight months, on the bluff, opposite the Palace, at some period, was a sacred grove, we discovered the ditch which surrounded it, and pits all over the mount, in which trees had been planted; on the other side, on the high ground, immediately to the south of the Palace, we discovered deep and wide channels, of great extent cut in the rock; which others, better versed in antiquities, declared were, where something like a labyrinth had been planted.

At another part, we found an oblong pit, cut in the rock upwards of 20 feet deep, which

we emptied of earth, and bones of strange animals; here, our antiquarian friends, were of opinion, that the bones of sacrifice had been thrown in.

In all the grounds, near *Boschetto*, are found ancient burying places; one was found, in the ditch, surrounding, what we call, the sacred mount, from which were extracted several fine vases with calcined bones, but no metal; those vases were of finer clay, and of more elegant form, than any others found,—In the face of the rock, on the right hand, from the road leading to the Verdala Palace, are to be seen several ancient tombs, like ovens, apparently opened, when quarrying the stones, to build the Palace; we are firmly of opinion that antiquarians excavating on those grounds, and the vicinity, will discover much, worthy of their attention.

The british and colonial silk company, made an extensive plantation of mulberry trees at *Boschetto* in 1827, and that year made a fine essay of about 60 pounds of silk, equal to the best from Italy.—The insects were fed from the leaves of trees planted 24 years before by Mr M'Aulay, the first british secretary on the Island; the agents of the company failed to

to make silk every year after, and finally abandoned the undertaking in 1837;—several of the natives followed the example of the company in planting trees; some also followed their errors, and ruined themselves.

The climate of Malta is admirably adapted, for the growth of the mulberry, and rearing of the silk worm; but in no country in the world can worms be brought to perfection, if fed in their last stages, on the leaves of young trees.—

The fine mulberry trees, over the Island, are being rooted up,—just when they are arrived at a state to feed worms. It is a melancholy fact, that many of our finest joint stock undertakings have failed, from men being put into the management of them, through interest, without a knowledge of what they took in hand.

To the east, at no very great distance from *Boschetto*, stands a pretty little palace, said to have been the country residence of the Inquisitor; this little palace is on the brow of a hill, finely situated for an extensive view of the Island, and towns before it;—near this, is a strong spring of charmingly pure water, which, running through the valley, to a great distance, irrigates innumerable strawberry beds, and kitchen gardens. Most strangers, coming to the

Island, visit this delightful spot: General Pousonby had the palace, (which was going to ruin,) put into an habitable state; and used, at times, to rusticate there with his family, when public business permitted of a few day's relaxation. The general planted some trees, about the house, and put the road, (which previously was very bad) into proper repair.

By permission of His Excellency the Governor, this palace which was formerly that of an Inquisitor, now forms an elegant and sequester'd retreat, for young married people, to pass their honey moon in, from whence, they undisturbed can look down on the busy world below. The best road to the palace of the Inquisitor, is that, which strikes off from Casal Attard.

CHAPTER VI.

Leaving Port Bomb, a fine road, to the right, leads down to Pietà, on the head of the quarantine harbour; at the extremity of which are public baths, on the sea side, made by sir Alex. Ball, for the convenience of the public:—From hence to the extremity of the bay, is called *Misida*: formerly, both the beginning of Pietà, and head of *Misida*, were considered unhealthy, from the sludge deposited by the sea.

Sir Alexander, run a fine stone wharf, from Pietà to the head of *Misida*, in consequence of which, all stagnate water is removed, and the whole rendered salubrious,—this fine road is now lined with pretty houses from one extremity to the other; here is the residence of His Excellency the Right Hon. John H. Frere, whose unbounded charity, and great hospitality, have rendered him next to idolized: to afford employment for poor workmen, Mr Frere has rendered a piece of rock, which he possesses, behind his residence, into fine picturesque gardens, which excite the admiration of all who have the opportunity of visiting them.

On the opposite side of *Misida-bay*, is the fine residence of Sir Vincent Casolani, at present, Collector of Her Majesty's land revenue; the road, to this fine house and gardens, runs round the head of the bay, close by the beach; — This road is being continued, round the point of *Tashbiesh*, and will join that, leading to *Sliema* and St Julians, on the other side to the quarantine ground; a great acquisition of the public in general, by affording a beautiful ride; and to the inhabitants, of *Sliema*, and St Julians in particular, by giving them a fine level road, in place of the steep hill they have to mount at present, from *Misida*.

The village of *Sliema*, to which is a pleasant drive, offers nothing attractive, except a fine colonnaded palace, build by a late Russian banker;—which we baptized “*Kremlin*,” and he *Selma Hall*. This palace was for two years, the residence of the prince of Capua, and his Irish princess, formerly Miss Penelope Smith.

About half a mile beyond *Sliema*, to the west, opens the fine bay, of St Julians. On the east side of the bay, there is an extensive embasured line wall, and at its extremity towards the sea, a square tower, to prevent a landing in the bay; the walls are falling fast into decay, but

the tower is kept in an efficient state, and has a Garrison of native troops in it. St Julians, being a favorite place, has, within but a few years, become an extensive straggling village, where several English families have villas; we shall take leave to mention the fine house and gardens of Bel-Vedere, the residence of John Watson Esq. who is rendering himself a benefactor to the natives, by his assiduity and exertions in the introduction of the Brazil cotton plant; an uphill task, with a people so bigoted to their ancient cotton and customs;—Mr. Watson labours both by precept and example, to show them their interest in this.

The natives, in the vicinity of St Julians, and also in the interior of the island, have a curious custom of bringing, both children and adults, afflicted with fevers, and other diseases, immersing them in pits or graves, in the mud, which collects in the head of the farther bay of St Julians, in which they lie for a certain length of time; this they pretend has the effect of extracting the disease;—Near this spot (where people are almost buried alive), is a mortar excavated in the hard rock, from which many tons of stone can be hurled on board any vessel attempting to enter the bay.

The valley at the top of this bay, has a romantic amphitheatral appearance, and in a part of it, is one of those incavated chapels, dedicated to the Virgin, and held in high estimation by the country people. On the western side of this bay, stands the stately palace of *Spinola*, belonging to a family at Genoa, at some period, connected with the knights of St John;—this must have once been a complete villa; its landing place, and boat houses, have been very fine;—the palace, with its gardens, is inhabited by his honor John Aspinal, Member of Her Majesty's Council at Malta. The peninsula which juts out between St Julians bay, and that of St George beyond it, (to which the road is very bad,) were strongly fortified in the time of the knights, who always feared invasion from their infidel foe. On the farther extremity of St George's bay, is another square tower, garrisoned by maltese Fencibles. St George's, except being a pretty bay, offers nothing worthy of the trouble in reaching it.

CHAPTER VII.

From the head of *Limsida*, runs a fine fertile valley, which ends, in the hills, or mountains, on the back of the island: the first Casal, or village, on the road, which runs up this valley, is the populous Casal of Birchircara. There is nothing in Birchircara worth seeing, if we except its magnificent church, one of the finest in the island. Birchircara was the native village, and home, of the renowned patriot, General Sir Vincenzo Borg, who commanded the peasants, that discomfited the French troops, on the St Giuseppe road, the morning after the insurrection, and who never laid aside his arms until the enemy surrendered.

Proceeding up the valley about half a mile, the road passes through a small village called Balsan, which joins to the fine Casal of Lia. Owing to the proximity of which, to St Antonio, the palace of the Prince, many of the first nobility, and gentry have houses in this village; one of the most remarkable is the Villa Pre-

zioso, as well for the beautiful house, as for its fine gardens;—this Villa is at present the residence of the hospitable Dr Waugh, who there reposes in *otium cum dignitate*, on his laurels, and handsome fortune, acquired by the healing art, so liberally, and successfully professed for years, in the Island.

The gardens, round Casal Lia, produce the finest oranges in the Island. The road through this casal, cuts at right angles, leading to St Antonio, Musta, and Nasciaro.

Casal Nasciaro stands on a hill, the approach to it is rather steep, but the road is good.— Tradition says, that the inhabitants of this village, were the first converted to christianity, after the arrival of St Paul; hence the name Nasciaro, which alludes to Nazareth. The only thing worth seeing here, is the palace and gardens of Col: Baron Parisi, one of the first, and most loyal, of the native nobility. From a fine raised alley in the gardens, there is an extensive view of the Salins, at the bottom of the hill, and of St Pauls-bay, in the distance,— The fine palace of Baron Parisi, was generously given for quarters, to our troops, during the siege, who left it in a state bordering on ruin.

Descending the hill, is another of those ex-

tensive line walls of the knights; here, on the 21st March, General Oakes was wont to celebrate the battle of Alexandria, in which he had a share, regaling his troops, with cheese and bread, and porter : the descent to the Salins is precipitous, and the road is a zig zag to the bottom. This place takes its name from the quantity of salt made on its shores; the water from the sea is drawn into bitumed beds, and evaporated by the heat of the sun.—Near the church of the Ascension here, in the brow of the rock, are several sepulchral excavations; a very fine one, more perfect in its symmetry, and more finished in its workmanship, than others, was discovered by Mr Giuseppe Fenech, the apothecary in Valletta; on an excursion he made to the place,—it has nine large niches,—a circular passage runs round the whole, with a straight one through the centre, all prettily finished.

From the Salins to St Pauls-bay, a fine road runs between the sea, and rich pasture lands under the hills.

The bay of St Paul, is a fine indentation, with good anchorage, but much exposed to the north east gales, which the Apostle experienced at his shipwreck. On the N. W. extremity of the bay, is a small Island, to which ships are

sent, having plague, or other dangerous infectious diseases on board, to perform the dangerous portion of their quarantine, before being allowed to enter Marsamuscetta.—On the high land, to the west of the bay, is the fine castellated palace of Salmon, built from the fund of Monte di Pietà,—God knows for what purpose;—The road to the west, conducts to Mileha.

Mileha cove, is both wider and deeper, than that of St Paul, the anchorage is good, but the bay is, equally, exposed to the Gregale, with its neighbour. In Mileha bay, is the celebrated chapel of the “Madonna of Mileha,” an incavated chapel cut in the rock, by the primitive Christians, amplified by later devotees, who built a chapel over it.—It is asserted that this grotto, was consecrated by seven Bishops, who were driven into the bay, when on their way to a council in Africa. This chapel is adorned with a portrait of the Virgin, from the pencil of St Luke, when he visited the Island in company with St Paul.

Our lady of Mileha is held in high odour, for having done many most miraculous things, the inside of the grotto, is covered with votary gifts, from shipwrecked seamen, and people

saved from contagious diseases, both here and elsewhere ; vows are daily made, and pilgrimages, even with chains at their heels, to her ladyship's shrine, are of very frequent occurrence.

Near the chapel of the Madonna of Mileha, is a very fine grotto, and near to it, a spring of icy cold water. Some insist, that this is the famed grotto of Calypso; whilst others assert that the fabled grotto is at Gozo. The only way to reconcile this discrepancy, is to suppose, that her Nymphship had, what might be called, a town and country residence; and that the miserable hole called her grotto at Gozo, was where she retired to, during the summer months:—which may probably have given rise to the custom of the present day, of leaving fine airy houses in town, to be stewed up in confined mosquito traps in the country, during the hot season.

Beyond Mileha, to the west, is Marfa, the extreme west of the Island, and the best place of embarkation for Gozo; here, the amiable Lord Hastings, built a house, ostensibly as a shooting box, but in reality, as a place of shelter, for people going to, and coming from Gozo, in stormy weather.

CHAPTER VIII.

The road which runs through Casal Lia to the south, leads to the village of Musta, and the Bengemma mountains; on the road from Casal Lia, on the left, are extensive tanks, made by Sir Alex. Ball, in his anxiety to increase the supply of water, for the City, and for his brother tars in the shipping.

In Musta, is being erected a new and unique church, on a plan from the native architect *Grognet*. This temple is certainly the most magnificent, extensive, and solid modern building we have ever seen; we remember nothing of equal elegance in Italy, France, or England; we know not, which most to admire, the beauty of the building, the fine taste of the talented architect who formed the plan, or the vanity of the inhabitants, of but a mean village, to project such an extensive temple; which certainly, when finished, will be an ornament to the Island, will immortalize the architect, and draw towards the casal every visitor to Malta.

The Pronaos or front, which for beauty of design, cannot be surpassed is **112** feet in length, **20** feet in depth, and **62** feet in height, with a double row of stately columns: the grand altar and choir of the temple, face this fine entrance; and immediately behind the choir, rises, another oblong attachment, corresponding in length with the portico; in the lateral parts of which are two halls or vestrys, of magnitude sufficient to contain in either, the entire population of the casal. This part of the undertaking is finished, so far as stone work goes, and is terraced.

The temple itself, is a perfect circle of **125** feet diameter, or measuring **165** feet, if the chapels or altar be included; and from the pavement, to the top of the dome, will be **208** feet: there are **3** chapels, on each side of the grand altar, and, standing in the centre, each, and all of them, may be seen to perfection; each chapel is **34** feet wide.

The whole mass of the temple, has arrived at several layers, beyond the spring of the cornice, and the portico, or facade, is in a very advanced state.

Funds, we believe, are rather short, for the finishing of this sublime edifice; but it will go

gradually on, to a termination, from the slender means which exist, and from the enthusiasm of the lower orders, who work gratis, on sundays, and other church holydays.—It is curious to observe, that the old church stands, in the centre of the new erection, and continues a place of worship: and that, when the new church is finished, and the old removed, the new will require no consecration.

On a mount, of bare rock, about two miles distant from Musta in a northerly direction, are to be seen, some Cyclopean stones, the remains of some ancient tower, or temple: near this, in the rocky ravine, is a small chapel, dedicated to St Paul; and in a natural cave, in the vicinity, the water percolates through the roof, in such purity, that a grand master would drink no other, and caused a supply of it, to be brought to his table daily—the place, we believe, is called *Wied-el-asel*.

The Bengemma mountains, is the highest land in Malta; 590 feet above the level of the sea; our information is, from the admeasurement of Her Majesty's Engineer department on the Island.

There is an idea, that a city, at some remote period, stood near this, but nothing of it remains

above ground to guaranty this idea, if we except the innumerable sepulchral excavations, which have been opened on the side of the mountains, and which render the place worthy of notice.—A mine, which has been run into one of the mountains, gives a copious supply of pure refreshing water.

We once made a delightful pic-nic excursion to this remarkable place; and leaving our carriages, went on foot to a place at no great distance, called *Fomi-i-rich*, (or the mouth of the wind,) here we found a tremendous cliff or precipice so perpendicular, that it appeared like a wall cut by the hands of man, and the sea below seemed of great depth. Returning from *Fomi-i-rich*, we dined by the fine spring: it chanced to be the 5th November, and whilst we were eating, firing in Valletta, announced “the gun powder plot.”

On our return, we visited the palace, and gardens of St Antonio.

The princely establishment of St Antonio, was founded by the grand master Antonio de Paulo; at the beginning of the 17th century. Whilst yet a simple knight, de Paulo, had built a tower, and walled in the very extensive gardens; these he laid out in fine walks, with

parterres of flowers, adorned with beautiful fountains; and, at a great expense, had all kinds of fruit trees, and flowering shrubs, brought from Italy, and France, and even parts at a greater distance; he had the large basins of the fountains garnished with rare river fish.

The palace of St Antonio, can boast of no architectural beauty; it is extensive, and at present commodious. After the arrival of the Marquiss of Hastings, the palace of St Antonio, was put into complete repair, under the direction and exquisite taste, of the noble Marchioness, who also enriched the gardens, with many fine shrubs, and exotics.

The palace is an irregular building, additions having been apparently made at different periods; in the centre rose a lofty, and stately square tower, commanding a fine view of most parts of the Island; this tower was struck by lightning in 1819, and the upper part so shattered, that it was found necessary to reduce its height several stories.—There are two entrances to the palace, one by the high road, which runs by Casal Lia, and which appears to have been the first, or ancient entrance; opposite to which, is the farm establishment, and kitchen gardens: the second, and more

modern entrance, is by a long alley between two walls, along the eastern side of the garden, which conducts into a kind of court yard, and runs up nearly to the main stair case, which, from its rather awkward termination, shows, that ~~this~~ entrance had nothing to do with the original plan, and was not much frequented by carriages.

A small Protestant Chapel was added to the premises by Lord Hastings.

Sir Alex. Ball, threw open the public gardens of St Antonio, as an evening promenade, for the better classes, in town and country; the rare fish were removed into a tank beyond the kitchen gardens, where we believe they still are; and the rarest fruit trees and shrubs were placed in the private, lock up gardens, on the lateral sides of the palace, from whence they can be entered by private stairs;—These private gardens were much embellished, and stocked with rare flowers, and choice fruit trees; the first mandarin oranges, (now common over the Island), were placed there, as also that most delicate and delicious fruit, the white Nectarine; the Nespole Japonica, or Japan Medlar, was once counted rare, but now abounds in every garden on the Island.—On

the eastern side of the palace, behind the flower gardens, is a poultry yard, for rare birds; and a covered place for pheasants and partridges.

Sir Thomas Maitland introduced a Pinery into the lower gardens, but it did not succeed; A late treasurer of the Island, grew some fine apples in his hot house, but they required more care and attention, than they do in England. There is something in the air, or climate of Malta, adverse to the growth of the pine apple; which at Naples grows in the open air without care.

St Antonio is worthy the attention of strangers.

CHAPTER IX.



There are two ways, by which we can leave Valletta, to visit the eastern parts of the Island; the one is, by descending by the Marina Gate, and passing through the busy scenes of active life on the mole, leading to the head of the great harbour; not seldom enlivened by the chearing song of the mariner, wafted on the breeze: the other passage, is by Port Bomb, where, after a short distance on the high road, a branch, conducts on the sea side, at the extremity of the glacis.

On reaching the embanking works of Mr Zammit, a road, over bridges, crosses the Marsh to the once sickly and deserted village of Paulo, (now rendered healthy through the exertions of Captain Hunn, and the profitable undertaking, we have just alluded to); thence to the Casals of *Tarscein*, *Zabar*, *Hasiak*, and *Zeitun*, finally to the port of *Marsa-Scirocco*.

On the right of the road opposite Zammit's first embankment stands a hillock called *Cortin*, which formerly belonged to the Jesuits.

Here, about the middle of the last century, were discovered the foundations of an extensive edifice, of very great antiquity; the Grand Master Pinto caused them to be excavated. It is asserted by the native antiquarian Barbaro that this building had, in its origin, been Phœnician, re-edified by the Greeks, and again by the Romans. It is presumed, they were store houses, into which the Phœnician navigators deposited their rich merchandise during the winter months, and before proceeding on their spring voyages. Here were also places for depositing the remains of their dead; in some subterranean excavations, were found curious vases filled with human ashes.

Farther on, advancing through the works of Zammit, a road to the left, leads to Casal *Luca* on the hill, and from thence to the villages of *Gudia*, *Krendi*, *Zurricco*, and several others of minor note, yet interesting, as, like all the Casals on the Island, they are inhabited by an active, sober, and industrious population.

A third road, which leads rather to the right, conducts up the still marshy valley, to Casal *Pinto*, or *Curmi*, as it is more generally called:—*Curmi* has at all times been considered a very unhealthy village;—by order of the

Grand Master Pinto, all the bakers for the City, were obliged to reside in this village, with the view that the fires of their ovens, would purify the air;—from its low and unhealthy situation, the plague (in 1813) lingered here several months, after the rest of the Island was purified. Proceeding up the valley, the road leads to *Casal Zebug*, and *Seggeui*, (another way to the Inquisitors palace) near *Seggeui* are some Cyclopean stones, worth looking at: they are supposed to be the remains of some undescribed temple, or other ancient building; near this, an aqueduct carries the water, from the rich spring at the palace called *Ain-il-Kbira*, or the great eye of the water, to fertilize the gardens in the valley below.

Casal Luca is reached by a steep, and uncomfortable road, and when there, nothing (in itself) is to be seen; we have always preferred this road to *Gudia*.—Near *Gudia*, is a pretty miniature palace, of the late Marchioness Dorell.—This wealthy and charitable lady, spent here large sums of money, to gratify her fine taste. and employed many poor workmen in beautifying this favorite palace: she planted an extensive olive grove, which she inclosed with a high wall of cut stone: the grounds are

beautifully laid out, in serpentine, and other walks, they are farther adorned with a lofty tower, and various vistas, and ornamental cottages; Sir Thomas Graham, now Lord Lynedoch had his head quarters there, during the siege, and in a pretty bower, planted by her Ladyship, lie the remains of two of his Aid-de-camps, who died in the palace; this may be called the prettiest place in Malta. The Marchioness passed her younger days at the Courts of Europe.

A road from Casal *Luca*, leads to the village of *Krendi*, through a well cultivated country; *Krendi* we must consider, as a point, from which verge off some things worth seeing, *Macluba* is one of these. This certainly is a most extraordinary looking place; it appears, that, by some convulsion of nature, the ground or rather rock, had given way, and in a moment sunk into an abyss, or pit; the circumference of this pit is considerable, and such is its depth, that a person at the bottom, appears to those at the top, like a pigmy;—in the bottom is a garden, which is fertile, in the production of fruits and vegetables. Though the rains in winter run in torrents into *Macluba*, it is never inundated, some subterraneous passage carries them off, fertilizing the gardens by the rich allu-

vion brought down: we have, more than once, gone down into this extraordinary place;—the descent is by crannies in the sides, and at times by holes cut in the cleft to put the foot in, the gardner or guide precedes and places the foot, at each step in the hole destined for it. Though this descent appears, at first sight perilous, and difficult, no accident ever occurs.

The history of the Island affords no clue to the period, at which this convulsion took place, but tradition, (as on all other occasions,) goes in some measure to supply this want, and ascribes it to the Christian Era. It is said, that on the site of *Macluba*, stood a village whose inhabitants were very wicked; and that the Almighty punished them, by making the earth give way and swallow them up; that one virtuous woman alone, was saved, being at prayers in the Church, which stands on the brink; and was the only place which remained, after the catastrophe took place;—whether this phenomenon has been produced by an earthquake, or by the sea undermining the place, through some cavern on the coast, (which is at no great distance), it is difficult to determine. The rock appears, as if cut by an axe, and at one part, a portion of a cistern remains, with its lining of bitumen, as used at the present day.

The pavement of the Chapel appears to be ancient, and is curious. A short walk from *Macluba*, leads to the bold eastern coast of the Island. The scenery here, is sublime, the lofty cliff, the picturesque natural arch, or column, and the roaring of the ocean into the caverns below, even in a calm, are tremendously grand. The little Island of *Filfla* stands at a small distance in the advance.—The fine air, on all this portion of the Island, is truly exhilarating, and would put even a Cynic in jovial humour.

At a short distance from *Krendi*, holding to the south-east, are a number of Cyclopean stones, of vast dimensions, evidently the remains of some undescribed temple; and about six years ago, two gentlemen, who were visiting those interesting remains, extending their walk towards the coast, to their astonishment, on descending into a curious valley, they discovered, on the brow of a rising ground opposite, an immense mass of ruins, far surpassing those they had left. The gentlemen alluded to, were Mr Kirkpatrick, Chief Justice at Corfù, and Mr Sim, first assistant in the Chief Secretary's office here: Captain Jones, of the Royal Engineers, hearing of this wonderful discovery,

induced Mr Sim to accompany him to the spot, and declared them to be, by far the finest, and most extensive ruins, hitherto found in Malta, surpassing those, of what is called "the Giants Tower," at Gozo.—The native Engineer *Grognet*, (who afterwards went to look at them) proclaims them to be *antediluvian*; the first is called "Mnaidra al Valone" the other "Hagiar Kim." No excavation appears to have taken place, at either the first or last of these splendid remains. It is rather astonishing, that, on such a limited spot as the Island of Malta, such immense ruins were never before discovered; or at all events described by any one. The place being inclosed by a kind of rude wall may account for modern visitors passing the ruins unobserved.

The village of *Zurico* is a populous, industrious, and healthy Casal, to which the Physicians of the Island, send their convalescents, to breathe the balmy air. There is one thing remarkable in this Casal, the natives have fine blue, laughing eyes, their hair is not black, and their complexion fair and ruddy.

Casal *Zeitun* is considered the most populous on the Island, we certainly consider it the richest, as many natives, who had made for-

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tunes in Spain before the destruction of the cotton trade, reside there,—there are still, some extensive cotton spinners in the village, who afford employment to many poor people.

The country is fertile round *Zeitun*, a large quantity of cotton, continues to be raised: and we are of opinion, from what we have seen, that potatoes are cultivated to a greater extent here, than on any other part of the Island.

As is *Medina*, on the feast of St Peter and St Paul, so is *Zeitun* on that of St Gregorio; with this difference, that in the place of horse racing, there is a general procession of all the Priests and Brotherhood on the Island, with their flags and different ensigns. This procession is of great antiquity: so much so, that no one positively knows, for what cause the general vow was made; some say it was in consequence of a terrible plague, others, that it was in consequence of a cloud of locusts, which visited the Islands, and were removed through the intercession of the holy priesthood.

The Priests from all parts, assemble at early dawn, at Casal *Tarschien*, and march in procession to the Church of *Zeitun*. People from all quarters flock to this clerical meeting, and the day is passed in convivial enjoyment.—

as we before mentioned, young brides stipulate that they are to be taken to this feast.

This is quite a benefit day for the rich inhabitants of *Zeitun*, who keep open houses, for the entertainment of their town and country cousins.

At no very great distance from *Zeitun* is the port of *Marsa-Scirocco*, which, with the exception of its pretty Fort, offers nothing worthy of observation, people make parties to eat fish here, cooked after fisherman fashion.

To the South of *Marsa-Scirocco*, stood the Temple of Hercules. In a farm yard called "Ta-harbat," the property of the late Marchioness Dorell, or Muscat, (another of her titles,) there are some few marble remains:—this ground appears to have been hitherto sealed to the excavator: and will certainly when opened, yeild a rich return.

The coast of Malta abounds in grottos:—near *Marsa-Scirocco* there is one on an extensive scale, called Hassan's çave.

CHAPTER X.



Separated from Malta by a narrow channel of about five short miles, is Gozo, the fabled Island of Calypso. In mid channel is the little Island of Comino, at present farmed by an English gentleman. The Island of Gozo is about twelve miles long, and from six to seven in breadth; and is prettily diversified with hill and dale,—the highest hill is called *Debegi*.

The coast is bold and precipitous in most parts; there are however, in the ravines, two pretty good landing places; also one or more of lesser note, into which boats can run in stormy weather. The principal landing place is called *Miggiarra*, and is on the east end of the Island; facing the western point of Malta called *Marfa*; here there is a fine sandy beach, where boats from Malta unload their cargoes, and passengers. On a height, to the right of this little bay, stands a small fort for its defence; and on another, to the left, is the fine fortification called *Chambray*, founded by a knight of that name, about the middle of the last century;

Chambray is the head quarters of the garrison of Gozo;—the out works of the fort are extensive, enclosing a large space, as a retreat for the inhabitants of the vicinity, with their cattle, in case of any sudden invasion.

Migiarra offers no convenience to people landing, except a dirty coffee shop; the few houses or huts on the beach, are for the reception of fishermen, and those attending the boats.—But there are always in waiting an abundance of asses, to transport visitors into the interior; there are now also some calesses, of a very ordinary description, for those who do not choose to ride. The road from the landing place, for a short distance, is of steep ascent, but is afterwards level, and in good order, leading to the centre of the Island.

On the right, leaving *Miggiarra*, is the village of *Nadur*, on a hill, cultivated to near its summit; here the finest fruits of the Island are produced: most people visit this fine hill, from its beautiful and extensive view of the Island and its vicinity; and from the females being the handsomest on the Island.

Gozo in many respects differs from her sister Island, and all of them are in her favor; her soil is deep, rich and fertile, her fields are large,

their walls are kept in good order, and they are finely cultivated: the houses of her peasantry are comfortable looking dwellings.

Gozo can boast of no rivers, but she may vaunt of having no morasses or marshes; she is however abundantly supplied with rich springs of fine water, which run in rivulets, enriching the soil as they pass: some even run to the sea.

The climate of Gozo is remarkably healthy, her robust, industrious and abstemious inhabitants, live to a very great age; and standing high, the air in summer is considered two degrees cooler than that of Malta. The physicians of Malta, recommend the fine climate of Gozo, to people in delicate health.

In different parts of the Island, there are pretty groves and plantations of orange and other fruit trees.

The products of Gozo, are the same as those of Malta, but more abundant: all the surplus, goes to the market of Valletta.—She sends a large supply of fruits and vegetables in their seasons; an astonishing number of fine lambs and poultry; cheese, from her ewes and goats, come up, both good and in plenty. What can equal the delectable honey of Gozo,

renowned in the early ages, and still surpassed by none, for limpidness, and richness of flavor; she sends also a supply of fine fish, and at times beautiful lobsters.

The Gozo race of jack-asses, is remarkably fine; so great has the demand for them been, for England and America during the last forty years, that it is with difficulty that a first rate *trumpeter* can be procured on the Island.

The citadel of the Island stands on a lofty place near its centre. The castle is a very ancient building, some think originally founded by the Phœnicians; at all events, it was rebuilt by the knights, and modernised; it appears not to be thought necessary to keep it in an efficient state. The space is extensive within the boundaries of the citadel; and besides several large public and private dwellings, there stands the principal Church of the Island, called the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, it is a spacious and pretty building, in excellent condition, well worth visiting. The baptismal font is fine, cut out of a pretty piece of native Alabaster.

Rabatto, or the suburb, is immediately under the walls of the citadel; it is a large town, containing many good houses, a square, a market place, several Churches, Convents and

hospitals for male and female patients. The entrance to the castle is through *Rabatto* by a broad stair.

Only a very few years ago, strangers visiting Gozo, were forced to carry with them, not only their bedding, but even the common necessaries of life, and trust for cover to the hospitality of some Convent; but such is the march of improvement, that now, within the walls of the citadel, there is an excellent house of entertainment, kept by an Englishman named Griffiths, where clean and comfortable beds can be had, and dinners, with good wines, in English style, at a moderate charge; in the town also, there are now some houses of reception, kept by natives;—one kept by a man named Filippo is very comfortable. Independent of *Rabatto*, there are six populous *Casals* or villages on the Island: and by a census, recently taken by Government, the population amounts to 16,000 souls.

It may be said, that there are no regular trades carried on at Gozo, except such as are connected with agricultural pursuits, many of the females however, employ themselves in the spinning and weaving of the native cotton.

There are several dyers, on different parts

of the Island, who dye the *Tyrian Purple*, from the *Orchilla* weed, which they find on their rocks; this we presume to call a gift, left them by their ancient friends and masters.

The objects of curiosity to be seen are not numerous, but they are remarkable. These are the Giants Tower; what is called Calypso's Grotto; and the Fungus rock; we take leave to add a small museum in the house of the Canonico Greck in *Rabatto*.

Until within the last 18 years, that which is called the Giants Tower, was only a mass of colossal stones, half hid in the brow of a hill; at that period Colonel Otto Bayer, a man of great scientific taste, was Lieut. Governor of the Island, and Mr James Somerville Chief Magistrate. Those two gentlemen combined in the idea of excavating this extraordinary looking place; and by permission of Government, with a gang of convicts put at their disposal, they commenced their labors.

As they advanced in their work, every step became more interesting; and finally, after having removed an immense quantity of *earth* and *rubbish*, they cleaned out and brought to light, what had been intended for a temple, but which to all appearance had never been finished.

At what early period of the world this gigantic work had been undertaken, or why its erection had been arrested before brought to completion, nothing is found to lend even an idea.

They reached the pavement of the Temple where they found an altar, and several indicative signs, that on it at some period sacrifices had been offered; near the altar is a trough or basin, to receive the blood of the victim, also a place in the form of an oven, where it is presumed the bones of the sacrifice were calcined. In this extensive work, there are two temples of an oblong shape, having a semicircular place at the extremity facing the entrance, and two similar of smaller diameter on each side,—both temples are of the same shape, all the stones are of extravagant dimensions, some are placed vertically, others laid over them horizontally, all in an unfinished state. During the excavation, nothing was found of value or importance; which we presume to think proves to a demonstration, that the *earth* and *rubbish*, had been filled in by the hand of man. We hazard an opinion that the sacrifices which had been made on the altar, and which had been erected in the first

instance, were to propitiate the Gods, in favor of the Temple which was begun; that as each row or layer of stones were laid, the space around was filled up to a level, and that thus by a kind of inclined plane, the immense blocks were raised to the positions they were intended to occupy. Finally, all being laid, and the rubbish removed, the stones from a rough state, were to pass under the chisel of the Artist. There is something in the building to show, that it was intended the Temple should be covered; but as no vestige of a fallen roof has been disinterred, it is evident that it had never been put on. Some great convulsion of nature or extraordinary catastrophe must have arrested the progress of the gigantic undertaking.—Could it have been the general deluge? at which Mount Atlas is supposed to have sunk into the sea.—From the magnitude of the blocks of stone which appeared above the surface, previous to excavation, the place acquired the title of the Giant's Tower.

The Grotto of Calypso, as it is called, is simply a narrow grotto or passage in the rock, which runs a considerable way under ground, into which visitors are conducted by torch-light; it is too narrow for two persons to walk

abreast, and in no part is there room sufficient for three persons to sit down together. This grotto has more the appearance of a den for thieves, than the place of residence of a Goddess and her Nymphs. The only things worthy of notice in this cave, are the fine stalactites formed by the droppings of the water from the roof.

The place where the renowned Fungus *Miletensis* grows, is a kind of Table Rock on the southern side of the Island: detached from the main land about an hundred feet, and in height, also about an hundred feet above the level of the sea. From this rock springs the Fungus which, in past times was held in such repute as a styptic and corroborating medicine in hemorrhage, and which is still in some partial use by native practitioners.

In former times this Fungus was sent by the Grand Masters as presents to the Crowned Heads of Europe. We have seen the Fungus, from six to nine inches in height, of a kind of cucumber shape, and in colour dark red, bordering on purple, the rock is said to produce large Lizards of a red colour.

The passage from the main land to the Fungus Rock is performed in a box or car,

with trucks, and placed between two strong ropes; it is rather an ugly looking excursion; but we have never heard of any accident occurring, one person only at a time goes in the car, and is drawn over by a guardian who has previously transported himself to the rock.

The Canonico Greck of Rabatto, a few years ago, digging in his garden, called "*la Tomba*," near Rabatto, disinterred a variety of curious relics of antiquity; consisting of vases of different sizes, in both glass and terra-cotta, also some coins; of these he has formed a small Museum, in his house, which he takes pleasure in showing to strangers.

We have some speculative notions about Gozo, which we refrain not from communicating, and leave to those who have the means and inclination for research to profit by them.

In walls within the lines of the Castle, may be seen inserted, blocks, or pieces of sculptured marble; from whence can those pieces of marble have come?

Our persuasion is, that at some early period, Phœnician, or Grecian Temples of marble must have stood on some part of Gozo;

which like those of the sister Island have disappeared; now as the soil of Gozo is much deeper than that of Malta, is it not fair to presume, that the marbles of those Temples lie hid some-where, to reward the Antiquarian.

There is hardly a place at Gozo, where accident has led to excavation, in which some vestige of antiquity has not been found.

Our Antiquarians fly into foreign parts to excavate, even at great risk, when a field lies before them in a possession of our own, where they might work with every probability of success.



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